

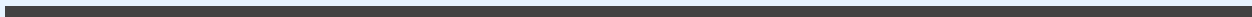


**UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY**  
**COMMITTEE**  
**Guidebook**



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## Committee Overview

Honourable Members of Parliament, welcome to the House of Commons and the House of Lords! In this document, we will be going through how the United Kingdom Parliamentary Committee (UKPC) functions and how it differs from both the real-life British Parliament, the Youth House of Commons, and MUN, if you have attended or have seen any of them previously.

To start off, the UKPC is a modified variation of the real-life House of Commons and House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, and as such, differs significantly from traditional Model United Nations committees. Furthermore, this committee also has the addition of a Crisis System, similar to those from MUN Crisis Committees. You might notice in this document or the Rules of Procedures that some changes also have to be made to accommodate the lack of participants to play as the House of Lords (in select conferences), the Privy Council, the Crown, as well as the reduced size of the committee, and the flow of debate while trying to best reflect how the real UK Parliament functions.

As the lower chamber of parliament, the House of Commons thus shares the responsibility to draft laws (Bills/Acts be it from the government or as an individual), address national issues on behalf of the constituencies and/or regions of different MPs, respond to international events and crises, and cooperating with the other organs of government (Lords, Crown, Privy Council). In addition, as a Crisis Committee, the committee is also expected to have participants respond to ongoing real-life events within their constituencies, the nation, internationally, or events set forth by the backroom chairs and/or the secretariat. As the House of Lords, your role is similar to the House of Commons, but to ensure that Bills are properly written, consider long-term factors that the constituency-minded MPs may overlook in favour of short-term improvements and votes, and protect the best interests of not only the nation but also your position as a lifetime member of the House of Lords. Although you can still submit bills as a peer in the House of Lords, which the Commons will also have to consider alongside your countless amendments for them to deal with once their Bill is sent to your House.

Therefore, the debate within the UKPC will follow the House of Commons or House of Lords courtesies, procedures, and structure. That means that you are allowed to use any and all personal pronouns aside from accusing another member of parliament of either house and other minor offences in the House of Commons, but for the House of Lords, you will have to be mindful about calling out other members and individuals directly, as it is a breach of courtesy. This also means that everything that you know about regular MUN besides Point of Order (for the House of Commons) has a different name or has been discarded entirely (the majority of them) for this committee to reflect the House of Commons and House of Lords realistically (this includes courtesies in addressing members of parliament or other branches of government, which shares

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almost none in common with MUN), while the Crisis side of the committee through Crisis Updates, Lord Amendments, the Privy Council, the Church of England, the Crown, etc., alongside the chaotic nature of the real-life House of Commons, will likely result in a highly active and fast paced debates on any topics throughout the conference.

As an MP, you represent a constituency and play the role of a person who participates in the House of Commons in real life. It is important to understand that their main interest is towards their constituency and, more importantly, their political status. Therefore, you should make an effort towards researching the issues plaguing your constituency, their interests, stances, and positions, while also taking a look at your character, their positions, previous stances, and history with their political party, while also researching the current, previous, and planned actions, stances, and internal dynamics of the party or parties that you MP is or were a member of. However, as a member of the House of Lords, your position is either hereditary or appointed, but you will sit there for life, so when you are debating, drafting bills, and considering topics, you can of course represent the area you live, but more importantly consider all long term implications that may negatively affect the nation from a Bill that tries to solve something short term and bring your professional changes to the Bills that are given to you from the Commons.

This is especially important for “backbenchers” (the MPs/Lords who sit at the back in the House of Commons/House of Lords and are not government ministers or shadow ministers) from the government and main opposition parties as the backbenchers play a key role in passing the laws of the government ministers and their rebellions may be catastrophic towards the legitimacy or status of existing bills that the government or opposition would like to try and pass. However, do note that upon the government or main opposition MPs' decision, a backbencher “rebellion” might also be met with consequences on your character as well.

