

Expertise within the House of Lords

Introduction

The Commission has been asked by successive Prime Ministers to consider nominees who would broaden the expertise and experience of the House of Lords and reflect the diversity of the people of the United Kingdom. Because of this request, the current Commission undertook in early 2014 to update the research published on its website¹ relating to the expertise within the Lords.

The Commission **does not use this information to target groups or individuals, or to make decisions as to which individuals to recommend for appointment.** However, it can provide a helpful context within which to consider nominations to the crossbenches.

Data sources, rules and caveats

Our database for the research consisted of the **780 peers** listed as eligible members of the House of Lords on the Parliament website **on 5 May 2014.**

As with the previous research, we used *Dod's Parliamentary Companion* as the principal source of data in identifying peers' experience and expertise. We also conducted other internet-based research where the biographical information contained in *Dod's* was deemed to be insufficient or prompted further questions about a peer's background.

We then categorised peers' expertise according to the different areas of public policy likely to come before Parliament for consideration. **38 distinct policy areas** were identified for this purpose, based on the remits of the various Lords, Commons and Joint Committees and the policy responsibilities of the UK Government's departments of state, as represented at Cabinet, and the Devolved Administrations.

Peers were assigned policy areas based on their biographical information. Each individual was assigned as many areas as seemed appropriate, given his or her background.

Identifying the 38 policy areas and categorising members' experience according to those areas inevitably entailed an element of **subjective judgement.** To try and keep this element to a minimum we endeavoured to restrict categorisation as much as possible to areas that were clearly linked to an individual's professional background. However, on a case-by-case basis, we reflected individuals' non-professional interests where this seemed sensible.

¹ Originally conducted by the UCL Constitution Unit in March 2010 and updated by the Commission's secretariat in May 2012.

We applied a **general three-year rule** to individuals' professional backgrounds. This meant that a peer had to have worked in a field for at least three years to be assigned that background. Although, here too, a certain amount of subjective judgement was required, as it was not always clear how much of someone's time had been devoted to a particular profession, and when that experience appeared to have been acquired so long ago as to no longer be relevant it was not recorded.

As stated above, as with the earlier UCL and secretariat research, our main source of data was *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*. *Dod's* is compiled on the basis of self-reporting and so is not necessarily consistent from member to member.

Finally, it should be noted that the results do not reflect expertise that peers may have developed due to their work in the Lords after being appointed – by serving on a Committee, for example – as this research was designed to capture the expertise that individuals *brought* to the Lords.

Summary of findings

According to our findings, the most **highly represented** areas of public policy in the House of Lords as a whole are:

Policy Area	Total number of peers with expertise	Percentage of peers with expertise
Public Administration	163	21%
Business and Enterprise	156	20%
Economics and Finance	155	20%
Local Government	123	16%
Higher Education	122	16%
Legal Affairs	103	13%

The **least represented** areas were:

Policy Area	Total number of peers with expertise	Percentage of peers with expertise
Fire and Rescue	0	0%
Health and Safety in the Workplace	4	1%
Food Safety	4	1%
Animal Health	4	1%
Climate Change	6	1%
Welfare and Pensions	9	1%

The highest and lowest areas of representation **on the Crossbenches** were:

Policy Area	Total number of Crossbench peers with expertise	Percentage of Crossbench peers with expertise
Higher Education	41	23%
Public Administration	28	15%
Legal Affairs	27	15%
Economics and Finance	25	14%
Business and Enterprise	23	13%
Health	20	11%

Policy Area	Total number of Crossbench peers with expertise	Percentage of Crossbench peers with expertise
Borders and Immigration	0	0%
Health and Safety in the Workplace	0	0%
Fire and Rescue	0	0%
Welfare and Pensions	1	1%
Transport and Infrastructure	1	1%
Scottish Affairs	1	1%
Animal Health	1	1%
National Security	1	1%
Further Education	1	1%

Full results can be found at **Annex A**.

