

What is the Composition of the House of Lords?

Until the Life Peerages Act (1958) all members of the House of Lords were hereditary peers. This means they were members of the British Aristocracy who had inherited their titles from their ancestors. The Life Peerages Act allowed the monarch to appoint members to the House of Lords for their life, but their title would not pass on.

The House of Lords Act (1999) radically changed the nature of the House of Lords. All but 92 of the Hereditary Peers were removed and now Peers are appointed for life.

The House of Lords traditionally had a conservative leaning. Prior to the House of Lords Act (1999) the Conservatives had 471 peers to Labour's 179. The House of Lords Act changed that make-up, which is now fundamentally different:

<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Life Peers</u>	<u>Hereditary Peers</u>	<u>Total</u>
Bishops	26	0	26
Conservative	212	46	258
Labour	164	4	168
Liberal Democrat	84	3	84
Crossbenchers	158	33	191
Lord Speaker	1	0	1
No Affiliation	37	2	39
Minor Parties	13	0	13
Totals	695	88	780

Crossbenchers – Crossbenchers are members of the House of Lords who do not claim any particular party allegiance.

Crossbencher Examples

Lord Lisvane (Robert Rogers) is a Crossbench Peer. Before entering the House of Lords he was Chief Clerk of the House of Commons. He has one of the country's foremost experts in constitutional affairs and parliamentary procedure and contributes enormously to the work of the House of Lords on this issue.

Baroness Boothroyd is a Crossbench Peer. Before entering the House of Lords she was a Member of the House of Commons. Between 1992 and 2000 she was the Speaker of the House of Commons. She was the first female speaker in History. As a Member of the House of Lords she has been a prominent contributor to debates on parliamentary reform and has enormous experience with which to inform these debates.

Lords Spiritual – The Lords Spiritual are senior members of the Church of England who continue to sit in the House of Lords. They include the Archbishop of Canterbury, currently Justin Welby. All Lords who are not Bishops are called **Lords Temporal**.

Although the House of Lords is split into government and opposition benches, party unity is far less strong in the House of Lords. There are a number of reasons for this:

- **Security of Tenure** – Members of the House of Lords are appointed for life. Therefore, they are far less reliant on their political party for advancement.
- **Less Whips** – The whipping system is far less strong in the House of Lords. Although Whips are appointed in the House of Lords, they are far less influential.

- **Different Role** – The House of Lords sees it as its role to scrutinise and check the House of Commons, as much as the government. Therefore, they work better collectively to make sure that the House of Commons is being kept in check.

How well does the House of Lords represent the make-up of the nation?

One of the benefits of the way members are chosen for the House of Lords is that the [descriptive representation](#) of the House can be taken into account.

Until very recently the House of Lords led the House of Commons in terms of representation of minorities. For example, after the 2010 election

- The Commons and Lords had an equal percentage of women with 22%.
- 2% of MPs came from an ethnic minority background compared to 5% in the House of Lords.

Currently, following the 2019 General Election:

- Men made up 71.5% of members of the House of Lords and women make up 28.5% (In the Commons women make up 34%)
- The average age was 70 (In the Commons the average age was 51)
- 11% of appointees to the House of Lords since 2000 have declared a disability (In the Commons the percentage currently declaring a disability is 0.76%)

As can be seen from these figures despite criticisms of the House of Lords as illegitimate because it has not been elected, arguably, it does a very good job of making sure that the nation is represented.

How are Lords Appointed?

People appointed to sit in the House of Lords are done so through the Life Peerages Act (1958). Officially, the monarch makes appointments to the House of Lords. However, in 2000 the [House of Lords Appointments Commission](#) was established. The Appointments Commission recommends individuals for the appointment as non-party-political life peers. It also vets the nominations of political parties, to ensure the suitability of members.

There are a number of mechanisms through which members of the House of Lords can be appointed:

[Life Peerages](#) are given to some MPs when they leave the House of Commons at the end of a Parliament. This is informally known as being ‘elevated to the Lords’.

- When a Prime Minister resigns they name a [resignation honours list](#). This is to reward those who have supported them.

After the 2015 General Election David Cameron gave peerages to a number of MPs who had left. These included:

Andrew Lansley – Former Leader of the House of Commons

William Hague – Former Foreign Secretary

After the 2019 General Election Boris Johnson gave peerages for the following MPs who had left the House of Commons included:

Philip Hammond – Former Chancellor of the Exchequer

Jo Johnson – Former Minister for Universities (and Boris Johnson’s brother)

After his 2016 resignation, David Cameron controversially recommended that the following be given peerages in his resignation honours list:

Lizz Sugg – A long term special advisor to David Cameron.