Meanwhile, when you try to draft and pass Bills unlike MUN, their formatting and voting procedures have their own separate methods, and in the case of voting, are less within the hands of MPs. Therefore, before and during the conference, you should be mindful of the formatting of the Bills that you will be drafting for the House, as an improperly formatted bill in the style of MUN or USCC will lead to delays within the committee and additional workload on the Speakers and Deputies alongside other MPs/Lords during the Second and Third Readings.

Furthermore, you have to also be prepared for when your Bill gets sent back to the committee for debate again after it has passed all of its readings from the Lord/Commons Amendments (which are going to be run by the Deputy Speaker[s]) in a pingpong between the two Houses until both Houses are satisfied with your bill and also pass it. Do note that a Bill may also come from the House of Lords to the Commons and vice versa for further debate as well.

## Committee Structure

The committee is divided into the following sections: The House of Commons (represented by the participants) and the House of Lords and the Crown (represented by the backroom or participants).

### **The House of Commons**

The House of Commons is composed of 650 members of parliament (MPs) elected by the public to represent their interests. The role of MPs includes proposing new legislation and auditing government policies on current issues. The House of Commons is tasked with most legislative functions and is often the primary initiator of bills.

In the United Kingdom, there are over 400 political parties that exist; of them, only 10 are represented in the Parliament and the House of Commons. You can find their views and beliefs on their respective party manifestos prior to elections, their social media accounts and the accounts of their leaders, their interviews, and their debates and bills within the House of Commons and the House of Lords (for members who are a part of a party).

### **The House of Lords**

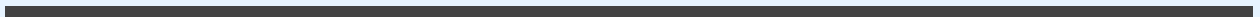
The second chamber of Parliament includes the House of Lords, whose members can also be referred to as both Lord(s) or Peer(s). Unlike the House of Commons, members in the House of Lords are chosen either based on appointment, heredity or official function and do not have a fixed number. The roles of the House of Lords include shaping and introducing legislation and scrutinising the government.

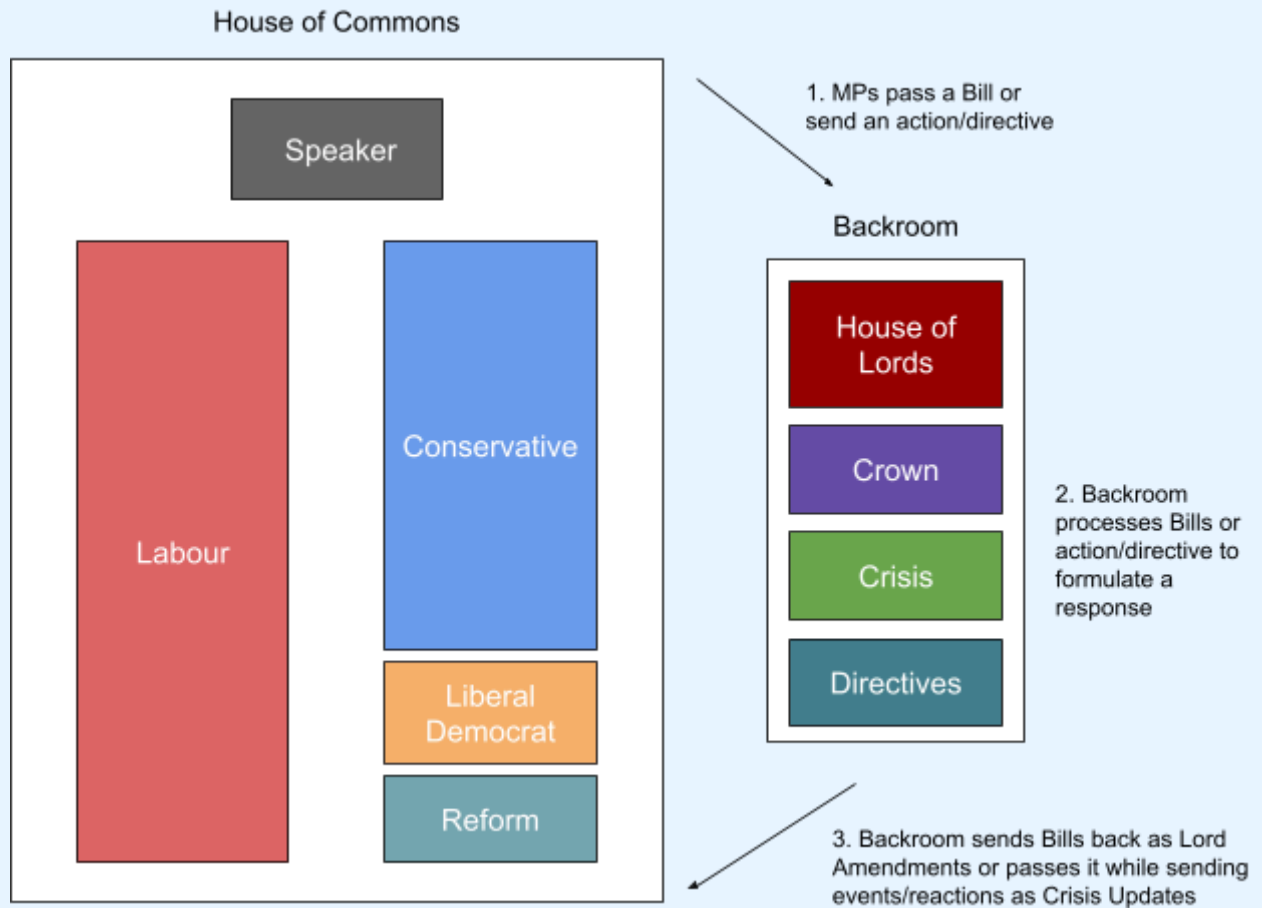
Please note that all bills must be thoroughly vetted and approved by both Houses of Parliament and given ascent by the Crown to become an Act and passed into law.

