

# *User guide for Q&A System*

**Revised March 2018**

**For Live Q&A System Version 2.5**

**User Guide Version 1.4**



**This user guide provides procedural and practical guidance on the submission of Written Answers, Corrections and Written Statements to both Houses. Updates to the user guide will be issued from time to time, reflecting any changes to rules and practices in one or both Houses.**

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

1	Aim of this User Guide .....	6
1.1	The Q&A Application .....	6
1.2	Procedural and stylistic information in the user guide .....	6
1.3	Accessing this user guide.....	7
1.4	Accessing the live and test versions of the Q&A system .....	8
1.5	Logging in to the Q&A system.....	8
2	Q&A System accessibility.....	9
2.1	Zoom.....	9
2.2	Tooltips.....	9
3	Navigating to different parts of the system .....	10
4	Viewing the home page for your Answering Body .....	12
4.1	Sorting questions: .....	12
4.2	Filtering questions: .....	12
4.3	Filtering by House .....	12
4.4	Filtering by Status: questions can be filtered by the following statuses: .....	13
4.5	Filtering by Question Type .....	14
	PROCEDURE: Filtering by Question Type in the Commons.....	14
	PROCEDURE: Filtering by Question Type in the Lords .....	14
4.6	Filtering by Date for Answer.....	15
	PROCEDURE: Date for Answer in the House of Commons.....	15
	PROCEDURE: Date for Answer in the House of Lords.....	15
4.7	Filtering by Tabling Member.....	16
4.8	Filtering by Corrections.....	17
4.9	Filtering by Flag .....	17
5	How can I download the electronic files of Written Questions?.....	18
6	Answering a question in the Q&A system.....	24
	PROCEDURE: Target dates for the submission of Commons Answers .....	24
	PROCEDURE: Deadlines for the submission of Lords Answers .....	24
	Searching by UIN (Unique Identifying Number) .....	25
	PROCEDURE: Answers—form and style in the Commons .....	26
	Stylistic rules for answers submitted in the House of Lords.....	27
	PROCEDURE: Stylistic rules for Lords Answers.....	27
	PROCEDURE: Formatting of Commons Answers .....	29
	PROCEDURE: Formatting of Lords Answers.....	29
	PROCEDURE: Sending Answers to Members of the House of Lords .....	34
7	Adding an attachment to an answer .....	35

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

PROCEDURE: Attachments and deposits in both Houses .....	35
PROCEDURE: Attachment formats, names and descriptions in both Houses .....	36
8 Grouping questions for answer .....	38
PROCEDURE: Grouping in the Commons.....	38
PROCEDURE: Grouping in the Lords .....	38
9 Submitting a holding answer – House of Commons only.....	40
PROCEDURE: Holding answers in the Commons .....	40
PROCEDURE: Holding answers in the Lords .....	40
10 Corrections to answered questions.....	41
Introduction.....	41
House of Commons Procedure for corrections .....	41
PROCEDURE: Corrections in the House of Commons.....	41
House of Lords Procedure for corrections.....	43
PROCEDURE: Corrections in the House of Lords .....	43
Submitting a correction .....	44
Navigating to a previously answered question .....	44
Send a note to the Parliamentary Gatekeeper .....	44
Making the proposed changes to the answer.....	45
Reverting to original text for a returned correction .....	48
Filtering for corrected answers.....	49
Overview of corrections.....	50
User privileges and corrections .....	50
Correction statuses .....	51
Gatekeeper responses to correction requests .....	52
11 Transfers .....	53
12 User management .....	55
13 Written Statements.....	59
Summary of key points .....	59
PROCEDURE in Summary: (Both Houses): .....	59
Navigating to the written statements page.....	60
Viewing, filtering and sorting written statements on the list page.....	60
Sorting .....	61
Filtering .....	61
Submitting a statement through the Q&A system .....	64
PROCEDURE: Notices of written statements in the Commons .....	64
PROCEDURE: Timing of the submission of written statements in both Houses.....	64

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

PROCEDURE: Timing of the release of written statements to key stakeholders and the press when issuing a written statement in both Houses .....	64
PROCEDURE: Market sensitive written statements in the Commons .....	64
PROCEDURE: Titles of written statements in the Commons .....	66
PROCEDURE: Titles of written statements in the Lords.....	66
Documents relating to a written statement .....	69
PROCEDURE: Attachments and deposits relating to written statements in both Houses .....	69
Deposits in the Library should be made in the following circumstances:.....	69
Terminology relating to attachments and deposits.....	69
Uploading attachments .....	70
PROCEDURE: Attachment formats, names and descriptions in both Houses .....	70
Submitting a statement which corrects a previous answer .....	71
Submitting a statement which corrects a previous statement.....	73
Making the statement in the other House .....	74
Submitting a Written Statement: Checklist.....	75
Correcting a written statement .....	76
PROCEDURE: Corrections to written statements (Commons) .....	76
PROCEDURE: Corrections to written statements (Lords).....	76
Making an editorial correction to a statement (HoC only) .....	76
Gatekeeper review of written statements.....	78
PROCEDURE: Gatekeeper review of written statements (both Houses) .....	78
If the Gatekeeper returns a statement.....	78
Referring to a previous written statement .....	78
14 Performance management and reporting .....	79
14.1 Performance management and reporting in the House of Lords.....	79
14.1.1 The list page—quick-view flags in the Lords.....	79
14.1.2 The Excel download—detailed performance management and record keeping in the Lords .	80
Using Excel functionality to filter, sort and analyse your questions and answers .....	82
14.2 Performance reporting in the House of Commons.....	83
14.2.1 The “target date” calendar for ordinary Questions .....	84
14.2.2 The Gatekeeper’s performance report for ordinary questions—detailed performance management and record keeping in the Commons .....	85
14.2.3 Reporting to the Procedure Committee.....	86
15 Prorogation .....	87
16 Glossary of terms used in this user guide.....	88
17 Queries/problems with the system .....	89

Before contacting us about a problem with the system, please make sure you are in a position to tell us: ..... 89

## 1 *Aim of this User Guide*

This guide is intended for users in Answering Bodies who are using the Q&A system to view or download written parliamentary questions, to submit answers to the questions and to submit the text of written statements. This guide explains how to use the system and it also includes important procedural guidance from the two Houses.

### *1.1 The Q&A Application*

The Q&A web application allows you to enter answers manually into the system through a web-page. The Q&A system has been developed to work with IE8 or above and this is the recommended browser. As a minimum the system will work with IE7 although the look and feel may be cosmetically affected. The Q&A system can also run on Firefox and Chrome, if you have access to these. Some ABs are using the API to link their own in-house systems directly to the Q&A system but the rules and procedures apply to both the Q&A application and the API – for queries on the API - <mailto:wqaapi@parliament.uk>.

### *1.2 Procedural and stylistic information in the user guide*

This document includes information about procedure, practice and rules in each of the two Houses. It is important to remember that the system is slightly different in the two Houses. The *main* differences are:

- **The role of the Gatekeeper:** in the House of Lords, the gatekeeper **will review every answer as well as** every proposed correction to an answer (see [page 26](#)).
- In the House of Commons, the Gatekeeper **will only review corrections**.
- In the Commons the Vote Office publish Written Statements (they can be contacted on 0207 219 3631). The Table Office review corrections to Written Statements.

**Paper copies of answers and wet signatures:** The Leader of the House of Lords has asked that all Departments continue to send signed paper copy answers to Lords Members who ask questions. This particular requirement is an internal government requirement and queries about it should be directed to the office of the Leader of the House of Lords. Departments must still submit answers and corrections in the Q&A system to ensure they are published on the Q&A web pages. Some Members of the House of Lords have chosen to also receive answers by e-mail.

Members of the House of Commons receive their Written Answers by e-mail. These e-mails are generated by the Q&A system when you submit an answer. You are not required to send paper copies of answers to Commons Members. **You need only submit answers in the Q&A system.**

There are many other subtle but important differences between the two Houses and we therefore set out information about procedure and practice in each House in separate and clearly identifiable text boxes throughout this user guide. The text in these boxes has been provided in collaboration with the Table Offices in the two Houses and will be updated in the event of any future procedural changes.

Procedural guidance for the House of Commons is displayed in green boxes.

Procedural guidance for the House of Lords is displayed in red boxes.

Bicameral procedural guidance is displayed in blue boxes.

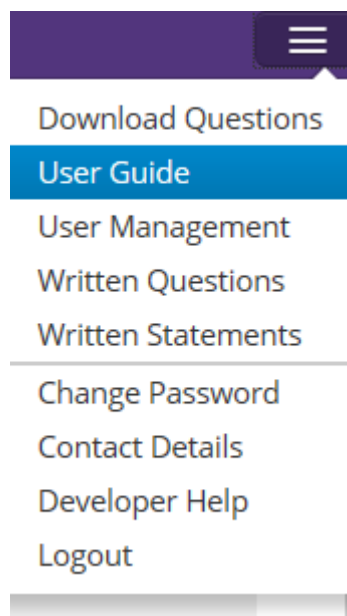
**It is essential that you pay very close attention to the procedural and stylistic information in the user guide, particularly if you are a new member of staff who has not previously used the system.**

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## 1.3 Accessing this user guide

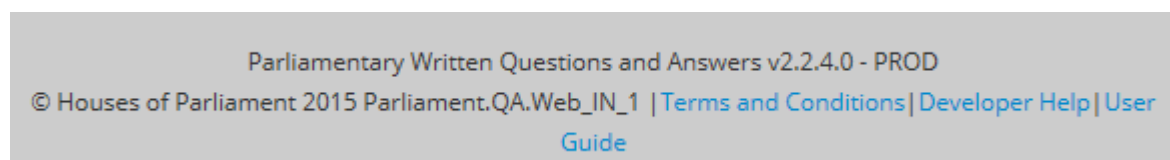
The latest version of this user guide is available from the Q&A web application. You can access the guide from the menu button in the top right hand corner of each page:

Figure 1: Downloading the user guide from the menu button



You can also access this guide from the 'User Guide' link at the bottom of each page:

Figure 2: Downloading the user guide from the link at the bottom of the page



If you have any problems with, or questions about, the Q&A system in the House of Commons, please contact the House of Commons gatekeeper on [tableoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:tableoffice@parliament.uk) or phone **020 7219 3731** (please only phone in an emergency). **Please refer to chapter 17 of this user guide first to make sure your problem is not already covered here.** When emailing include screenshots as appropriate.

If you have any problems with, or questions about, the Q&A system in the House of Lords, please use the following contact details:

***For questions about dealing with members, transfers or the content of questions:***

HL Table Office: 020 7219 3036 or [minute@parliament.uk](mailto:minute@parliament.uk)

***For questions about the gatekeeper role***

By e-mail: [QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk](mailto:QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk)

By phone: 020 7219 1596

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *1.4 Accessing the **live** and **test** versions of the Q&A system*

You can access the **live** Q&A system by following the link below:

<https://wqa.parliament.uk>

You can access the **test** Q&A system by following the link below (including the functionality for Written Statements), the Q&A test system is also referred to as 'UAT' (User Acceptance Testing):

<http://wqatest.parliament.uk>

Please bookmark these web pages by adding them as 'favourites' in your internet browser or add them as shortcuts to your desktop.

The **live** site should be used exclusively for the submission of real, live answers and statements to Parliament.

The **live** site displays the following banner on every page:

LIVE SITE - ANSWERS SUBMITTED WILL BE SENT TO MEMBERS AND TO PARLIAMENT

The **test** site should be used for training new users.

The **test** site displays the following banner on every page:

USER TESTING SITE - ANSWERS WILL NOT BE SENT TO MEMBERS OR TO PARLIAMENT

## *1.5 Logging in to the Q&A system*

Use your username and password to log into the system. This should be entered in the boxes provided on the left hand side of the login page, under the heading 'Login with E-mail and Credentials' (see figure 3).

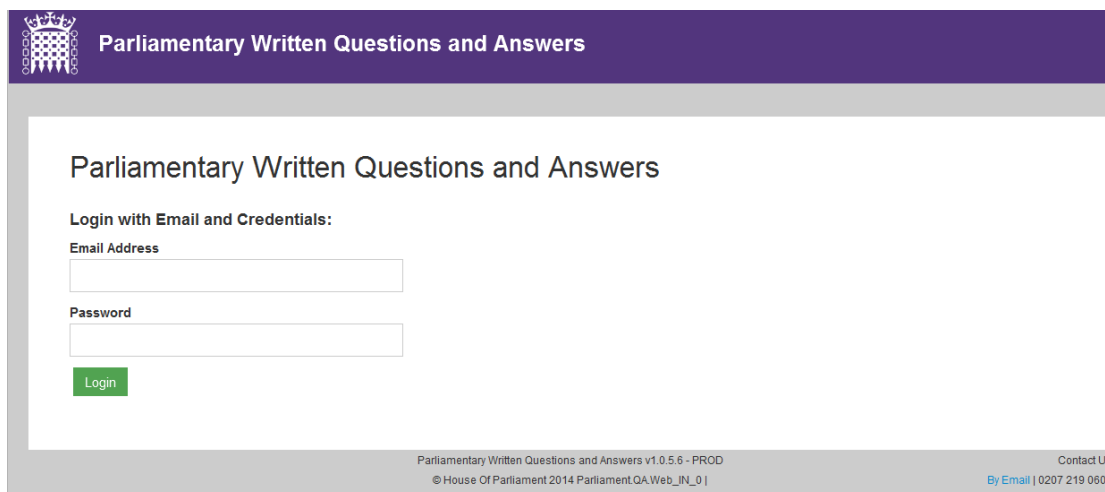
'Super Users' in each Answering Body will be responsible for managing the accounts of other users within their own organisation, including setting up new accounts. When a new account is created, the system will automatically generate a temporary password and send it to the new user via e-mail. The temporary password is valid for 7 days (but only for 48 hours after a password has been re-set).