Olivia Bloomfield – The Conservative Party’s Chief Fundraiser.

After her 2019 resignation, Theresa May recommended peerages for:

Gavin Barwell – Her Chief of Staff and an ex-MP

Elizabeth Sanderson – Former Special Advisor to Theresa May

- Members are appointed to ‘top up’ the strengths of the political parties in the House of Lords. These should by convention be the similar to that in the House of Commons.
- Former Speakers of the House of Commons have traditionally been given a Life Peerage.

Ex-Speakers of the House of Commons currently in the House of Lords are:

The Baroness Boothroyd (Betty Boothroyd) – Speaker from 1992-2000

A* Zone

When he stood down as Speaker of the House of Commons in 2019, it was widely expected that Jon Bercow would be appointed to the House of Lords. However, as of December 2020, this has still not happened.

It is widely known that Boris Johnson was frustrated at what he saw as Bercow's obstruction of his agenda over Brexit and his attitude to the prorogation crisis.

It is clear that the failure to award Bercow his customary peerage is down to political reasons.

There have been a number of scandals associated with how Members of the House of Lords are chosen. These scandals have included:

Cash for Honours (2007) – In 2007 police were investigating reports that Labour Party donors had been asked for large sums of money before quickly afterwards being suggested as members of the House of Lords. One particular Labour donor who was made a Member of the House of Lords was Chai Patel, who eventually withdrew his name for consideration as a Lord. The police investigation was so serious that even the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was interviewed.

Cameron's Cronies (2016) – After resigning as Prime Minister David Cameron named a number of his closest advisors and staff as nominees for the House of Lords. These include Lizz Sugg and Ed Llewellyn, his former Chief of Staff. This was criticised as it appeared that Cameron was attempting to use the Resignation Honours List to favour political allies, not to further the operation of the House of Lords.

Boris Johnson and the House of Lords – Since becoming Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been criticised for some of his appointments to the House of Lords. He has been criticised for appointing his political allies to the House of Lords:

- He appointed his own brother, Jo Johnson, to the House of Lords after he stepped down from the House of Commons. Other MPs and Ministers who stepped down at the 2019 General Election were not given this treatment.
- Former Cricketer Ian Botham was appointed to the House of Lords in October 2020. He had been a prominent Leave supporter during the 2016 EU Referendum. As of December 2021, he has only spoken twice in the House of Lords but has voted in 66 divisions.
- In February 2021 Boris Johnson appointed Peter Cruddas, a prominent financial donor to the Conservative Party, to the House of Lords. This was despite the House of Lords Appointments Commission specifically recommending that it could not support the nomination due to concerns regarding Cruddas' relationship with the Conservative Party.

Why might Peers be appointed?

There are a number of reasons why Peers may be appointed:

- As a means to bring people from outside Parliament into the Government

In 2005 Andrew Adonis was made a Labour Lord by Tony Blair. He immediately took a place in the government as a Minister of State for Education.

In 2007 Digby Jones was made a Lord by Gordon Brown. He was immediately made a Minister for Trade and Investment as part of Gordon Brown's 'government of all the talents'. He had a wide-ranging business background and had extensive experience in international trade.

Lord Frost was a Senior Diplomat and Special Advisor to Boris Johnson when he was Foreign Secretary. Boris Johnson wanted him to become a Member of the Government and so appointed him to the House of Lords in September 2020.

- Getting rid of potential troublesome backbenchers

John Major took over as leader of the Conservative Party from Margaret Thatcher in 1990. Margaret Thatcher remained in the House of Commons and was still widely respected and revered by the Conservative Party, many of whom were still loyal to her. In 1992 she was offered a place in the House of Lords and she stepped down from Parliament. This enabled John Major to place more distance between himself and Thatcher, who still held so much authority in the party.

- As a reward for political service

John Prescott was Labour's Deputy Prime Minister between 1997 and 2007. He stepped down from this role when Tony Blair resigned as Prime Minister. In 2010 he was awarded a Life Peerage, sitting as a Labour Lord. This was due to his long service with the party. He was heavily criticised for accepting this. John Prescott had always been a strong advocate for the working class and had said that the House of Lords should be abolished.