ANNEX A	Conservatives		Labour		Lib Dem		Crossbench		Bishops	Other Parties	Non-Affiliated	Total	
Public administration*	63	29%	63	29%	4	4%	28	15%	0	2	3	163	21%
Business and enterprise	73	33%	33	15%	18	18%	23	13%	1	2	6	156	20%
Economics and finance	75	34%	31	14%	17	17%	25	14%	1	3	3	155	20%
Local government	24	11%	46	21%	29	29%	10	5%	0	7	7	123	16%
Higher education	14	6%	46	21%	11	11%	41	23%	3	1	6	122	16%
Legal affairs	27	12%	28	13%	18	18%	27	15%	1	0	2	103	13%
Media and digital	27	12%	33	15%	14	14%	11	6%	0	2	1	88	11%
Community and society	5	2%	14	6%	8	8%	17	9%	25	0	2	71	9%
Culture and sport	23	10%	22	10%	4	4%	15	8%	0	0	3	67	9%
Health	13	6%	16	7%	3	3%	20	11%	0	2	1	55	7%
Employment	5	2%	38	17%	3	3%	5	3%	0	1	0	52	7%
EU matters	13	6%	20	9%	9	9%	7	4%	0	0	1	50	6%
Schools	13	6%	17	8%	13	13%	3	2%	1	2	0	49	6%
Foreign policy	13	6%	10	5%	5	5%	16	9%	0	1	1	46	6%
Crime and policing	8	4%	11	5%	10	10%	12	7%	0	2	0	43	6%
Defence	11	5%	8	4%	3	3%	16	9%	0	2	0	40	5%
Agriculture and fisheries	23	10%	2	1%	2	2%	9	5%	0	0	2	38	5%
Equality and human rights	6	3%	10	5%	6	6%	13	7%	0	1	1	37	5%
Science and technology	7	3%	7	3%	8	8%	10	5%	0	0	0	32	4%
Transport and infrastructure	15	7%	10	5%	4	4%	1	1%	0	0	0	30	4%
Northern Ireland affairs	7	3%	2	1%	2	2%	6	3%	0	5	1	23	3%
Housing, planning and built environment	4	2%	4	2%	6	6%	4	2%	1	1	1	21	3%
Energy	8	4%	4	2%	3	3%	4	2%	1	1	0	21	3%
Scottish affairs	5	2%	8	4%	4	4%	1	1%	0	0	1	19	2%

ANNEX A	Conservatives		Labour		Lib Dem		Crossbench		Bishops	Other Parties	Non-Affiliated	Total	
Political and constitutional reform	3	1%	4	2%	7	7%	2	1%	0	0	1	17	2%
Further education	6	3%	1	0%	6	6%	1	1%	0	0	1	15	2%
Environmental protection	7	3%	2	1%	1	1%	3	2%	0	0	2	15	2%
Social care	1	0%	4	2%	1	1%	8	4%	0	0	1	15	2%
Welsh affairs	3	1%	4	2%	4	4%	2	1%	0	2	0	15	2%
International development	2	1%	5	2%	0	0%	5	3%	0	1	1	14	2%
Children and young people	2	1%	4	2%	3	3%	4	2%	0	0	0	13	2%
Borders and immigration	6	3%	5	2%	2	2%	0	0%	0	0	0	13	2%
National security	7	3%	0	0%	2	2%	1	1%	0	0	0	10	1%
Welfare and pensions	3	1%	3	1%	2	2%	1	1%	0	0	0	9	1%
Climate change	0	0%	3	1%	0	0%	3	2%	0	0	0	6	1%
Animal health	2	1%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0	0	4	1%
Food safety	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%	2	1%	0	0	0	4	1%
Health and safety in the workplace	1	0%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	4	1%
Fire and rescue	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0%

	Total
Conservatives	220
Labour	218
Liberal Democrat	99
Crossbench	182
Bishops	25
Other Parties	15
Non-Affiliated	21

Total **780**

Data about the composition of the House of Lords is from 6/5/14

* Includes former Ministers - 98 of the 163 peers with Public Administration expertise gained it through former ministerial roles