Passwords must be 6 or more characters and must contain numeric as well as lower and upper case letters. **Accounts will be locked after three failed password attempts.** Passwords must be different from the previous six passwords used. Passwords will automatically expire and must be changed every three months. Passwords can be changed by clicking on the menu icon in the top right hand corner of the screen and selecting 'Change Password'.

In the Q&A system, access to questions, pages and functionality depends on the permissions assigned to the individual user. Passwords should remain confidential and should not be shared with other colleagues. Users will be automatically logged out of the system after 60 minutes of inactivity. Nonetheless, for security reasons, users should always log out of the system if they leave their desk.



**Figure 3: Login page for the live Q&A System**

The screenshot shows the login page for the Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers system. At the top, there is a purple header with the Royal Coat of Arms on the left and the text "Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers" on the right. Below the header, the main content area has a white background with the title "Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers" in a large, bold font. Underneath the title, it says "Login with Email and Credentials:". There are two input fields: "Email Address" and "Password". Below the "Password" field is a green "Login" button. At the bottom of the page, there is a small footer with the text "Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers v1.0.5.6 - PROD", "© House Of Parliament 2014 Parliament.QA.Web\_IN\_0 |", and a "Contact Us" link with the text "By Email | 0207 219 0600".

The 'Gatekeepers' will be responsible for liaising with the 'Super Users' in the Answering Bodies, including setting up and maintaining accounts for 'Super Users'.

If you have any problems accessing the site, please contact the Gatekeepers:

Commons gatekeeper email: [wpq.hoc.gatekeeper@parliament.uk](mailto:wpq.hoc.gatekeeper@parliament.uk) and [tableoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:tableoffice@parliament.uk) or phone: 020 7219 3731.

Lords gatekeeper: e-mail: [QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk](mailto:QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk), or phone: 020 7219 1596.

## 2 *Q&A System accessibility*

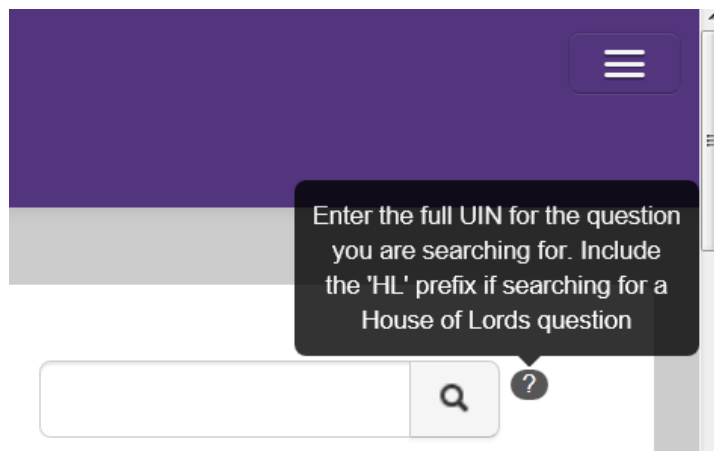
### *2.1 Zoom*

Users can use the zoom functionality (available on most browsers) to change the size of the font and objects on the page. Hold down the 'Ctrl' key and roll the mouse wheel up to increase the size of objects and font size or roll the mouse wheel down to decrease it.

### *2.2 Tooltips*

The system has 'tooltips'—small black buttons with question marks—next to some buttons or links. If you hover over or click the 'tooltip', text will be displayed to explain the corresponding button or link it is next to.

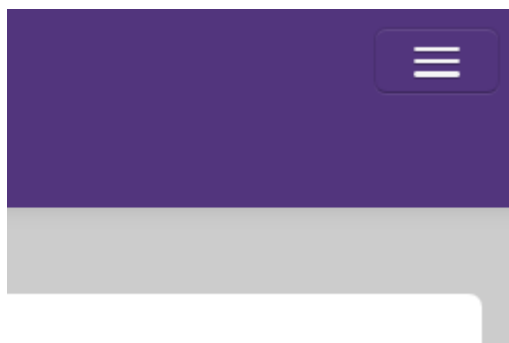
**Figure 4: Example of a tooltip**



### 3 *Navigating to different parts of the system*

Once you have logged into the Q&A system, you will see a menu button in the top right hand corner of the banner bar.

**Figure 5: Menu button**



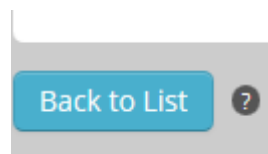
Hovering the mouse pointer (cursor) over this menu button will display a roll down menu containing a number of options depending on the level of access you have. You may have to click on the menu button to lock it and make it easier to see and choose options.

Answering Body Super Users will have access to the 'User Management' pages—further information on this can be found in [Chapter 12](#).

To navigate to a particular page click on the menu button and then click on the item you want—this will take you to the relevant page in the system.

Clicking on the 'Portcullis' in the top left hand corner of any page will take you to your home page – the list of Questions for your organisation. Using this function will reset any filters you might have used previously. If you wish to preserve the filter settings used previously, you should use the 'Back to List' button to return to your home (list of written questions) page.

**Figure 6: Portcullis at top of page and back to list at bottom of page**



## 4 Viewing the home page for your Answering Body

The home page lists all the written questions for your organisation from Members of either House, including unstarred questions, orals not reached and questions that have been transferred to you. You can only view and answer the questions that have been tabled (or transferred) to your Department. The Q&A system only contains questions from the current Session.

**At the end of each parliamentary Session, all the question and answer data will be removed from the Q&A system and archived.** However, questions and answers will still be published permanently on the parliamentary website ([www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers](http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers)).



### 4.1 Sorting questions:

You can choose the order in which questions are displayed by clicking on the heading at the top of each column. For example, if you want to sort the questions by the date on which they were tabled, click on the heading 'Tabled Date'. If the small arrow is pointing downwards, the questions are displayed with the most recent first. If you click on the heading again, the order is reversed. You can follow the same process to sort the columns by UIN (Unique Identifying Number), House, Member, Question Type, Tabled Date, Date for Answer, Status, Answered Date or Flag.

**Figure 7: Example of an Answering Body home page**

Displaying results 1 to 20 of 413



<< < 1 2 3 4 5 > >>

UIN	House	Member	Question Type	Tabled Date	Date for Answer ▼	Status	Answered Date	Flag
219201	HoC	Sir Greg Knight	Named Day	17 Dec 2014	12 Jan 2015	Tabled		 
To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the extent of worn and faint road markings on (a) zebra crossings and (b) elsewhere; and what assessment he has made of t...								
218863	HoC	Mr David Blunkett	Named Day	15 Dec 2014	05 Jan 2015	Tabled		 
To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to the Answer of 8 December 2014 to Question 216761, what assessment he has made of the effect on Northern Rail of Government plans for the Tra...								

### 4.2 Filtering questions:

The list of questions can be filtered by using the filter options at the top of the page.

**Figure 8: Filter on the home (list of questions) page**

Written Questions   

To filter items select from the following options:

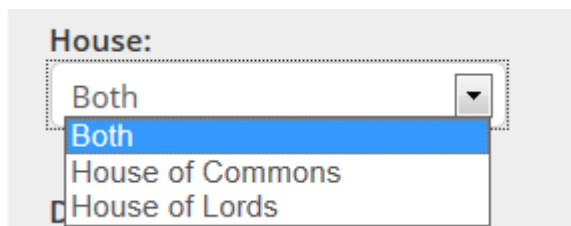
House: <input type="text" value="Both"/>	Type: <input type="text" value="All"/>	Tabling Member: <input type="text"/>
Date for Answer: <input type="text"/>	Status: <input type="text" value="Tabled"/>	Answered within the last: <input type="text" value="All"/>
Corrections Only <input type="checkbox"/>		

### 4.3 Filtering by House

You can choose to filter by House—select which House you want from the drop-down menu and then click on the 'Filter Questions' button.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 9: Filtering by House



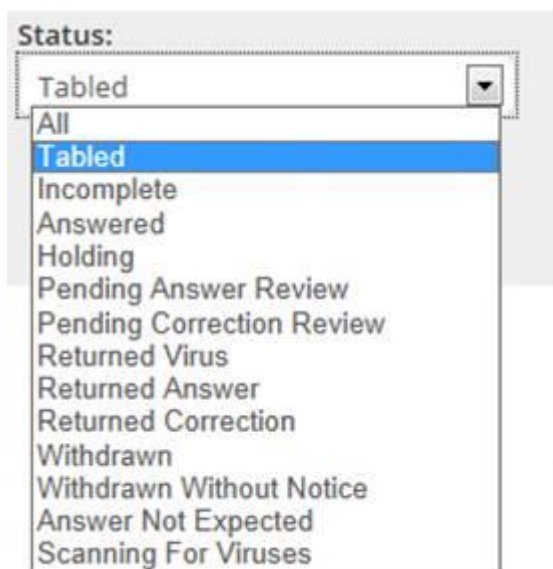
## 4.4 Filtering by Status: questions can be filtered by the following statuses:

- **All**—all questions;
- **Tabled**—questions submitted by Members but not yet answered (note: this is the default status applied to the filter, which means that when you first log in or 'reset filters', the list of questions displayed will only be those with the status of 'Tabled');
- **Incomplete**—questions where a draft answer has been saved but not submitted to Parliament;
- **Answered**—questions which have been answered and submitted to the Member;
- **Holding**—(Commons questions only) questions where a holding answer has been submitted;
- **Pending Answer Review**—(Lords questions only) questions for which an answer has been submitted and the Lords Gatekeeper is reviewing the answer (note: all Lords questions will go to this status when an answer is submitted, when the House of Lords Gatekeeper accepts the answer, the status will change to 'Answered' and the answer will be sent to the Member);
- **Pending Correction Review**—a correction has been submitted to an answer previously made. It is now awaiting review and clearance by the relevant Gatekeeper;
- **Returned Virus**—questions for which an answer has been returned to your Department because an attachment has failed the virus scan (note: the answer will need to be resubmitted with a new acceptable file in order for the answer to be successfully submitted to Parliament);
- **Returned Answer**—(Lords questions only) questions which have been answered but the Lords Gatekeeper has returned them to your department (note: there will be an indication of why the answer was returned on the system and in an e-mail notification);
- **Returned Correction**—a correction which has been reviewed by the Gatekeeper who has identified a problem with it. The Gatekeeper will always provide a reason for the rejection so you can take the relevant action;
- **Withdrawn**—questions withdrawn by Members;
- **Withdrawn without notice**—(Commons questions only) questions withdrawn for administrative reasons, usually duplicate questions, or withdrawn after the date for answer;
- **Answer not expected**—(Commons questions only) questions where the Member has instructed the Table Office that an answer is not expected; and
- **Scanning for viruses**—questions where an attachment to an answer is in the process of being scanned for viruses (note: the virus scanning service runs every minute so questions will not remain in this status for long).

If you want to filter by status, select the status you want in the relevant drop-down menu and then click on the 'Filter Questions' button.

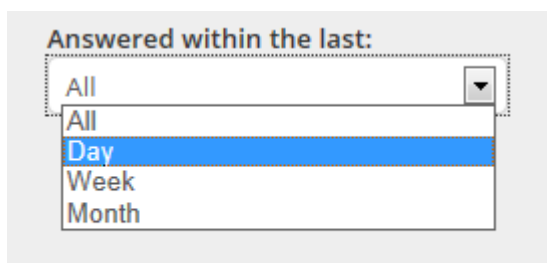
# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 10: Filtering by the status of questions



If you select the status 'Answered', it is also possible to use an additional filter so that you see questions answered in the last day, week or month. This enables you to see quickly which questions have recently been answered. Click on the relevant drop-down menu and then click the 'Filter Questions' button. Please note that 'day' includes both the current day and the previous day and 'week' includes both the current day and the previous week.

Figure 11: Menu for filtering by answered within the last...



## 4.5 Filtering by Question Type

### PROCEDURE: Filtering by Question Type in the Commons

There are two types of Questions in the House of Commons:

**Ordinary Questions** are normally expected to receive an answer within five "working days" of the date for answer. Refer to the calendar of target dates issued to Super Users by the Table Office.

**Named Day Questions** must receive an answer on the date specified by the Member tabling the question, although a holding answer may be given and a more substantive answer submitted at a later date.

### PROCEDURE: Filtering by Question Type in the Lords

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

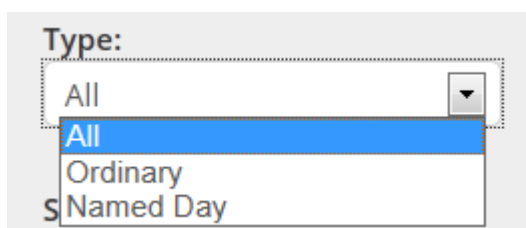
All Lords WPQs are of the same type ("ordinary") so filtering by question type is not applicable in the Lords.