- To bring particular expertise into the House of Lords. These peers are often crossbenchers.

Between 2011 and 2014 Robert Rogers was the Clerk of the House of Commons. As such, he was the senior constitutional expert in the UK. As such, upon his retirement in 2014 he was appointed to the House of Lords, becoming Lord Lisvane.

Examples of prominent Crossbench Peers with particular expertise

Baroness Boothroyd – Former Speaker of the House of Commons: An expert on constitutional and parliamentary affairs.

Lord Dannat – Former Chief of the General Staff: An expert on military matters.

Baroness Grey-Thompson – Former Olympic Paralympian: An expert on sporting and disability matters.

Lord Hennessey – Prominent political author: An expert on constitutional issues.

Lord Lisvane – A former Clerk of the House of Commons: An expert on constitutional and parliamentary issues.

Lord O'Donnell – A former Cabinet Secretary: An expert on government relations and administration.

What are the roles of the House of Lords?

The House of Lords has four key roles:

- To make laws (with a particular focus on amending bills sent from the House of Commons)
- To scrutinise the executive and hold it to account.
- To offer Government Ministers where required.
- To provide a source of specialist knowledge and expertise.

Legislation can be initiated in either the House of Lords or the House of Commons. Normally, however, a bill will be introduced in the House of Commons. If it passes its Third Reading in the House of Commons, it then goes to the House of Lords where it is examined in detail and '**line by line**'. The Lords will look to amend Commons bills and make them better. As such, it is often referred to as an '**amending chamber**'. The process the bill goes through in the House of Lords is largely the same, however, when the Committee Stage happens the Lords sit as a 'Committee of the Whole House' in which any peer can take part.

If a bill is revised it is sent back to the House of Commons. If the Commons disagree with the amendments, it would be sent back to the Lords. Sometimes bills can go back and forth between the two chambers numerous times. This is known as parliamentary ping pong.

There are a number of advantages that the Lords can offer when it comes to legislation:

- **Time** – Traditionally the House of Lords can spend far more time considering legislation. They are able to do this line-by-line. For example, the Committee Stage in the House of Lords is conducted by the whole house.

In 2020 the Agriculture Act was passed by Parliament. In total, the House of Commons spent 32 hours and 45 minutes considering this bill. However, the House of Lords spent 96 hours, almost three times as long.

- **Expertise** – There are a number of well-respected professionals in the House of Lords. They are able to use this expertise to make a bill better.

- **Independence** – Although there are only 191 crossbenchers in the Lords, as a whole the House is more independent. Firstly, this is because the whips are less powerful and secondly because they do not have to rely on public or support to be re-elected in the future like an MP does.

To remember the advantages of the House of Lords when it comes to legislation remember **TIE**:

Time
Expertise
Independence

Although it is rare, the House of Lords does sometimes block Government legislation.

Recent Examples of Government Defeats in the House of Lords

26/10/21 – A defeat by a majority of 143 on a clause in the Environment Bill added by the Lords that insisted sewage companies reduce harms from the untreated dumping of sewage. In total the Government suffered 13 defeats on the Environment Bill.

27/04/21 – A defeat by a majority of 82 on a clause in the Fire Safety Bill. This was the third time the House of Lords had requested a clause that stopped landlords from passing on the cost of making flats safe to their tenants following the Grenfell Fire. In total the Government suffered 6 defeats on the Fire Safety Bill.

02/02/21 – A defeat by a majority of 171 on a clause in the Trade Bill. This clause would require that both houses debate government response to determinations by the High Court that a trading partner was engaging in genocide. In total the Government suffered 14 defeats on the Trade Bill.

Government Defeats in the House of Lords since 2010

2019-December 2021 (Conservative) - 114

2019-2019 (Conservative) - 1

2017-209 (Conservative) - 69

2016-2017 (Conservative) - 38

2015-2016 (Conservative) - 60

2014-2015 (Coalition) - 11

2013-2014 (Coalition) - 14

2012-2013 (Coalition) - 27

2011-2012 (Coalition) - 48

2010-2011 (Coalition) - 14

What is the role of the House of Lords in providing Government Ministers?

Government Ministers must come from either House of Parliament. However, most come from the House of Commons. In addition, by convention, all the **Great Offices of State** must be filled from the House of Commons. This is so that they can be adequately held to account by the people's elected representatives.