### **Committee Rooms**

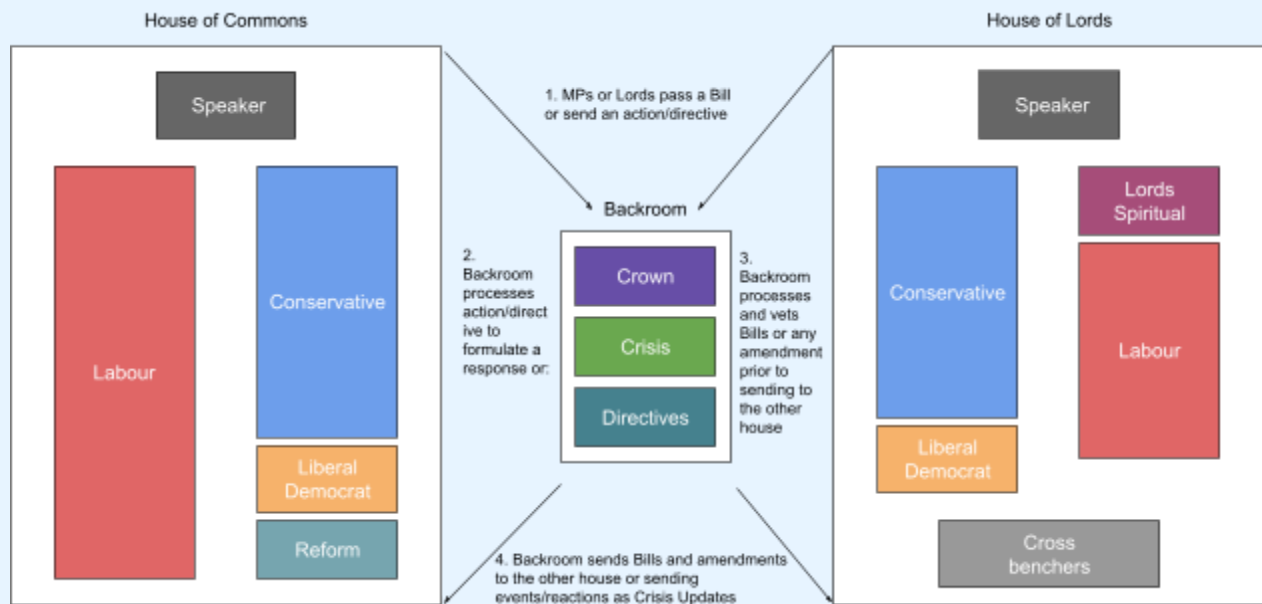
The committee rooms are composed of the key politicians who make up the House of Commons. You will have to take actions based on the interests of your committee as well as your personal interests - depending on your role and the strength of your views - such as supporting a hard or soft Brexit.