Questions can be filtered by the following types:

- **Any**—all questions;
- **Ordinary**—ordinary written questions (Commons) and all questions (Lords); and
- **Named Day**—questions due to be answered on a Named Day (Commons only).

Select the type of questions you want in the drop-down menu and then click on the 'Filter Questions' button.

Figure 12: Menu for filtering by type of question



## 4.6 Filtering by Date for Answer

**PROCEDURE: Date for Answer in the House of Commons** This is the first day on which the Question *could* be answered. It is not the deadline for answering the Question.

It is the expectation that Ordinary Written Questions are answered within five "working days" of the date for answer.

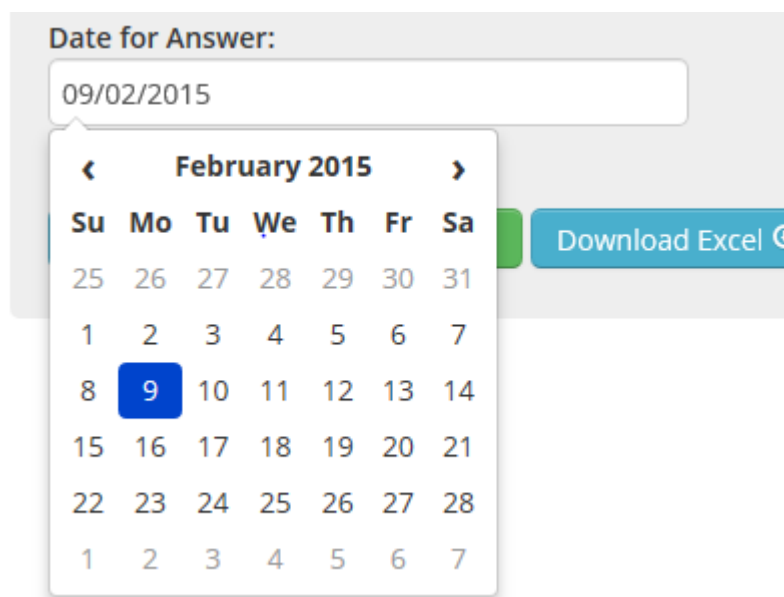
**PROCEDURE: Date for Answer in the House of Lords** refers to the actual deadline for answering the question. This is ten working days after the date of tabling.

You can choose to filter by the date for answer<sup>1</sup>—select which date you want from the calendar and then click on the 'Filter Questions' button.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please note the different meaning of the Date for Answer in the two Houses. This is set out in the procedural boxes above.

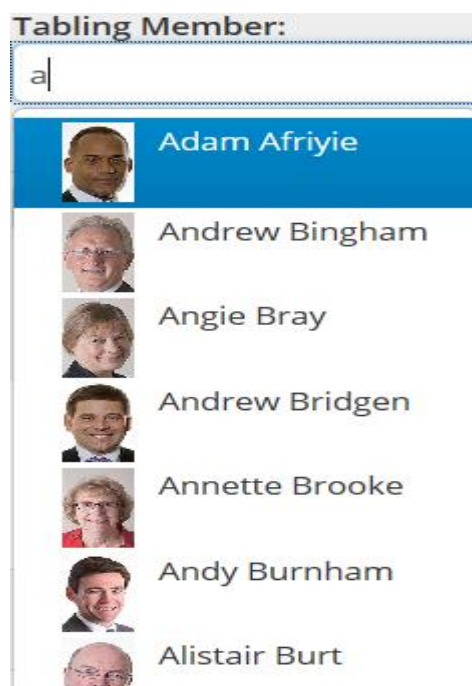
Figure 13: Calendar for filtering by Date for Answer



## 4.7 Filtering by Tabling Member

You can also filter the questions by the name of the Member of either House who has tabled the question. This will list questions which have been tabled by a particular Member. If you start to type the name of the Member in the 'Tabling Member' box, a roll-down list will appear. Click on the name of the Member you want to select and the name will appear in the box (note: you may have to double click on the Member in order for your selection to 'stick'). Then click on the 'Filter Questions' button and the questions will be filtered by Member.

Figure 14: Filtering by the name of the Member who has tabled the question





## 4.8 Filtering by Corrections

Answering Bodies are required to submit corrections to answers through the Q&A System, as outlined in [chapter 10](#). If you want to filter questions which have had an accepted Ministerial Correction (House of Commons) or Correction (House of Lords) applied to their answer, then you can tick the checkbox

Corrections Only ☐

'Corrections Only' and apply the filter (note: only questions in 'Answered' status will have a correction). Editorial corrections, pending corrections and returned corrections will not be included in the displayed list.

You can also use a combination of these filters to refine the questions displayed even further. If you want to remove the filters, click on 'Reset Filters'.

## 4.9 Filtering by Flag

Answering Bodies may find it helpful to filter by flag in order to see which Lords questions have been answered late or which Commons Named Day questions have been answered late. This functionality does not apply to Ordinary Written questions in the Commons. Further details on reporting functionality can be found in [chapter 14](#).

## 5 *How can I download the electronic files of Written Questions?*

Many Answering Bodies will want to download each day's questions in a format similar to that provided previously by TSO.

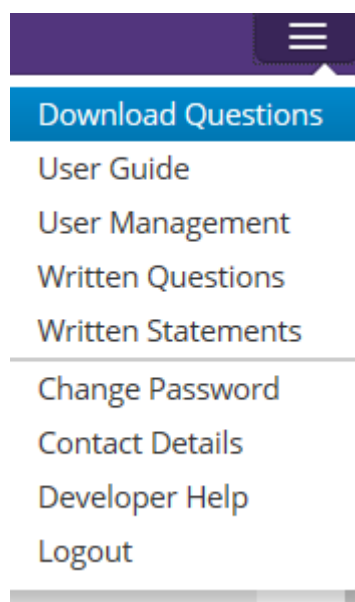
To download the electronic file of questions for either House, there are a number of steps to follow:

***Step 1 – Click on the Menu button in the top right hand corner of the page***

Click on the menu button (rather than just hovering over it) to select an item from the dropdown menu.

***Step 2 – Highlight 'Download Questions' at the top of the dropdown menu and click***

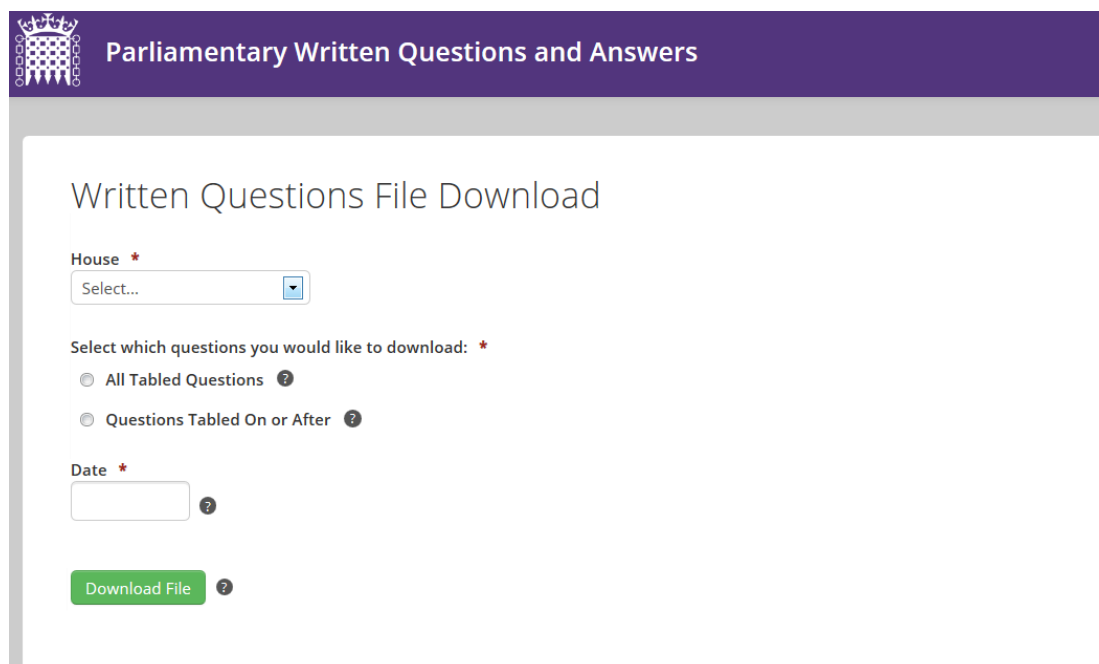
Figure 15: Going to the Question File Download page



***Step 3 – You will see the following page:***

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 16: The Question File Download page



Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## Written Questions File Download

House \*

Select...

Select which questions you would like to download: \*

☐ All Tabled Questions ?

☐ Questions Tabled On or After ?

Date \*

?

?

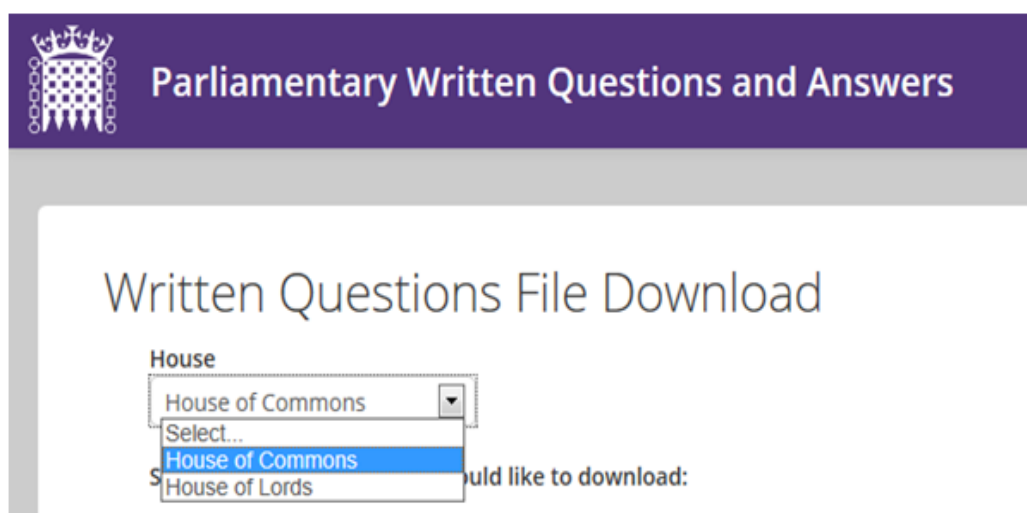
### ***Step 4 – Select which House to download the questions for***

You now have two options under the 'House' heading.

Click on the arrow in the box next to 'Select'...

Select either 'House of Commons' or 'House of Lords' (figure 17).

Figure 17: Selecting the relevant House



Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## Written Questions File Download

House

House of Commons

Select...

House of Commons

House of Lords

Select which questions you would like to download:

### ***Step 5 – Select which questions you would like to download***

You now have two options.

Using the radio buttons, select either:

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

1. 'All Tabled Questions'—this will download all written questions for your organisation which have been tabled in the current Session of Parliament for which no answer has been submitted (Figure 18)—or,
2. 'Questions Tabled On or After' a particular date—this will download all written questions for your organisation, tabled on or after a date of your choice (provided it is in the current Session of Parliament). This is useful if you just want to download the most recent questions (Figure 19) e.g. you may wish to download questions from the previous sitting day on a daily basis. The second step required here is:
  - a. Click on the 'Date' field and, in the drop-down calendar, select the date from which you wish to download questions (Figure 20).


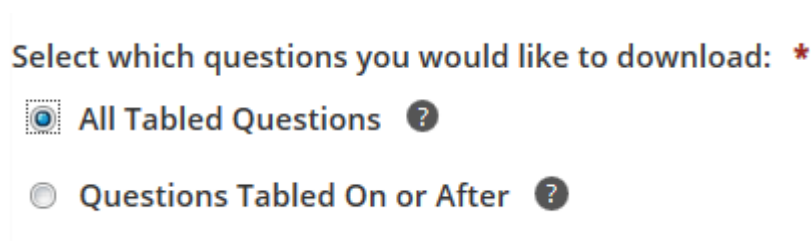

Hovering over the tool-tip  symbol will give you more information about the available functions.

Figure 18: Selection of All Tabled Questions



Select which questions you would like to download: \*

☒ All Tabled Questions 


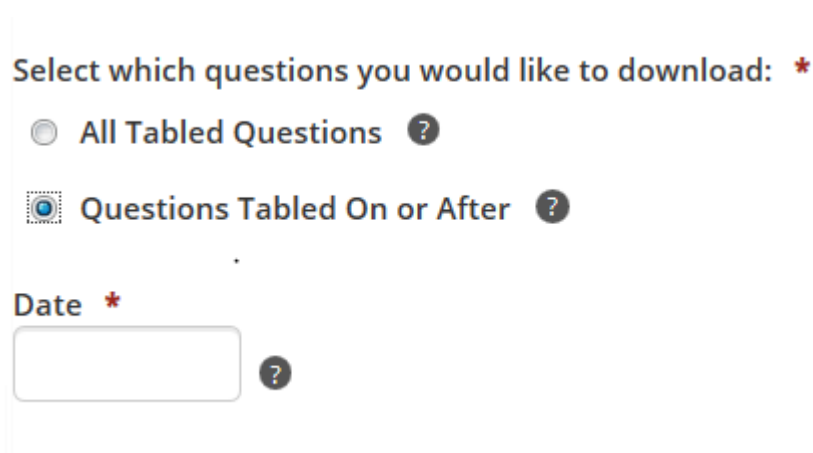


☐ Questions Tabled On or After 

Figure 19: Selection of Questions Tabled On or After



Select which questions you would like to download: \*

☐ All Tabled Questions 

☒ Questions Tabled On or After 

Date \*




Figure 20: Dropdown calendar for selecting date

☐ Questions Tabled On or After ?