The last Member of the House of Lords to fulfil one of the Great Offices of State was Lord Carrington. Between 1979 and 1982 Lord Carrington was Foreign Secretary. He resigned after failing to recognise the threat to the Falklands Islands that was posed by Argentina before their invasion in 1982.

However, there are normally a number of Members of the Lords in the Government. Currently, Members of the House of Lords who are serving in the Government as of December 2021 are:

Leader of the House of Lords – Baroness Evans
Minister of State (HM Treasury) – Lord Agnew
Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) – Lord Ahmad
Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) – Lord Goldsmith
Minister of State (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) – Baroness Stedman-Scott
Home Office – Baroness Williams
Home Office – Lord Greenhalgh
Cabinet Office – Lord True
Ministry of Justice – Lord Wolfson
Ministry of Defence – Baroness Goldie
Department of Health and Social Care – Lord Kamall
Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – Lord Grimstone
Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy – Lord Callanan
Department of Education – Baroness Barran
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – Lord Benyon
Department of Transport – Baroness Vere
Northern Ireland Office – Lord Caine
Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland – Lord Offord
Office of the Leader of the House of Lords – Lord Howe
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – Lord Parkinson
Office of the Advocate General for Scotland – Lord Stewart

Sometimes, a Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition may use the House of Lords to bring someone from outside of Parliament into the **Cabinet** or **Shadow Cabinet**.

Members of the House of Lords appointed in order to join the Government

Lord Adonis – Andrew Adonis was a Senior Advisor to Tony Blair. In 2005 he was appointed as a Life Peer so that he could become Minister of Education. Later, he was promoted to the Cabinet to be Secretary of State for Transport.

Digby Jones – Digby Jones was a British Businessman who was director of the CBI between 2000 and 2006. In 2007, he was appointed to the House of Lords so that he could become a Minister for Trade and Investment.

Members of the House of Lords appointed in order to join the Shadow Cabinet

Shami Chakrabati – Shami Chakrabati was a barrister and the director of Liberty, a Human Rights Pressure Group. In October 2016 she was appointed to the House of Lords so that she could become Shadow Attorney-General.

How does the House of Lords scrutinise the Executive?

Questions - Peers put questions to a government spokesperson during question times throughout the day, similar to how they do in the House of Commons. Urgent Questions can also take place in the House of Lords if the Lord Speaker agrees to an application. However, in the House of Lords they are called **Private Notice Questions**.

On the 6th December 2021 Baroness Faulkner of Worcester asked a Private Notice Question about the Casey Review into the violence that took place at the Euro 2020 Final.

Debates - Peers debate specific issues and at the end of each debate a Government Minister responds to the matters raised.

On the 18th August 2021 a debate was held on the situation in Afghanistan which saw the Taliban take the capital Kabul and chaotic evacuations taking place. The debate lasted from 11.09 to 18.34 and Lord Ahmad responded for the Government.

Select committees - These are set up to consider areas of public policy. Some are fairly quick enquiries with a narrow focus, others are broader so take longer. A report of their findings is debated in the House of Lords and responded to by the Government.

On the 19th November 2021 the House of Lords Constitution Committee published a report on the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill which will repeal the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act (2011). They recommended that the Government's plans needed more consideration, particularly regarding safeguards against abuse of the process by the Prime Minister. The Government formally responded to this report on the 13th December 2021.

Legislative Scrutiny – The Lords carefully scrutinise legislation coming from the House of Commons.

How does the House of Lords supply Specialist Knowledge?

Ever since the Life Peerages Act (1958) it has been possible for Members to be appointed to the House of Lords so that they can offer specialist knowledge and expertise to the House.

Examples of Members of the House of Lords with specialist knowledge

Baroness Brady

Karen Brady, also famous for her role on the apprentice, was appointed a Conservative Lord by David Cameron's Government in 2014. She became a prominent business figure after being managing director of West Ham and Birmingham Football Clubs before the age of 35. She is renowned for doing well in what is traditionally seen as a 'man's world' and is a strong advocate for women in business.

Lord Adonis

Andrew Adonis was appointed a Labour Lord by Tony Blair's Government in 2005. He was previously an advisor to Tony Blair on Education policy and is a published academic on this area. Upon being appointed to the House of Lords he was immediately appointed to the Cabinet as Minister of State for Education.