Parliament is split into a committee and a backroom. The structure is as follows:





(For conferences with only the House of Commons)



(For conferences with the House of Lords)

## **Backroom**

The backroom staff includes the Chairman of Ways and Means, the Deputy Speaker(s), the Crisis or the Speaker, who is currently not taking part in the role of the Speaker and is in charge of vetting through Bills, amendments, crises, directives, and actions within a period of the committee. In conferences that include the House of Lords, the Senior Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords will take the position of a backroom staff or the Lords Speaker, the deputy is taking his/her duties. Unlike most MUN committees, the backroom staff of UKPC will sit within the committee to help aid the Speaker(s) of the House in handling the committee, passing documents such as Standing Orders, ornaments and ceremonial items, and conducting ceremonial duties and events should the backroom staff(s) and Speaker(s) decide when it is appropriate.

The backroom can present the position of the Deputy Speaker in the place of the Speaker (where the Speaker is unavailable), any local, national, or international actor, organisation, or individual, including institutions such as the Crown, Church of England, European Commission, etc.

When MPs or Lords send in actions that the MP/Lord makes within their constituencies or to work with a relevant member in the House of Lords, the Crown, external actors, or preexisting connections, the backroom will handle the consequences of such actions and the response appropriately to the individual and/or committee via Crisis Updates or notes to the individual MP/Lord.

## **Military Actions**

The Prime Minister and cabinet have the power to declare war and carry out military actions; however, unless there are circumstances that require an immediate military response due to the security of the country, permission is usually granted from the Commons and the Crown. In this case, the declaration and specific military actions must be outlined in detail in a cabinet directive. A simple majority from the House of Commons, and the agreement of the Crown (represented by the back room) is all that is required for military action and declaration of war

## **Crisis Staff and Secretariat**

This section is not meant for delegates, although those of you who are interested in the inner workings of the committee are welcome to read it. Delegates and Speakers for the House of Lords **must have significant parliamentary and/or MUN experience** as a majority of the debate is under the control of the Lords (Peers) rather than the Speaker.

Please note that all pages, backroom (except the crisis director) and frontroom staff for UKPC must go through preliminary training by the secretariat in accordance with the latest full edition of the House of Commons and House of Lords Standing Orders and Procedures published by the United Kingdom Parliament, alongside the Crisis procedures and the structure of the British

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government, before they begin the committee session.

### **Team Organisation with only the House of Commons**

1. Speaker (Head Frontroom Chair)
2. Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Frontroom or Head Backroom Chair)
3. First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Frontroom or Backroom Chair)
4. Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Backroom Chair)
5. Crisis Director (Backroom)

### **Team Organisation with both Houses**

1. Speaker of the House of Commons (Deputy Head Chair)
2. Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Chair)
3. First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Chair)
4. Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Chair)
5. 2-4 Commons Clerk (Pages)
6. Speaker of the House of Lords (Head Chair)
7. Senior Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords (Deputy Chair)
8. 2-4 Lords Clerk (Pages)
9. Crisis Director (Backroom)

Do note that this committee requires a minimum of three chairs for the committee, with only the House of Commons, and 6 chairs for committees with the addition of the House of Lords. In the lead-up to the conference, the secretariat and chairs must prepare the following:

### **Room Arrangements**

Make sure to arrange the seatings to be accurate to the Houses of Parliament with regards to the Speakers and clerks, the position of the dispatch boxes, and the position of the various political parties, depending on the changes relevant to the period. Please also ensure that there is a throne placed in the House of Lords for the crown to sit during crises and enough space to house the MPs from the House of Commons.