Date \*

09/02/2015 ?

<

February 2015

>

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Step 6 – Once the options have been selected, click on the green ‘Download File’ button**

Figure 21: the ‘Download File’ button



At the bottom of the page a box will appear giving you three options (Figure 22):

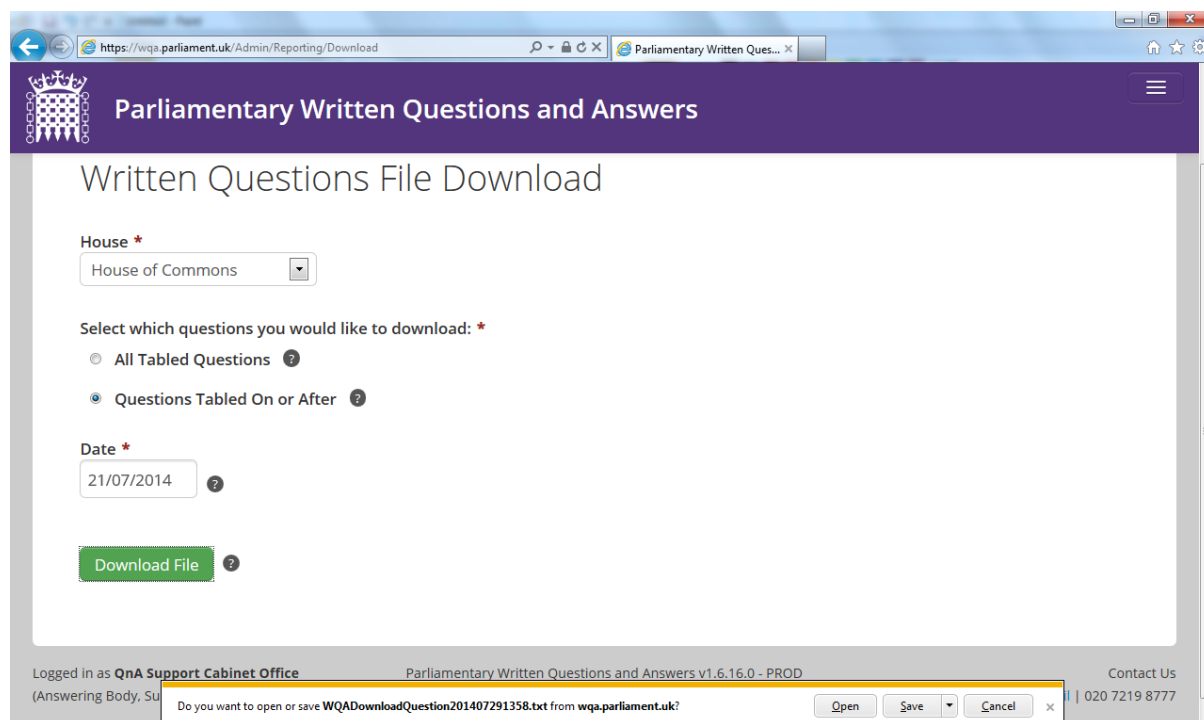
Click ‘Open’—if you want to open the document before saving it (Figure 22)

Click ‘Save’—if you want to save this document (Figure 22)

Click ‘Cancel’—if you want to go back and select different options.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

**Figure 22: Options to 'Open' 'Save' or 'Cancel' the file with your date selection**



## ***Step 7 – Open or save this document to your shared drive***

You can open the file before saving it to your shared drive by clicking on the 'Open' button.

Or, you can save the Question Download File without opening the file. By clicking on the arrow in the box next to the 'Save' button; a menu will appear giving you two options (Figure 23):

**Figure 23: Saving the file**



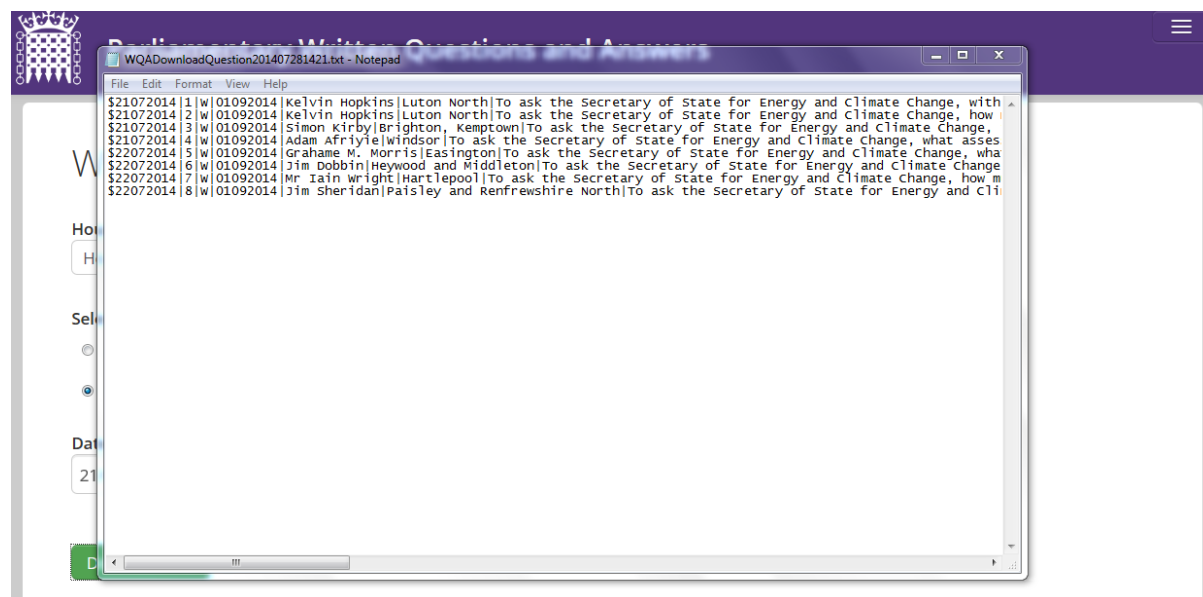
Click 'Save' if you want to save the file into your default location/folder (determined by your computer settings).

Or click 'Save as' if you want to navigate to a specific location or folder i.e. a Shared Drive folder, to save this file in. You will also have the opportunity to change the name of the file at this stage.

The questions are provided in Notepad and should look like this (Figure 24):

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 24: The saved Questions Download File



## 6 Answering a question in the Q&A system

### PROCEDURE: Target dates for the submission of Commons Answers

**Ordinary Questions:** Procedure Committee guidance is that Members “*should receive an answer within five working days, and certainly no later than ten working days.*”<sup>2</sup>

The five and ten day target dates for ordinary questions are calculated on the basis of the **date for answer**—the first day you are allowed to answer the question. **The Date for Answer is day 1** when you count and all working days—sitting or non-sitting—count towards the target date.

The cut-off times for the submission of answers on sitting, non-sitting or recess days are:

Monday to Thursday—6.00 pm sharp

Fridays—3.00pm sharp

Answers submitted after 6 pm / 3pm will be counted as submitted on the next working day for reporting purposes (sitting or non-sitting day) and they will be included in the next issue of the Daily Report.

Please see [Chapter 14](#) for further guidance on target dates and reporting for ordinary questions in the House of Commons.

**Named Day Questions** must receive an answer on the date specified by the Member tabling the question, although a holding answer may be given and a more substantive answer at a later date. Only Sitting Days can be “Named Days”.

**Earliest date for answer:** It is not possible to submit House of Commons Written Answers before the ‘Date for Answer’. This applies to both ‘Ordinary’ and ‘Named Day’ questions. The system will allow you to enter an answer, save it in draft (‘Incomplete’) status and preview it in the PDF before the ‘Date for Answer’, **but you will not be able to submit the answer until the ‘Date for Answer’ has been reached.**

### PROCEDURE: Deadlines for the submission of Lords Answers and Written Ministerial Statements

Answers must be supplied within ten working days of the question being tabled.

**Sitting Days:** The deadlines for the submission of Written Answers and Written Ministerial Statements sitting days are:

Monday to Thursday—6.00 pm sharp

Sitting Fridays—3.00pm sharp

**House of Lords Recess and Non-sitting Fridays:** A Gatekeeper will be on duty on each working day of recess. Deadlines for submission of Written Answers and Written Ministerial Statements originating in the House of Commons in recesses and on non-sitting Fridays are:

---

<sup>2</sup> Procedure Committee, July 2009; Third Report of Session 2008-09, para 94



## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Monday to Thursday—5.00 pm sharp

Fridays (Non-sitting / recess)—3.00pm sharp

### The only exceptions to these deadlines are:

Christmas Eve—12 noon

New Year's Eve—12 noon

Answers submitted after the cut-off time on any given day working day will be counted as submitted on the next working day for reporting purposes and they will be included in the next issue of the Daily Report of Answers.

You can use the filters on the home page to find the relevant question. Then click on the UIN of the question you want to answer. The UIN is in a blue font and is on the left hand side of the page.

**Figure 25: Example of question on home page with blue UIN link**

UIN ▼	House	Member	Question Type	Tabled Date	Date for Answer	Status	Answered Date	Flag
219569	HoC	Jonathan Ashworth	Ordinary	18 Dec 2014	05 Jan 2015	Tabled		- 
To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff were employed in his Department on 1 January 2015.								

Click on the 'UIN link' for the question—this will take you to the 'answer page' for this particular question. This is the page on which you will enter and save the answer before submitting it to the Member and to Parliament.

### *Searching by UIN (Unique Identifying Number)*

Or, if you want to search by the UIN of the question, enter the full UIN (including the HL prefix for a House of Lords question) of the question that you want to answer in the box in the top right hand corner of the page. Then either press 'Enter' or click on the magnifying glass button and this will take you to the 'Answer page' for this particular question.

**Figure 26: Box for searching by UIN**

On the 'Answer page' you have the option of finding out more about the Member who has tabled the question. Click on the blue 'Member's name link' and this will take you to the biography of the Member on the Parliament website.

Figure 27: Example of Member's name link

## Written Question



Member

[Jonathan Ashworth](#)

Constituency

Leicester South

### PROCEDURE: Answers—form and style in the Commons

#### Answers

The substance of the answer must be typed or pasted into the answer text box. It should never simply be attached.

Letters from other parties such as an NDPB or a Minister in another Department should either

1. be pasted into the answer box in full, preceded by a suitable introduction, or
2. uploaded as attachments PROVIDED that a suitable introduction has been pasted into the Answer box. The text in the Answer box should be as self-contained as possible.

#### Length of answers

There is no limit on the length of a Written Answer in the Commons. However, the Answer should be focused on the Question asked and not contain extraneous material which is not directly relevant to the Question.

#### Forms of address

Where fellow Ministers are referred to in an answer, this should be in the third person, with their correct honorific and title and also by constituency—and name, if there is more than one Minister with the same title. Ministerial titles should match the List of members of the Government, published at the start of every Hansard volume.

Eg: my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary; my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General; the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Broxtowe (Anna Soubry).

#### Cross-referencing

**To refer to an answer already given and already published:**

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

"I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 14 October 2014 to Question UIN [insert UIN and link it to the answer found on the Q&A web pages on <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers> ]..."

Please do not link to the daily rolling Hansard as the link is only valid for one day.

### **To refer to another answer submitted less than 90 minutes and not yet published:**

"I refer the hon. Member to the answer I have given today to Question UIN [*Insert UIN*]."

### **To refer to documents attached to the Answer:**

"The attachment [name] contains..."

When one or more documents are attached, their content should always be explained in the main body of the Answer.

### **To refer to deposited papers:**

"The tables have been placed in the Library/Libraries of both Houses."

### **Holding answers**

If a substantive answer cannot be submitted within the expected timeframe, a Holding Answer can be submitted though the special Holding Answer tick box described in [Chapter 9](#).

## *Stylistic rules for answers submitted in the House of Lords*

### **PROCEDURE: Stylistic rules for Lords Answers**

#### **Answers**

The substance of the answer must be typed or pasted into the answer text box.

All answers should be substantive, make sense without reference to further material and not rely purely on a weblink. The only exception to this rule would be if the question asked whether a certain document has been published and what it had said.

A weblink can be included in Written Answers to Lords PQs as extra information but the relevant document(s) has to be included additionally as an attachment as links may break in the future.

Answers will not be edited or proof read for errors but will be rejected if they do not follow the guidance in this guide.