Lord Winston

Robert Winston was appointed a Labour Lord in 2005. He is one of the world's foremost authorities on IVF, embryology and fertility. He has a wide background in medicine and is able to contribute an enormous amount of scientific issues within the House of Lords.

Lord Lisvane

Lord Lisvane is a Crossbench peer. He joined the House of Lords in December 2014. Before entering the House of Lords he was Chief Clerk of the House of Commons. He has one of the country's foremost expert in constitutional affairs and parliamentary procedure and contributes enormously to the work of the House of Lords in this issue.

Baroness Grey-Thomson

Tanni Grey-Thompson is a former paralympian who was born with spina bifida. She has used a wheelchair for her entire life. In March 2010 she was created a Life Peer. She sits a crossbencher. Thompson has used her peerage to challenge the government on disability rights. For instance, she was an outspoken critic of the government's 'bedroom tax', which would have removed benefits from families using a spare bedroom to support a disabled person.

There are many benefits of having this range of expertise in the House of Lords:

- Specialist knowledge means that some Lords will be able to offer excellent insights in debate

In the 2011 Lords debate on Libya, many of the speakers had extensive international experience, including three former defence chiefs and a former NATO secretary general. For example, Lord West, former First Lord of the Admiralty.

In the 2021 Lords debate on Afghanistan, many speakers had significant foreign policy experience. For example, Lord Hammond was a former Foreign Secretary.

In the 2017 Article 50 debate, the House of Lords had a number of former MEPs and EU Commissioners. For example, Lord Mandelson, former EU Commissioner for Trade.

- Lords' committees have many members with relevant knowledge and expertise.

The Lords Constitution Committee includes Lord Hennessy who is one of Britain's foremost constitutional scholars.

The Lords International Relations and Defence Committee include Lord Campbell. A Former Lib Dem Leader and Foreign Affairs Spokesperson, he has long been considered an authority of foreign affairs.

- The appointments system allows a House of Lords which is arguably more diverse than the elected House of Commons.

However, despite these benefits, there are also a great many limitations to this experience and specialist knowledge that the House of Lords has. These limitations include:

- Some groups remain relatively underrepresented, e.g. science and engineering. However, this is a problem for Parliament in general, as the House of Commons has even fewer members with a background in science.
- Peers do not use their professional expertise all the time: often they will debate issues in which they have no specialist knowledge
- Acquiring professional expertise takes time, so peers have a much higher average age than the general population.
- Having busy careers means that some peers do not have time to attend many sessions in the House of Lords.
- Regardless of their expertise, peers are unelected. Reform campaigners argue that this is undemocratic and means that the House of Lords is unaccountable to the electorate.
- It is generally accepted that professional expertise only stays up to date for three years. Therefore, the specialist knowledge of almost

Be Careful!

You must know a variety of examples of Members of the House of Lords. It is no good just being able to name Lord Sugar! Don't just learn their names, learn what they offer to the House of Lords and try and find some **specific** examples of how they have contributed.

How did the House of Lords change and develop in the twentieth century?

The House of Lords changed and developed significantly in the twentieth century:

The Parliament Acts (1911 and 1949)

The Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949 took away the power of the House of Lords to block legislation. Instead, they only had the power to delay it by two years (1911) and then one year (1949).

Salisbury Convention

The Salisbury Convention is a doctrine that was agreed between 1945-1951 whereby the House of Lords will not vote against government bills that had been part of their General Election manifesto. This doctrine aimed to ensure that the elected house was guaranteed supremacy over the House of Lords, especially when they were fulfilling the elector's wishes.

Life Peerages Act 1958

The Life Peerages Act allowed Peers to be appointed to the House of Lords for life. This allowed for a much more diverse House of Lords and enabled governments to place individuals with specialist expertise in the House of Lords.

The House of Lords Act (1999)

The House of Lords removed most of the hereditary peers that had previously sat in the House of Lords. After the House of Lords Act only 92 Hereditary Peers remain. When a hereditary peer dies a by-election is held to see who, from the peerage of Great Britain, will take their place.

Ironically, the way the remaining Hereditary Peers were chosen after the House of Lords Act (1999) was by an election. This means that the only people ever elected to sit in the House of Lords are hereditary peers!

What further reform did Labour and the Coalition make to the House of Lords?

