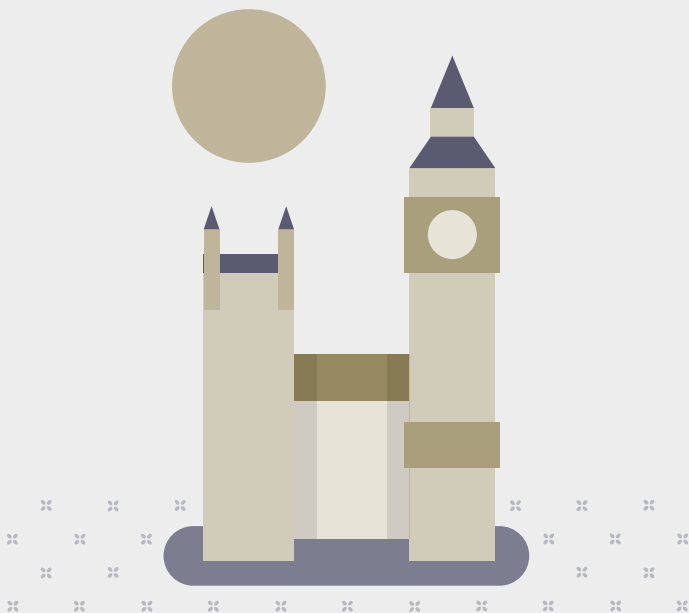


# Fact Card



## Parliamentary Select Committees

### Clues

- **There are currently around 90 of these**
- **MPs or Peers take part. Sometimes both together**
- **These can last weeks or months**
- **You can send in written evidence to this**

Select committees are one way that the Government is scrutinised by Parliament. Both Houses of Parliament have select committees. There are also a few joint select committees, such as the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Often debates and question times do not last long enough for MPs or peers to examine issues in great depth. A select committee can devote several weeks or even months to an inquiry. They also have authority to take evidence from anyone they want to hear from.

They ask members of the public and organisations for views on the issue they are examining. They usually produce a report that the Government must respond to, which includes recommendations they want the Government to take up.

### How you can get involved

You can submit written evidence and you may be called to give oral evidence in person if you do. You can also watch the committees in person or on **Parliamentlive.tv**.

## All Party Parliamentary Groups

### Clues

- **There are over 500 of these**
- **These are cross party groups**
- **These have no official status in Parliament**
- **You can write to them**

APPGs are informal cross-party groups that have no official status within Parliament. They are run by and for members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. Groups that wish to be registered as APPGs have to conform to rules about cross-party membership and transparency about their activities and funding.

### How you can get involved

You can visit the Parliament website to see the list of APPGs. If there is one that links to a cause or campaign you are passionate about you can also contact them for support.

## Early Day Motions

### Clues

- **This can be started by most MP's**
- **This happens in the House of Commons**
- **MPs sign these to demonstrate support for a cause**
- **You can ask your MP to start or sign this**

Early Day Motions (EDMs) are proposals submitted for debate in the House of Commons for which no day has been fixed. As there is no specific time allocated to EDMs very few are debated. However, many attract a great deal of public interest and media coverage.

EDMs are used to put on record the views of individual MPs or to draw attention to specific events or campaigns. Topics covered by EDMs vary widely. By attracting the signatures of other MPs, they can be used to demonstrate the level of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.

Ministers, whips and parliamentary private secretaries do not normally sign EDMs. The ministerial code sets out the standards of conduct expected of ministers and how they discharge their duties and includes guidance for parliamentary private secretaries. Neither the Speaker nor Deputy Speakers will sign EDMs as their role requires them to be politically impartial. Internal party rules may also affect who can sign Early Day Motions.

### **How you can get involved**

You can ask your MP to submit an EDM about a cause you are passionate about or sign one that has already been submitted.

## Petitions

### Clues

- **It's on the internet (www)**
- **If it's big enough Government will respond**
- **If it's even bigger the House of Commons may debate it.**
- **British citizens and UK residents add their names.**
- **You can start or sign this**

A British citizen or UK resident can create or sign petitions through the Parliamentary Petitions Website. To create a petition you must get 5 people to support it. It also needs to be checked to ensure it meets the standards for petitions before it is published.

The Petitions Committee reviews all petitions that are published. They select petitions of interest to find out more about the issues raised. They have the power to press for action from Government or Parliament. At 10,000 signatures a petition will get a written response from the Government. At 100,000 signatures a petition will be considered for a debate in Parliament.

### **How you can get involved**

You can create or sign a petition.

## Westminster Hall Debates

### Clues

- **An MP can request this**
- **There is no vote at the end**
- **You can ask your MP to request this**
- **They are allocated by ballot**

Debates in Westminster Hall take place on 'general debate' motions expressed in neutral terms. These motions are worded "That this house has considered [a specific matter]".

They allow the House of Commons to debate something without having to agree or disagree on a position on the topic. MPs apply for a debate which are then allocated by a ballot arranged by the Speaker's Office. Westminster Hall debates may also take place on select committee reports and in response to petitions and e-petitions.

### **How you can get involved**

You can ask your MP to request a Westminster Hall Debate on a topic you are passionate about.

## Questions for Short Debate

### Clues

- **A Peer can ask a question to start one**
- **They are 60-90 minutes long**
- **The Government will respond**
- **You can ask a Peer to request this**

In the House of Lords any member may table (propose) a 'question for short debate' at the end of the day's business or during the dinner break. The member is then referred to the Office of the Government Chief Whip to "agree upon a suitable date when the question can be asked".

The Office of the Government Chief Whip offers time in the Lords to members for their questions for short debate. Up to four slots are usually available each week on the floor of the House. Debates last for up to one-and-a-half hours or one hour if taken in the dinner break.

Questions for short debate are a way in the Lord's can hold a debate and receive a reply from the Government to the question.

### **How you can get involved**

You can ask a peer to ask a question for short debate on an issue you are passionate about.