In May 2014 the House of Lords agreed the following guidance for answers to written questions:

*Only substantive answers to questions are admissible. Except where due to shortage of time answers cannot be prepared in response to questions tabled within five working days of the end of a Session, holding answers are not permitted.*

*Answers should not exceed 500 words, though the Editor of Debates has discretion to exceed this in exceptional cases.*

*Answers should be complete and comprehensible and should not rely on references to external documents or web pages.*

*Up to three electronic attachments can be included with any answer. In the interests of long-term accessibility, supporting documents should be included as attachments, rather than by means of*

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

*hyperlinks (which may break in the future). Electronic attachments will be published on the parliamentary website but will not be printed in Hansard (the Library will print attachments on demand).*

*Electronic attachments should be referred to in the substantive answer so that readers of paper copy know that they exist. A note indicating where readers can find the additional material will be inserted in the printed text of Hansard.*

*Tables will be printed only if submitted in such formats as are approved from time to time by the Editor of Debates. Tables not in approved formats can be included as one of the electronic attachments.*

*Visual material such as graphs, charts or maps may be included in an electronic attachment.*

**Holding answers** are not allowed except where, due to shortage of time, answers cannot be prepared in response to questions tabled within five working days of the end of a Session.

**Tables**—Tables are accepted if they can fit into two columns of Hansard. Tables should be no more than 6 columns wide. If a table contains lengthy text, the columns will expand and be too wide for print purposes so please rebalance the table and ensure that it remains readable. The format of tables should be as simple as possible.

On the 'Answer page' you can answer this particular question by completing the 'answering Minister/Member' and 'Enter answer text' fields (see figure 28).

You need to enter the name of the Minister/Member who is answering the question in the 'Select answering Minister/Member field' below the question. When you start typing in this field, a roll-down list of Members appears. This is a full list of Members but the Ministers for your department will be highlighted in bold. Click on the name of the relevant Minister (or Member) in the list. In the Lords the name selected must be the name of the Minister or Whip who signed the paper copy answer.

For a basic answer, you can copy and paste text straight into the 'Enter answer text' field. The buttons along the top of the 'Enter answer text' field allow you to format the text in various ways.

It is also possible to upload an attachment if you want to provide additional information (for details on how to do this please see [chapter 7](#) of this user guide) or to group a number of questions together with one answer (for details on how to do this please see [chapter 8](#) of this user guide).

Figure 28: Example of test answer

## Written Answer

Group questions for answer (*skip this step if not applicable*) ☐ ?

Select answering Minister/Member \*










Mr Francis Maude

Tick if Holding Answer ☐ ?

Enter answer text \*

**B** *I*

- ☰

1  
2  
3         

Example of test answer.

### PROCEDURE: Formatting of Commons Answers

- The use of bold, italics and underlining is permitted, but should be used sparingly. It should not be used for an entire answer;
- Bullet points are permitted;
- Footnotes are permitted;
- Acronyms should be expanded at the first mention to avoid confusion.

#### Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks should be used sparingly and should always be active so that Members and other readers can click through to the relevant website. You should be mindful of hyperlinks' limited "shelf-life" and usefulness in the long term. Guidance on creating live links can be found below.

### PROCEDURE: Formatting of Lords Answers

- The use of bold, or italics, is not permitted.
- Bullet points should not be used but indents may be used.
- Footnotes are allowed.
- Acronyms should be expanded for the first reference to avoid confusion.

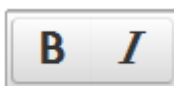
## Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks should only be used to add value by directing readers to the same content as is available in an attachment. In such cases the answer should explain that the web link is just another way to access the information in the attachment.

It is now possible to format the text in the 'Enter answer text' field by using the buttons.

Highlight the text and then click on the relevant button:

**Figure 29: Buttons for formatting text in bold or italics**



click on the first button for bold, the second button for italics

**Figure 30: Buttons for formatting text in bullet points or a numbered list**



click on the first button for bullet points, the second button for numbering

**Figure 31: Button for inserting a hyperlink into the answer**



click on this link if you want to insert a hyperlink.

You will then see a box (figure 32) which gives you the option of copying and pasting a URL straight into the top field and text in the middle field if you want text to be displayed (such as the name of a document) rather than the full URL. If you do not want different text in the middle field, the URL will automatically appear in that field as well.

Click 'OK' to save this and to return to the 'Enter answer text' field.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 32: Fields for inserting a hyperlink into the answer

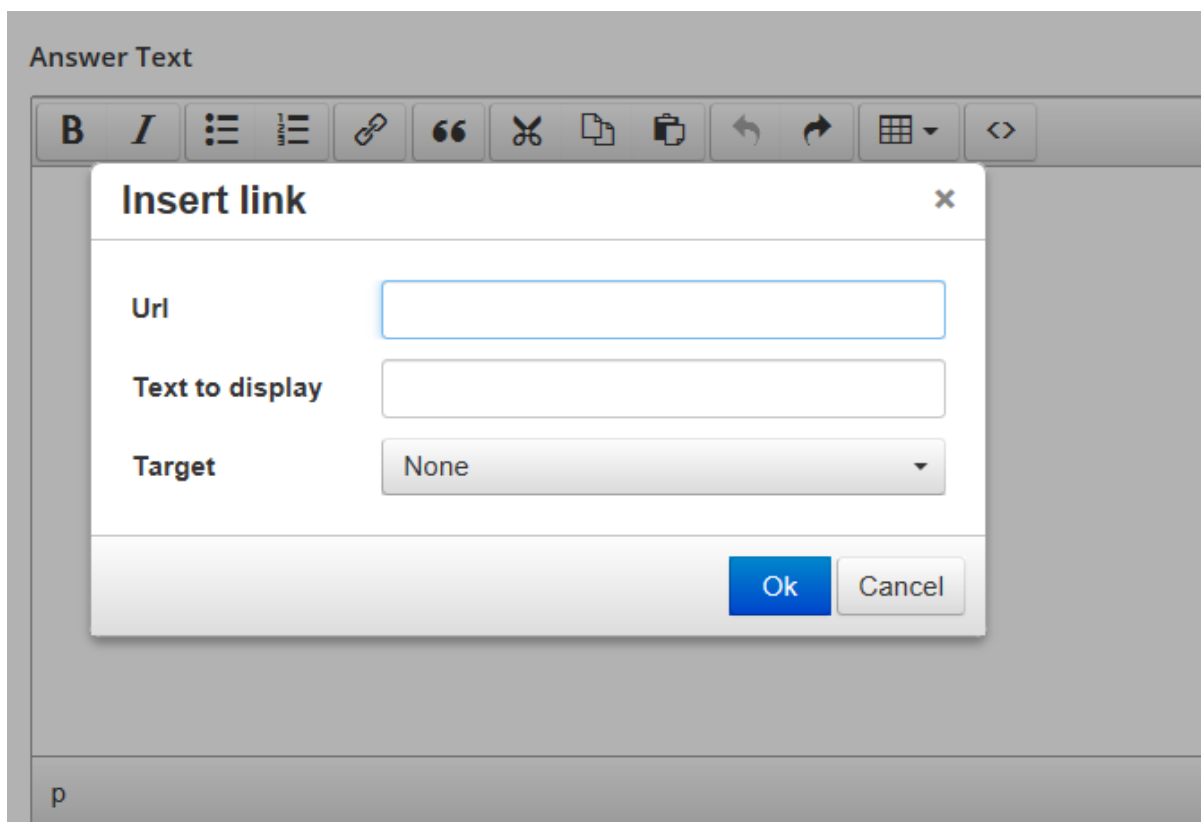


Figure 33: Button for indenting text for a quote



click on this button to indent text for a quote

Figure 34: Buttons for cutting, copying and pasting



click on these buttons to cut, copy or paste text

Figure 35: Buttons for undoing and redoing



click on the first button to undo any action, click on the second to reverse the action

You can insert a small table by clicking on the table button. This provides various options for inserting a small table in the 'Enter answer text' field. You can also copy and paste in small tables directly from Microsoft Word or Excel. Large tables or more complex tables can be uploaded as attachments (see [Chapter 7](#) of this User Guide.)

Highlight the number of rows and columns that you need for your table. This will create a table in the 'Enter answer text' field. The 'Cell', 'Row' and 'Column' menu can be used to edit the table by actions such as deleting rows or adding columns.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 36: Button for inserting a small table

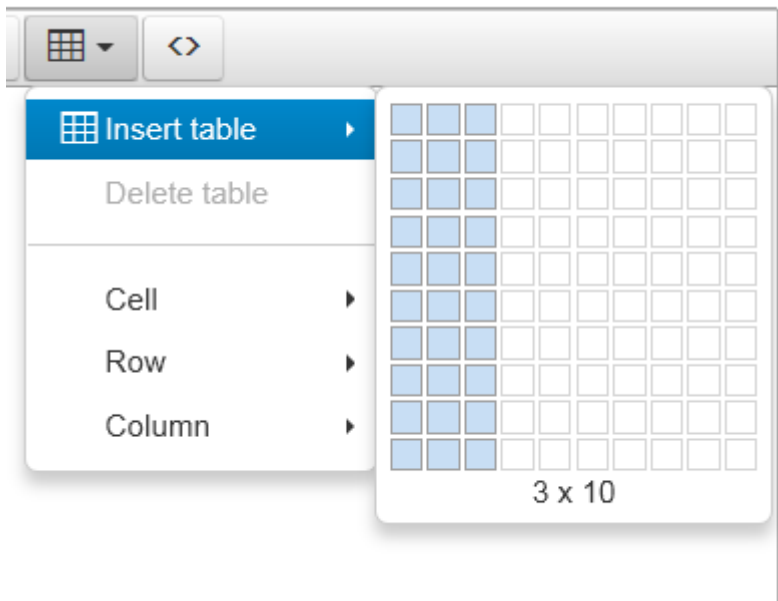



Figure 37: Button for displaying the source code



The final button opens a new window—this shows the source code for the text in the 'Answer Text' field. This gives you an alternative way of editing and formatting the text in the 'Enter answer text' field.

Figure 38: Example of basic test answer without formatting

Written Question



Member	UIN	Question Type	Tabled Date	Date for Answer	House	Status
<a href="#">Jonathan Ashworth</a>	219569	Ordinary	18 Dec 2014	05 Jan 2015	HoC	Tabled
Constituency Leicester South	To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff were employed in his Department on 1 January 2015.					

Written Answer

Group questions for answer (skip this step if not applicable) ☐ ?

Select answering Minister/Member \*

Tick if Holding Answer ☐ ?

Enter answer text \* ?

**B** *I*

- ☰
- ☷

Example of test answer.

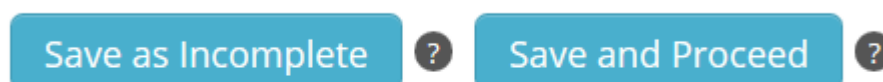


## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

At the bottom of the page you can choose between clicking on 'Save as Incomplete'—if you wish to continue working on the answer before finalising it—or clicking on 'Save and Proceed' if you wish to go to the 'Answer Preview page'. If you click on 'Save as Incomplete' the next page will also give you the option of clicking on 'Discard Draft Answer' if you decide to remove all the text and start again.

You will also notice that the system will reformat the entered text and tables into a standardised format. Some inadmissible formatting and styles may be removed and the text and table row/column widths may be resized so answers will display in a consistent format for publishing.

**Figure 39: Buttons for saving the answer**



The 'Answer Preview page' will allow you to check that the answer is correct before submitting it to Parliament and the Member.

**Figure 40: Page for previewing the answer**


### Answer Preview

**Jonathan Ashworth:** To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office, how many staff were employed in his Department on 1 January 2015. [219569]


**Mr Francis Maude:**  
Example of test answer.

Select the document to print or download this saved answer to check how it will look in hard copy 

[<< Edit Answer](#) 

[Submit Answer](#) 



You must check how the answer will look when it is printed out by clicking on the  button. This is particularly important if the answer text includes a table. You will need to check that the table is displaying correctly. You may decide to upload the table as an attachment if it isn't. If, having previewed the answer, you identify any changes required (e.g. if you have noticed any errors or would like to delete tables that do not preview adequately and attach them as documents instead), then you can click on the '<<Edit Answer' button to go back to the previous answer page and you can make your changes accordingly on the 'Answer page'.

Once the answer has been signed off by the Minister and you have checked the final text on the 'Answer Preview page' and on the PDF, you can submit it to Parliament—including the Tabling Member—by clicking on the 'Submit Answer' button at the bottom of the page.

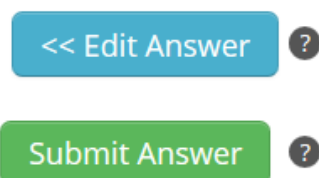
**In accordance with House of Commons procedure, ABs will not be able to submit House of Commons questions before the 'Date for Answer'. This applies to both 'Ordinary' and 'Named Day' questions. The system will allow you to enter an answer, save it in draft ('Incomplete') status and preview it in the PDF before the 'Date for Answer', but you will not be able to submit the answer until the 'Date for Answer' has been reached.**

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 41: Button for previewing the answer in a PDF

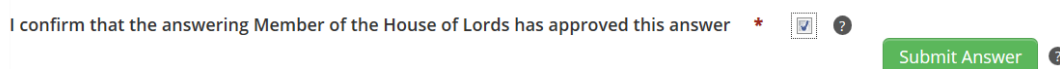
Select the document to print or download this saved answer to check how it will look in hard copy 

Figure 42: Buttons for editing or submitting the answer



For questions in the Lords you will need to tick a box confirming that the answering Member has approved this answer—before clicking on 'Submit Answer'.