Since the 1999 House of Lords Act, no further radical change has ensued. In 2001, following a report called the [Wakeham Commission \(2000\)](#), a Labour White Paper called for a House of Lords that was 20% elected. In 2003 this, among other Labour Proposals were rejected. In 2005, Labour pledged a fully elected House of Lords, with staggered elections. A vote in the House of Commons for a fully elected House of Lords passed by 113 votes. However, predictably, it was rejected by the House of Lords.

As part of the Coalition Agreement House of Lords reform was to be pushed forward in the 2010-2015 parliament. A bill for Lords reform was introduced by Nick Clegg in June 2012. It called for:

- A chamber limited in size.
- A mixed chamber, with 120 members elected and some appointed.
- A cap on the number of government ministers that could come from the House of Lords.

However, due to the opposition of Conservative Backbenchers in the House of Commons, the Government did not have the votes to pass the legislation. In September 2012, the legislation was withdrawn and never revisited.

How effective is the House of Lords?

Even though the Parliament Acts and the Salisbury Doctrine limit the power of the House of Lords, it is still an effective check on the Government. There are three key reasons why this is:

Experience - There is a wealth of experience in the House of Lords, including previous members of the Government. This allows them a special expertise in holding the government to account.

Security of Tenure - It is very difficult to remove a member of the House of Lords. The fact that Lords do not have to fear for the position enables them to speak freely and openly and to take potentially unpopular stances in holding the government to account.

Weakness of Party – The hold of political parties and the power of the whips is far less strong in the House of Lords. This enables the chamber to become particularly independent.

However, there are also a number of things that hold the House of Lords back:

Inactivity of some peers – There is a big difference between the amount of time that peers are or willing to put into their role in the House of Lords. There are generally considered to be three different classes of peers:

Between 2010 and 2015 62 peers claimed £360,000 in expenses despite not voting in a single division!

Between 2016 and 2017 115 peers did not speak even once in the House of Lords.

Between 2018 and 2019 Lord Bookman claimed £50,000 in expenses but did not speak once. 46 peers did not vote a single time.

- **Non-Working Peers** – These are individuals who have been given a peerage as an honour but take very little part in the activities of the house. There are a number of peers with extremely poor attendance and voting records.

Examples of ‘Non-Working’ Peers

Lord Sugar – Since joining the House of Lords in 2009 Lord Sugar has voted in 26 out of 1103 divisions. This is just 2.36% of divisions. He has only spoken 63 times.

Lord Lloyd-Webber – Andrew Lloyd-Webber was a member of the House of Lords from 1997 to 2017. In 20 years he spoke just 20 times and voted just 42 times out of 2460 divisions (just 1.7%).

Lord Paul – Since 2010 Lord Paul has voted in 24 out of 1025 divisions (2.3%).

- **Part-Time Politicians** – These are peers that are not attached to any particular party but do take part in votes that are of particular interest to them. Their attendance is usually better than ‘non-working’ peers but is still irregular.

Examples of a ‘Part-Time Politicians’ in the House of Lords

Lord Winston – In 2021 Lord Winston spoke 34 times and voted in 63 out of 143 divisions. This is 44%. He has tended to focus his interventions on scientific matters, his particular area of expertise.

- **Working Peers** – These are peers that are members of a political party and consider themselves to be professional politicians. Sometimes they are members of the Government or opposition.

Examples of ‘Working Peers’ in the House of Commons

Lord Bates - Since joining the House of Lords in 2008 Lord Bates has voted in 847 out of 1025 divisions. This is 70.3%. In 2021 he spoke in 67 times.

Lord Adonis – Since joining the House of Lords in 2005 Lord Adonis has voted in 1015 out of 1587 divisions. This is 64%. In 2021 he spoke 86 times.

Lord Campbell – Since joining the House of Lords in 2015 Lord Campbell has voted in 408 out of 531 divisions. This is 76.8%. In 2021 he spoke 68 times.

Lack of Legitimacy – The fact that the House of Lords is unelected reduces its legitimacy. This lack of legitimacy is furthered by mistrust over the appointments process. The fact that the Lords is not seen as fully legitimate can lead members not to risk upsetting the public. This was a point made during the debate over Brexit.

Constrained by Convention and Statute – A number of conventions such as the Salisbury Convention and those regarding Money Bills stop the Lords from fully scrutinising all aspects of Government policy. In addition, the Parliament Acts mean the House of Lords often give into the House of Commons when there is a conflict.

Should the Lords be reformed and what are the options?