### **Placards**

The Placards must have the name of the Member of Parliament, the County or State name and any governmental role, for example, Shadow Secretary or Treasurer. Meanwhile, the placards for the front and backroom chairs are to be named after their official names within the House of Commons (except the Crisis Director).

### **Crisis Scenarios and Scope**

You must work out not only which crises you are discussing, but also how long they are and when they will be implemented in normal debate. Will they be implemented regardless of the progress on the topics, or only if debate is slow or there are successful bipartisan efforts with no

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resistance? This also includes working out how much real time per in-crisis day you are allocating (for example, three crisis hours equals one real hour). It goes without saying that the committees should be decided here as well.

### **Directive Submission Method**

Possibly the next most important aspect of Crisis is sending directives. The method for delegates submitting their directives to the backroom must be efficient and easy to track. American conferences favour a paper system, which can work but may result in lost directives. A proven method used in THAIMUN is Google Forms, where delegates fill in the type of directive (a multiple-choice option) and the content of their directive (a long-form answer box). If using a Google form, remember to record the sender's username so you know who it came from.

### **Presentation Method**

The crisis element of the UKPC would be pointless if the delegates could not see what effect their actions have on the world. The delivery of both global and cabinet-specific crisis updates must be considered. The most low-tech and usually most amusing option is for crisis staff to act out the crisis update to the cabinets, temporarily taking the role of some other character. Alternatively, an update can be written out by the backroom and read out to the cabinet by the chairs or, as the most high-tech option, a web page set up where delegates can access the crisis updates. Tumblr has also been used in the past.

For events and actions relating to amendments made by the House of Lords, the Clerk of the House of Commons (represented by one of the backroom staff) will deliver the message. You can use this as a reference: [https://youtu.be/piFc2klH\\_h0?si=xc17zbNZZ-I8ktk3](https://youtu.be/piFc2klH_h0?si=xc17zbNZZ-I8ktk3) (House of Commons) or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsVZiZBMHbM> (You can also use this House of Lords tongue twister style but remember to change the terminology to Commons).

For events and actions relating to the Crown, a message must first be sent by Black Rod (played by a backroom staff or crisis actor) to send the message to the Commons, and it is within tradition that MPs or staff slam the door shut in front of Black Rod prior to being let in to invite the MPs to hear the address of by the monarch. Do note that the door used for the entry of the Black Rod and the entry of any staff or MPs of the House of Commons must use the door on the side of the MPs. Please also note that when the Crown wants to address the Commons, MPs must move **to a different room that houses or in place of the House of Lords**, as the monarch entering the Commons will be treated as a violation of the House's independence. Please use this as a reference: [https://youtube.com/shorts/MFeWrI\\_9eSw?si=uGPVds5M7IA9-Pty](https://youtube.com/shorts/MFeWrI_9eSw?si=uGPVds5M7IA9-Pty).

## **Creditories:**

*Much thanks must go to the following people, without which the development of this Handbook and the committees would not have been possible.*

### **Resources used:**

The House of Commons Standing Orders

The House of Lords Standing Orders

The HCC Rules of Procedure

The THAIMUN X UKPC Rules of Procedure and Guidebook

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmstords/so-1932-23102023/so-2023i.pdf>

[https://www.parliament.uk/contentassets/33b6064aa92f4ee883c8876a5c36687e/hoc\\_2023\\_rules\\_of\\_behaviour\\_and\\_courtesies-nov-2023.pdf](https://www.parliament.uk/contentassets/33b6064aa92f4ee883c8876a5c36687e/hoc_2023_rules_of_behaviour_and_courtesies-nov-2023.pdf)

<https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/publications-records/house-of-lords-publications/rules-guides-for-business/companion-to-standing-orders/companion-to-standing-orders-2025.pdf>

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/house-of-lords-publications/rules-and-guides-for-business/>

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