Figure 43: Confirming that the Lords answering Member has approved this answer



The Q&A system will immediately e-mail the answer to the Member who tabled the question (for the Commons) or will send the answer to the Lords Gatekeeper for review. The Gatekeeper in the House of Lords can either return the answer, in which case the Answering Body will have to re-submit it, or they will accept the answer, in which case the Q&A system will immediately e-mail the Lords Member who tabled the question. After the answer has been sent to the Member via e-mail the Q&A system holds the answer for 30 minutes before automatically publishing the answer in full on the Parliament website. **Once the answer has been submitted/accepted it cannot be 'stopped' before it is published on the Parliament website. The only way to correct the answer once the 'Submit Answer' button has been clicked is to submit a correction to the answer.**

## PROCEDURE: Sending Answers to Members of the House of Lords

**Confirmation of Ministerial approval of the answer** — Civil servants should ensure that Ministers have seen and signed a paper version of each answer and should tick the onscreen box to confirm this before submission to the House through the Q&A system.

**The Leader of the House of Lords (a Cabinet Office Minister) has asked that all Lords Ministers continue to sign paper copies of answers and that these signed copies are sent by Departments directly to the relevant Member. This is a within Government requirement and not a requirement of the Q&A system. The House does not wish to receive signed copies of answers in any format. Queries about this requirement should be directed to the office of the Leader of the House of Lords.**

The status of the question is changed to 'Answered' (or 'Pending Answer Review' for a Lords question) in the Q&A system and you will see a confirmation message at the bottom of the page.

Figure 44: Confirmation message at bottom of page

• Your answer has been submitted.

## 7 *Adding an attachment to an answer*

### **PROCEDURE: Attachments and deposits in both Houses**

#### **Attachments—when to use them?**

Subject to the principles set out below, documents that form part of the Answer should be attached to the Answer in the Q&A system rather than being deposited in the Library wherever possible. This means that the documents will be available to the Member when they receive their Answer by e-mail and they will be directly visible and available to anyone browsing the Q&A publications page on the web.

When you are uploading attachments which have not been produced by the Government or by Parliament, please ensure that you are not infringing copyright.

#### **Attachments should be used in the following circumstances:**

1. one or more large tables do not fit in the Answer box, or they format incorrectly on the preview page or in the pdf;
2. some element of the answer cannot be pasted into the answer box – e.g. graphs, maps or other graphic material, and
3. You need to submit additional information, such as a report that you might, in the past, have deposited in the library.

#### **Deposits in the Library should be made in the following circumstances:**

There are still a small number of situations when you need to “deposit” documents for a Written Answer in the Library:

1. If a Minister has made an explicit commitment to “deposit” a document in the Library;
2. If there is some other obligation or commitment specifically to “deposit” a document;
3. The total size of documents that you wish to attach exceeds 12MB;
4. More than three documents need to be submitted with an Answer.

If you deposit documents, you do not need to *also* attach them to the Answer.

Please refer to the document “Rules for depositing papers in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords”.

**Note:** Library deposits of other documents, not related to Written Answers, remain unchanged. For the rules on Attachments submitted with Written Statements see [chapter 13](#).

The Q&A system gives Answering Bodies the opportunity to provide additional information or data in the form of an attachment. Attachments should never be used for the actual text of an answer —this should always be entered into the ‘Enter answer text’ field on the ‘Answer page’.

If you wish to upload an attachment, tick the box shown (figure 45).

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 45: Choosing to upload attachments

Attach files to submit for publication with this answer (*skip this step if not applicable*)



You will then see these extra boxes and buttons on the 'Answer page' (figure 46). Clicking on the 'Browse' button opens a file search window and you can attach a file from your network drive or paper drive to the answer.

Figure 46: Uploading attachments

Attach files to submit for publication with this answer (*skip this step if not applicable*)



1. File	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Description *	<input type="text"/>
2. File	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Description *	<input type="text"/>
3. File	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Description *	<input type="text"/>

## PROCEDURE: Attachment formats, names and descriptions in both Houses

### Attachment formats

Word documents should be saved in .doc format and Excel spreadsheets should be saved as .xls format. This is because .docx and .xlsx are not compatible with older versions of Microsoft Office.

Acceptable attachment file types are: pdf, doc, docx, xls, png, jpg, xlsx

**Do not use the file type odt. Open document file types are not compatible with the Q&A system.**

### Attachments: descriptions of contents

It is compulsory to enter a description of each attachment in the 'Description' field. The description should describe the content of each file accurately and comprehensively so that Members and the public are able to understand easily what information is contained in the attachment.

### Attachments: file names

The filenames of attachments should be meaningful to Members and the public. Remember they are sent to the Member and published on the internet.

Descriptions of attachments and filenames should not have spaces—use underscores or hyphens instead. The reason is that indexing and search work better if there are no spaces in filenames.

The Q&A system will automatically scan attachments for viruses. But please ensure you do not upload files that are unclean or corrupted, we assume all Answering Bodies will have their own virus protection built into their IT systems. If the file is not acceptable, the Q&A system will not accept the answer (which will then set to the 'Returned Virus' status) and you will be notified of the virus scanning failure by e-mail.

Once you have uploaded an attachment, you can choose to click on 'Save as Incomplete'—if you wish to continue working on the question before finalising it—or to click on 'Save and Proceed' if you wish to go to the 'Preview answer page'.

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

The virus scanning process can take up to one minute to complete. During the time the system is scanning for viruses, the status of the question will be set to 'Scanning for Virus' and the attachment will display in black text and cannot be opened by clicking on it. When virus scanning is complete, the document will appear in blue text (you may have to refresh the screen) and will be clickable (you may wish to open the attachment on the preview page to ensure that you have attached the correct file).

**Figure 47: Reviewing or removing your attachment**



If you want to review the attachment, click on the attachment once the virus scanning is complete. You can review the attachment on the 'Answer Preview page' or you can click on the 'Edit Answer' button to go back and review it on the 'Answer page'. Click on the attachment link (in figure 47) and then click 'Open' at the bottom of the page. The attachment will open and you can check that it is correct. If you decide to remove the attachment, then tick the box next to 'Remove' and then click either 'Save as Incomplete' or 'Save and Proceed'.

If you are happy with the answer and the attachment, you can now submit the answer text and the attachments to Parliament by clicking on the 'Submit Answer' button on the 'Preview Answer page'.

If you later discover that you have forgotten to attach the relevant attachment, you will need to submit a correction for the Gatekeeper to review.

## 8 *Grouping questions for answer*

### **PROCEDURE: Grouping in the Commons**

Written questions on the same subject may be grouped and given a single comprehensive answer.

Ordinary Questions and Named Day questions can be grouped for answer, so long as they have all reached or passed their Date for Answer.

#### **Holding replies and grouping:**

Questions to which you have previously submitted a holding answer can be included in a grouped answer when the substantive answer is submitted.

It is not possible to submit holding replies to groups of questions. Holding replies have to be submitted individually.

#### **Correcting an answer to grouped questions:**

It is not possible to submit one correction for a number of grouped answers. **Each individual answer requires a separate correction.** If only one corrected answer is submitted to a group you will be contacted by the Gatekeeper and requested to upload the corrected answer to each question in the group.

### **PROCEDURE: Grouping in the Lords**

Written questions on the same subject, asked by the same Member, may be given a single comprehensive answer.

It is not possible to submit one correction for a number of grouped answers. Each individual answer requires a separate correction.

If you want to group a question with other questions, you can tick the box (in figure 48) above the 'Select answering Minister/Member' field.

**Figure 48: Choosing to group questions for answer**



**Group questions for answer (*skip this step if not applicable*)**



You will then see a field in which you can enter the UINs of the other questions you wish to group together with the question selected (see figure 49). If entering multiple UINs, you should separate each by a comma. There is no limit to the number of questions that can be grouped in this way. After the UIN(s) have been entered, click on the 'Update Grouped Questions' button. The text of the other grouped questions will now be displayed. You can check whether you have entered the correct UIN(s). If you have made a mistake, tick the box next to 'Remove' and then click 'Update Grouped Questions' button.

**Figure 49: Field for grouping questions with one answer**

## Written Answer

Group questions for answer *(skip this step if not applicable)*  

### Select question(s)

Please enter the UIN(s) for the other question(s) you wish to group with the question above. If entering multiple UINs , separate them with a comma e.g. 12345, 67891, 23456.

Update Grouped Questions

You can then answer this group of questions by following the steps explained in [chapter 6](#).

## 9 Submitting a holding answer – House of Commons only

### PROCEDURE: Holding answers in the Commons

If a substantive answer cannot be submitted within the expected timeframe, a *Holding Answer* should be submitted through the special Holding Answer tick box described below. A substantive answer can then be submitted later. Holding answers are published on the Q&A web pages but not in the Commons Daily Report.

Holding Answers can be submitted in respect of 'Ordinary' as well as 'Named Day' Questions. The system generates a standard rubric for holding Answers.

### 'I Will write' answers—IMPORTANT

"I will write..." answers should **never** be used in cases where an answer simply cannot be provided within five sitting days—a holding answer is equivalent and should be used instead. If an "I will write..." answer is submitted in the system, it will **not** be possible to submit a substantive answer subsequently.

In a very small range of circumstances, a Minister may undertake to write to a Member when the information cannot be published, for reasons of data protection, for example, provided that no subsequent substantive answer needs to be submitted through the system. In such circumstances, an "I will write" Answer is appropriate.

### Holding answers and grouping

When holding answers are submitted, they cannot be grouped. However, the subsequent substantive answers can be grouped together even if one or more questions in the group previously had a holding answer.

### PROCEDURE: Holding answers in the Lords

Holding answers are not accepted in the House of Lords.

When a question has been tabled less than five days before the end of the Session it may not be possible to answer on time. This is the only case when a "holding answer" is permitted. The answer should say:

*"Due to shortage of time it has been impossible to answer this question before the end of the Session. The Minister will write to the Member in due course."*

If you tick this box and add the name of the Minister, you can submit the holding answer by clicking on the 'Save and Proceed' button and then clicking on the 'Submit Answer' button on the 'Preview answer page'. The system generates a standard text which is e-mailed to the Member.

### Figure 50: Standard text for holding answer

#### Answer text

The Cabinet Office has indicated that it will not be possible to answer this question within the usual time period. An answer is being prepared and will be provided as soon as it is available.

You can easily check which questions have been answered with holding replies by using the status filter on the home page. When you are ready to submit the substantive answer to this question, follow the steps explained in [chapter 6](#).



## 10 *Corrections to answered questions*

### *Introduction*

Answering Bodies should request all corrections to written answers through the Q&A System. Answering Bodies are responsible for marking up changes to answers using the styling functionality in the Q&A system, as outlined in this guide. All corrections will be reviewed by the Parliamentary Gatekeeper in the respective House and will either be 'accepted' or 'returned'. Only accepted corrections are published on the Q&A web pages [www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers](http://www.parliament.uk/writtenanswers).

### *House of Commons Procedure for corrections*

#### **PROCEDURE: Corrections in the House of Commons**

**Corrections to written answers must be submitted through the Q&A system. All corrections will be subject to Gatekeeper review. From 12 September 2014 corrections (editorial and Ministerial) will only be published on the new Q&A web pages.** Hansard will continue to print ministerial corrections to oral answers and contributions to debates. A written answer can only be corrected with a Ministerial correction once. If an answer has already been corrected through a Ministerial correction and the Answering Body requests a subsequent correction that is deemed to be more substantial than an editorial correction, then the correction will be returned and the Answering Body will be required to submit a Written Statement.