The position of the House of Lords in British politics is still a matter of wide debate and disagreement. Little change has been made to the House of Lords by the current government. However, there are many who believe the House of Lords still needs fundamental reform.

The potential options for Lords Reform:

Abolition – Some argue that the House of Lords should be abolished entirely and Britain should become a unicameral system.

Pros:

- New Zealand, Denmark and other countries function without a second chamber, so why can't we?
- We would save money by having only one chamber.
- Scrutiny could be carried out in different ways such as through a strengthened committee system.

Cons:

- The standard of scrutiny of legislation would drop in a unicameral system.
- The House of Commons would have too much power without a revising second chamber.
- The bicameral system is ingrained in British political culture and has, historically, worked well.

Fully Appointed – Some people argue that Life Peers have worked well. Therefore, why not make the House of Lords Fully Appointed?

Pros:

- It will help maintain the current broad range of membership of the House of Lords rather than creating more professional politicians. Would Lord Sugar (Alan Sugar) or Baroness Grey-Thompson (Tanni Grey-Thompson) stand for election?
- It doesn't threaten the democratic supremacy of the House of Commons.
- Appointment is more cost effective than election.

Cons:

- It is undemocratic to have unelected Members of the Lords involved in drafting and passing legislation.
- The UK is one of only two countries, the other being Canada, that has an unelected second chamber.
- A more democratic system is worth investing in.

Fully Elected – Some argue that the House of Lords could be made more accountable simply by making it a fully elected chamber, like the House of Commons

Pros:

- It fully addresses the current democratic deficit, giving the House of Lords a full mandate to initiate and amend legislation.
- More people will be given the opportunity to stand for Parliament giving a greater range of representation.
- More young people will sit in the House of Lords.

Cons:

- It causes more problems than it solves: with two elected chambers, the House of Commons would no longer be supreme.
- The chamber would be full of career politicians rather than attracting individuals with a wealth of knowledge and experience in a vast range of fields.
- It isn't clear how often elections should be and additional elections would cause additional costs.

Hybrid Lords (70% Elected and 30% Appointed) – Some people argue that the Lords should be neither Fully Elected or Appointed, but should strike a balance in the middle

Pros:

- It combines the best of both fully appointed and fully elected systems: addressing the democratic deficit while retaining individuals with expertise and experience in valuable fields.
- The House of Commons would retain its democratic supremacy.
- It would be a more straightforward system to introduce.

Cons:

- It is undemocratic to retain any unelected Members of the Lords.
- It will create a two-tier House of Lords of elected and non-elected Members causing friction.
- The system would cause additional confusion both within and without Parliament as to where power does, and should, lie.

What are the differences between the House of Commons and House of Lords and which House is dominant?

Traditionally, the House of Lords was the dominant house of the UK legislature. However, the dominant house is now the House of Commons, the elected chamber of Parliament. For example, by convention the winner of the most seats in the House of Commons has the option to form a government and the Prime Minister is expected to come from the House of Commons.

The last Prime Minister from the House of Lords was the Marquess of Salisbury in 1902. In 1963, Alec- Douglas-Home was appointed Prime Minister from the Lords, but resigned and ran in a by-election for the House of Commons due to the convention that the Prime Minister come from the Commons.

Despite this, the House of Lords is still called the ‘Upper Chamber’ of Parliament.

The role of the House of Commons is similar to that of Parliament as a whole, notably ‘ROLLS’.

However, there are some clear differences between the House of Commons and the House of Lords:

- **Mandate for Government** – The Government must come from the party that receives the most seats in the House of Commons after a General Election (or one that can form a stable coalition). This preserves the democratic mandate of the government in the UK.
- **Dominant Chamber** – The House of Commons is the dominant chamber. This is clear from the fact that most legislation comes from the House of Commons. Equally, money bills cannot come from the House of Lords and must originate from the House of Commons. The Salisbury Convention also ensures that Government bills based on their manifesto are not blocked by the House of Lords.
- **Powers of Scrutiny** – The Commons has more powers of scrutiny than the House of Lords. Since most members of the Government are MPs, they have to be questioned in the chamber of the House of Commons. In particular, by convention the Prime Minister also comes from the House of Commons.
- **Support of Government** – Only a vote of no-confidence in the House of Commons can bring down a government. This last happened to the Callaghan government in 1979.

The superiority of the House of Commons has been further enhanced by the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005, which has taken away the Judicial Powers of the House of Lords, powers which it possessed that the Commons did not.