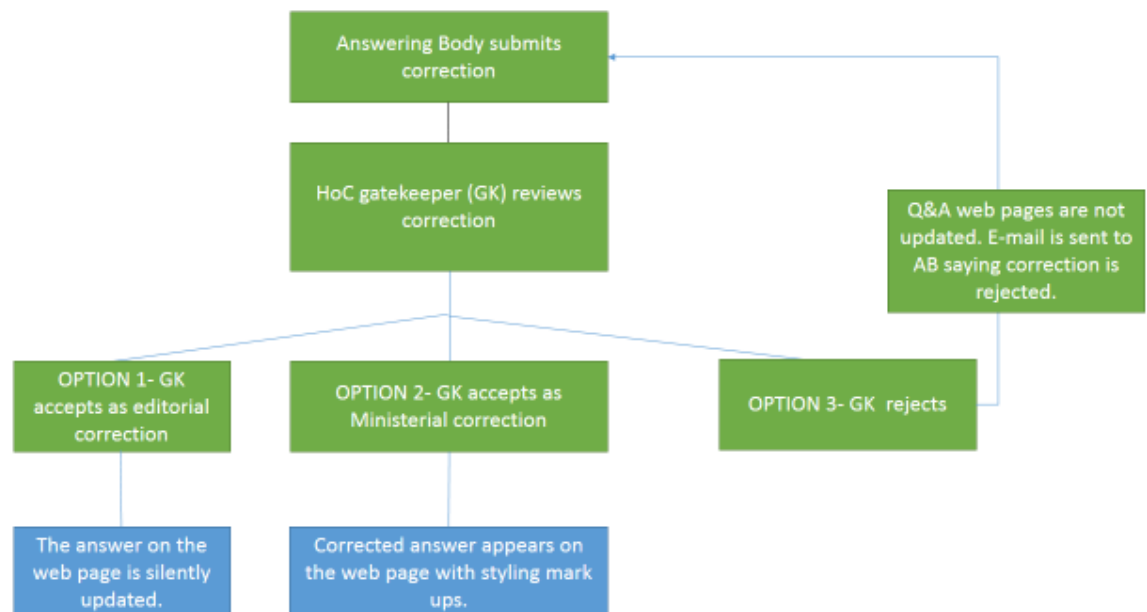
In the House of Commons, the Gatekeeper will determine the nature of the correction. There are two types of correction in the House of Commons:

- 1) **Editorial corrections:** If the House of Commons Gatekeeper accepts a correction as an Editorial correction, then the Q&A web pages will be silently updated. Members will not be notified of these changes. Such changes could include minor typing errors, a change to the name of the answering Minister, or small changes that do not alter the substance or meaning of the answer in any way. At the discretion of the Gatekeeper, it is technically possible to make multiple editorial corrections to an answer (though this is not desirable);
- 2) **Ministerial corrections:** if the House of Commons Gatekeeper accepts a correction as a Ministerial correction, the Q&A pages will be updated with the corrected answer with the changes highlighted with styling mark ups. Ministerial corrections are necessary when the meaning of an answer has changed, when figures given in the original answer have been found to be incorrect, and any other significant addition to an answer or removal of text has taken place.

Once a correction has been accepted as a Ministerial Correction by the Gatekeeper, **the Q&A system will automatically send the corrected answer to the Member via e-mail**. The correction will appear on the web pages about 45-90 minutes later.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 51: Overview of the corrections procedure for the House of Commons



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *House of Lords Procedure for corrections*

### **PROCEDURE: Corrections in the House of Lords**

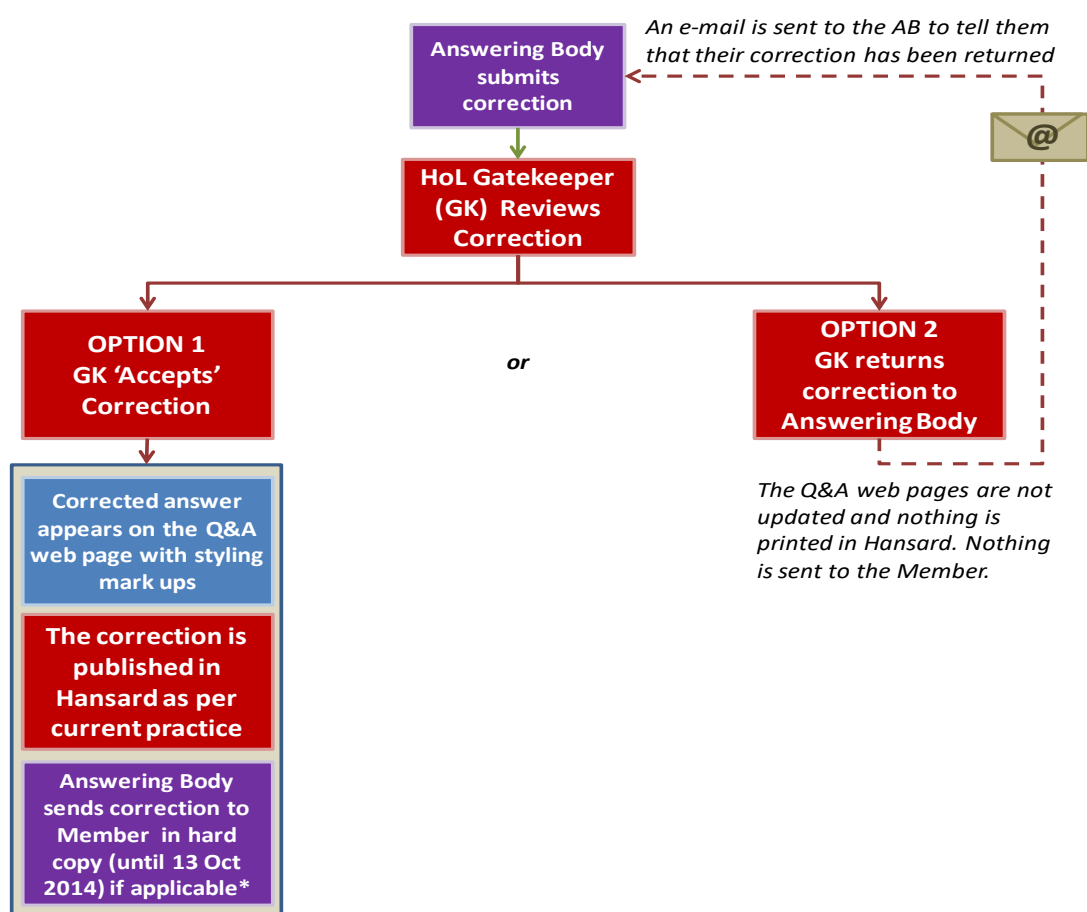
Corrections to written answers must be submitted through the Q&A system. All corrections, if accepted by the House of Lords Gatekeeper, will be published on the Q&A web pages.

If a correction is made to a grouped answer, answers need to be corrected and resubmitted separately on the Q&A system.

If a correction is accepted by the Lords Gatekeeper, then it will be published on the Q&A web pages with highlighting mark-up applied. The Member will also receive an e-mail from the Q&A system, notifying them of an accepted correction. In parallel, you should continue to follow guidance issued by the Leader of the House of Lords on sending paper copies of Answers and Corrections to Members.

A written answer can only be corrected once in the House of Lords. If an answer has already been corrected and the Answering Body wishes to make a subsequent correction, they will be required to submit a Written Statement.

**Figure 52: Overview of the corrections procedure for the House of Lords**



## *Submitting a correction*

This functionality should be used when a written answer to a question has been submitted (and also 'accepted' in the House of Lords) but a correction is later required. Only questions with an 'Answered' status can be corrected. Corrections can only be applied to an individual answer and cannot be grouped (even if the original answer was grouped).

## *Navigating to a previously answered question*

You can initiate a correction in two ways via your list page (just as you do when submitting an answer), either by searching for a question using the UIN search bar or by clicking on the UIN number in the column 'UIN' for the question that has the answer you wish to correct.

If you wish to make a correction you will need to click on the "Make Correction" button at the bottom of the main Question and Answer page:



The page expands so that the "Note to Gatekeeper" form appears at the top of the page. In the middle of the page you can see the "Corrected answer text" box, where you will mark up the correction.

## *Send a note to the Parliamentary Gatekeeper*

**This step is mandatory for all corrections.**

You should fill in your phone number in the 'note to the Gatekeeper' form. It is usually helpful for the Gatekeeper to understand the context behind the changes—especially when submitting corrections without much prior correspondence with the Gatekeeper. This note will NOT be published on the Q&A web pages, nor will it be sent to the Member. However, as it will still be seen by Parliamentary staff and processed via the Q&A system, please do not send sensitive information (or any information you would not want Parliament to see) through this note.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 53: Fields for sending a note to the Gatekeeper

Send a note to the Parliamentary Gatekeeper with the information required. This note will NOT be published or sent to the Member ?

Name *	<input type="text" value="SO User"/>	Team	<input type="text"/>
Contact Tel *	<input type="text"/>	Email address *	<input type="text" value="SO.User@parliamentqna.net"/>

Note to Gatekeeper

## *Making the proposed changes to the answer*

You will notice that the previously submitted answer will be pre-populated in the 'Corrected answer text' box. **It is important that you do not delete and replace (i.e. copy and paste over) this text with a new answer, unless the whole answer has changed.** You should only delete or add changes to the original answer text or delete or add attachments using the styling mark up icons in the answer toolbar. **Note: If you delete or add attachments, you should provide an explanation in the answer text providing context behind the attachment change.**

You will notice that there are three icons in the answer editor (that are not present when submitting an answer).



## **Deleting Text:**

- In the "Corrected answer text" field, highlight the text that you want to delete from the original answer and click on the red letter icon.



- **Do not simply delete wording from the answer text using your keyboard delete keys. The system will not allow you to submit the correction if you do. You must use the red letter icon to delete wording.**

## **Inserting Text:**

- Put the cursor where the new text should go and click on the green letter icon.




- If you are entering text after a deletion, you may need to click on the blank letter icon first (to reset the styling) before selecting the green letter icon.



- Alternatively, you can type corrected text into the corrections text box and then highlight it and apply the 'insert text' function on the tool bar – rather than selecting the 'insert text' function first.
- If you add wording in the text box you must highlight it with the green letter icon. If you do not, the system will not allow you to submit the correction.


# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## Undoing the removal of text:

- You can also use the blank letter icon to reset or unmark text you no longer want to mark as deleted from the original answer. Highlight the text that you had previously marked as removed (e.g. ~~Simple answer~~) and click on the blank letter icon. 
- To remove text you have added and highlighted with the green letter icon, simply select it and delete it using your keyboard delete keys.


## Adding a new attachment:

- You can add new attachments to the original answer in exactly the same way as you would when answering a question. Once you click the 'Save and Proceed' button, you will see the new attachment highlighted in green to indicate that it is a change to the original answer on the 'Correction Preview page'.

 2012 Autumn Statement (Time bullet.JPG)

## Removing an attachment:

- You can remove attachments that were on the original answer in exactly the same way as you would remove them before submitting an answer. You will not need to apply the styling icons to an attachment change because the system will automatically mark this up for you once you click the 'Save and Proceed' button. You will see the removed attachment highlighted in red to indicate that it is a change to the original answer on the 'Correction Preview page'.

 ~~Autumn Statement (tick.jpg)~~

## Changing the answering Minister/Member

- You can change who the answering Minister/Member is by selecting the new Minister/Member from the drop down. You will not need to apply the styling icons to an answering Minister/Member change because the system will automatically mark this up for you once you click the 'Save and Proceed' button. You will see the preview of the Correction showing the previously specified Minister/Member struck out and highlighted in red; and the new Minister/Member inserted and highlighted in green on the 'Correction Preview page'.

~~George Eustice~~ Mr David Cameron

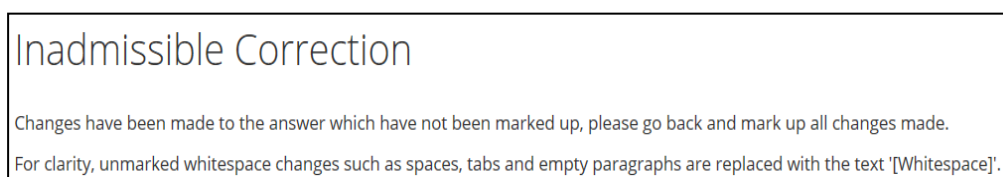
## Saving the corrected answer

- If you want to save the correction as a draft before submitting it or at any point when you are on the page, you can click on the 'Save as Incomplete' button. You will notice that an 'Undo Latest Changes' button will appear. Click this button if you want to discard your changes and revert back to the original answer (i.e. to start your correction from scratch).

## Previewing and submitting the corrected answer:

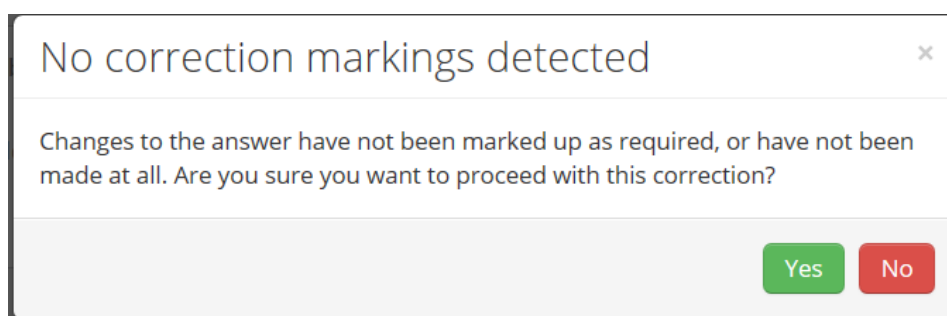
- When you are happy with the changes, click the 'Save and Proceed' button to take you to the correction preview page.
- It is important to check that ALL the text which you want to delete is marked in red and ALL the text that you have inserted is marked in green. This will help the Gatekeeper to review the change more quickly.
- If you have not marked up the changes correctly, the system will not allow you to continue with the correction and you will get the following 'Inadmissible Correction' warning instead of the 'Preview page':

Figure 54: Message for inadmissible correction



- If your correction is deemed inadmissible by the Q&A system, click on the '<<Edit Correction' button to return to the page where you entered the correction. The system will give you hints about where you did not apply the mark up styling correctly. If in doubt, you can click the 'Undo Latest Changes' button and start again.
- If your only change has been to add and/or remove an attachment, the Q&A System will present the following message:

Figure 55: Message for "no correction markings detected"



- If the attachment change was the only change you had made and this is what you had intended, click the **Yes** button and then the **Save and Proceed** button. If you had more changes to make, click the **No** button to return to the editing page.

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

- Preview the corrected answer as this is what will be published on the Q&A web pages. The original version of the answer can be viewed at the bottom of the page.
- If you want to make changes, click on the '<<Edit Correction' button. Make the necessary changes.
- Preview the PDF attachment as this is what it will look like in paper copy.
- If you are happy with the changes, click on the 'Submit Correction' button.
- The answer will now have the status 'Pending Correction Review' and will be waiting for the HoC or HoL Gatekeeper to action. Corrected answers will not be sent straight to the Member. They will go to the Gatekeeper first for review. You will see the following message when successfully submitted:

• Your correction has been submitted.

- **It is not possible to edit an Answer that is currently waiting for the Gatekeeper to review (status – 'Pending Correction Review') or pending a virus scan (status – 'Scanning for Viruses'). You will need to contact the relevant Gatekeeper if you want to make further changes to a Correction that is pending a correction review.**

### *Reverting to original text for a returned correction*

This is an option if the Question has been returned by the Gatekeeper and you want to change the Answer Text back to the published version.

If a Correction has been returned by the Gatekeeper, it will have the status 'Returned Correction'. The reason why the correction was returned is displayed immediately under the Question summary under the heading 'Return Reason'. Answering Bodies will be also be notified of returned corrections via e-mail.

The Q&A System will keep the update history at the bottom of the Question page, showing that the previous answer (i.e. the most recent correction) had been 'Returned to Answering Body'.

### **Steps to follow to revert to original text**

1. Navigate to the question with the returned correction. You will notice that the changes that were submitted and subsequently returned will still be highlighted in the text box. This is because you may just want to tweak one or two changes and keep the remaining changes that were made to the answer.
2. If you wish to undo all of the changes click on the 'Revert to Published Answer' button under the correction textbox.
3. In the confirmation message, if you are sure you wish to discard the current unsaved draft and Revert to the published answer text, click on the 'Revert to Published Answer' button – or click the 'Cancel' button if you didn't mean to make this selection.
4. The Q&A System will strip out the correction text and any private message you may have supplied for the Gatekeeper and revert the answer text back to the previously published version.



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Filtering for corrected answers*

This technique is useful if you want to find previous corrections for reference.

### Steps to filter for corrected answers

1. From your home page (titled: Written Questions), supply the appropriate filter options in the filter box at the top of your list of Questions and click on the **Filter Questions** button.
  - **Finding corrections that have been returned by the Gatekeeper:** use the status 'Returned Correction'.
  - **Finding corrections that have been saved as a draft before submission:** use the status 'Incomplete' and check the 'Corrections Only' check box under the Status field. All draft corrections will appear as 'Incomplete (C)'.
  - **Finding corrections that are waiting for the Gatekeeper to action:** use status 'Pending Correction Review'.
  - **Finding corrections that have been accepted by the Gatekeeper:** use status 'Answered' and check the 'Corrections Only' check box under the Status field. All accepted corrections will appear as 'Answered (C)'.

**Figure 56: AB home page showing corrections tick box**

The screenshot shows a filter box titled "To filter items select from the following options:". It contains several input fields and a checkbox. The "House:" field is a dropdown menu with "Both" selected. The "Type:" field is a dropdown menu with "All" selected. The "Tabling Member:" field is a text input field. The "Date for Answer:" field is a text input field. The "Status:" field is a dropdown menu with "Tabled" selected. Below the "Status:" field is a checkbox labeled "Corrections Only" which is currently unchecked. The "Answered within the last:" field is a dropdown menu with "All" selected. At the bottom of the filter box are two buttons: "Filter Questions" (blue) and "Reset Filters" (green).

2. If the Q&A System finds any Questions matching the supplied criteria, it will display all matching Questions.

For House of Commons corrections only: it is not possible to filter for Questions which have been accepted as Editorial Corrections by the Commons Gatekeeper – only Ministerial Correction are marked as 'Answered (C)' in the system. Editorial Corrections have the status 'Answered'.

## Overview of corrections

Figure 57: Example of preview page for answer that has been corrected

f

Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Correction Preview

Corrected Answer (for publication) ●

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what expenditure his Department incurred on the cancelled tendering process to replace the National Equine Database. (154038)

~~Heather Wheeler: Mr David Heath~~ An error has been identified in the written answer given on 20 May 2014. The correct answer should have been:

No additional cost was incurred in running the ~~tender documentation~~ process to replace the National Equine Database. The procurement exercise was managed by existing staff resource.

Attachments:

- ~~Tender Documentation (bick.jpg)~~
- Tender Documentation (bick.jpg)

Select the document to print or download this saved correction to check how it will look in hard copy

Previous Answers

1 Previous Answer

Answering Minister/Member:	Answer Submitted:	Holding Answer?
Heather Wheeler	20 May 2014 15:14	No

Answer Text

No additional cost was incurred in running the procurement process to replace the National Equine Database. The procurement exercise was managed by existing staff resource.

Attachments

1. Tender Documentation (bick.jpg)

← Edit Correction

Submit Correction

Back to List

As the Minister was changed in this example, the previously specified Minister has been highlighted in red and struck out; and the newly specified Minister has been highlighted in green

Pre-populated message that is displayed on the website for a correction (ministerial if it is in the Commons)

Text that has been highlighted in red and shown with a line struck through it indicates text that has been removed as part of the correction

Text that has been highlighted in green indicates new text that has been added as part of the correction

New attachments added as part of a correction are highlighted in green

Attachments that have been removed as part of the correction are highlighted in red

The previous answer is always displayed at the bottom of the page. If there has been more than one correction, the most recent change is displayed at the top of the list of previous answers.

## User privileges and corrections

Only users set up with the sufficient access privileges can submit corrections – in the same way that restrictions apply to submitting answers:

Who can save draft versions of corrected text?

- Super Users;
- Users with full Read/Write; and
- Users with partial Read/Write.

Who can submit corrections to the Gatekeepers?

- Super Users; and
- Users with full Read/Write access.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Correction statuses*

The following statuses relate to answers that have corrections associated to them:

### **Answered (C)**

An Answer where a correction has been submitted by an Answering Body and accepted as a Ministerial Correction by the Gatekeeper. These types of corrections are highlighted on the website and the Tabling Member will be notified by email.

NB: Editorial Corrections keep the status "Answered" and no notification email will be sent to the Tabling Member. In the Lords there are no Editorial Corrections.

### **Incomplete (C)**

An Answer where a correction has been saved as incomplete (Draft)

### **Pending Correction Review**

A correction submitted to Parliament and the relevant Gatekeeper has not yet actioned it.

### **Returned Correction**

A correction which has been submitted to Parliament and the relevant Gatekeeper has returned it together with a reason why.

No updates will have been made to the answer on the website and the Tabling Member will not have been notified of this correction request.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## ***Gatekeeper responses to correction requests***

The Gatekeeper in each House will check each correction request submitted through the Q&A System by Answering Bodies.

### ***House of Lords***

**The House of Lords Gatekeeper is based in Lords Hansard who can be contacted:**

**By e-mail:** [QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk](mailto:QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk)

**By phone:** 020 7 219 1596

In the Lords, the Gatekeeper can action the requests in the following ways:

- **Accept Correction:** the change will be made on the web site with the text:

*"An error has been identified in the written answer given on [DATE INSERTED]. The correct answer should have been:"*

and an email of the amended version sent to the Tabling Member.

- **Return Correction:** this is when the correction has not been accepted and the Gatekeeper will supply a reason for this. The website will not be changed and the Tabling Member will not be informed.

### ***House of Commons***

**The Commons Gatekeeper can be contacted:**

**By phone:** 020 7219 8777 or 020 7219 3731

**By e-mail:** [tableoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:tableoffice@parliament.uk)

In the Commons, the Gatekeeper can action correction requests in the following ways:

- **Accepted as an editorial correction:** the change will be made 'silently' on the website and Tabling Member will not be informed. This would be used for a simple spelling mistake which does not alter the sense of the answer.
- **Accepted as a ministerial correction:** the change will be made on the web site with the text marked up and an email of the amended version sent to the Tabling Member. This type of acceptance will be used for more substantial corrections.
- **Return correction:** This is when the correction has not been accepted and the Gatekeeper will supply a reason for this. The website will not be changed and the Tabling Member will not be informed. An example could be when the correction is considered so important that it needs to be corrected by a Written Statement or if the AB has decided not to go ahead with the correction at all.

## 11 Transfers

Automated functionality for transferring Questions from one Answering Body to another is not available within the Q&A System. Answering Bodies should initiate and complete transfers following the long-standing and established procedures in each House.

### **PROCEDURE: Transferring Commons Questions between ABs**

#### **With effect from 4 June 2014, the rules for transfers are now as follows:**

**Ordinary Questions:** transfers will be permissible at any time before an Answer has been given, provided that both ABs have agreed the change. Please do not contact the Table Office about transfers that have not been firmly and formally agreed between the two ABs.

**Named Day Questions:** transfers will be permissible at any time up till, and including, the day *before* the named day. Again, agreement of the two ABs *before* the TO is contacted is essential.

**NOTE:** Do not copy the Table Office into discussions on the transfer of questions; the Table Office do not arbitrate between ABs when there is disagreement regarding transfers; the Table Office cannot insist that any AB accept the transfer of a question.

#### **Process:**

Once the 'receiving' Answering Body has firmly and formally agreed to the transfer, you should request the transfer by email from the Table Office using a suitable transfer request template.

The Table Office will check and forward transfer requests to the Parliamentary Printing Unit who will update the PQ database at the end of the day and the change will then be updated in the Q&A System shortly afterwards. Once the Q&A System has been updated, the Question will disappear from the list of questions for the Answering Body making the transfer and become visible in the list of questions for the 'receiving' Answering Body.

The newly assigned Answering Body can then submit an answer in the usual way.

The transferring AB needs to inform the tabling Member of the transfer just as in the past.

**Please note that the Table Office cannot guarantee transfer requests will be actioned immediately.** Transfer requests will usually be processed at the end of the day on which they are received – this means that the Q&A system will be updated overnight. **In the event of an urgent problem with transfers, please contact the Table Office.**

**Please note: the closer it is to the Q&A deadline (6pm / 3pm) the less likely it is that the Table Office can assist you with any issues you may have in uploading answers on that day.**

#### **Transfer of ordinary written questions during recess periods**

Target dates for ordinary written questions may fall when the House is in recess. The Table Office cannot guarantee full staffing of the office and the Parliamentary Publishing Unit during recess to process transfers. As a recess period approaches please be aware of any target dates in that period that affect your questions. Before the House rises for recess the Table Office will circulate dates to Super Users on which transfers will be processed.

## **Late Transfers of Named Day Questions**

Late transfers are now only a potential problem if the date for answer (the named day) for a Named Day question has passed.

In such cases, the Answering Body that *should* have answered the question (AB2) will need to supply an appropriate answer to the AB to which the question was originally tabled (AB1). AB1 will need to enter the answer supplied by AB2 on the Q&A system in the name of the Minister from AB2. The following wording should be used to make it clear to readers that the answering Minister comes from AB2 rather than AB1:

*"I have been asked to reply on behalf of [name of AB2]..."*

## **PROCEDURE: Transferring Lords Questions between ABs**

Answering Bodies should continue to initiate transfers as they have done in the past. Continue with the existing business process, notifying the Table Office of any agreed transfers. Please do not contact the Table Office about transfers that have not been firmly and formally agreed between the two ABs. The Table Office will update their system which will filter through to the Q&A system shortly afterwards. Once the Q&A system has been updated, the Question will disappear from the list of questions for the Answering Body making the transfer and become visible in the list of questions for the 'receiving' Answering Body. The 'receiving' Answering Body can then submit an answer in the usual way.

### **Transfers during the summer recess**

Departments may transfer questions during the recess by contacting the House of Lords Duty Clerk. Please note that the duty clerk will not be able to expedite clearance by a gatekeeper.

## 12 User management

The 'Gatekeepers' will be responsible for setting up and maintaining any new Super User accounts.

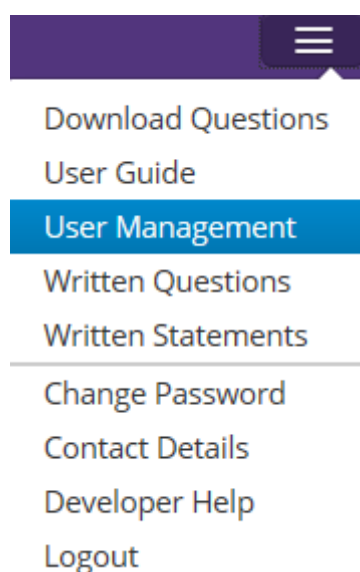
One of the main responsibilities for Super Users is user management—managing accounts for other members of the team. This includes:

- Setting up new accounts;
- Deleting accounts when no longer needed;
- Setting or changing user permissions; and
- Resetting passwords i.e. for account which are locked.

There is no limit to the number of accounts that you can set up on the Q&A system. However, it is your responsibility to maintain them. The 'Gatekeepers' and support staff in the Houses of Parliament can also access this information and will be able to give you advice but they will not maintain Answering Body accounts other than those of the Super Users .

Super Users will have access to the 'User Management' page. Other users will not be able to see this page. You can access this page by clicking on the Menu button in the top right hand corner and then clicking on 'User Management'.

Figure 58: Menu button and drop-down list



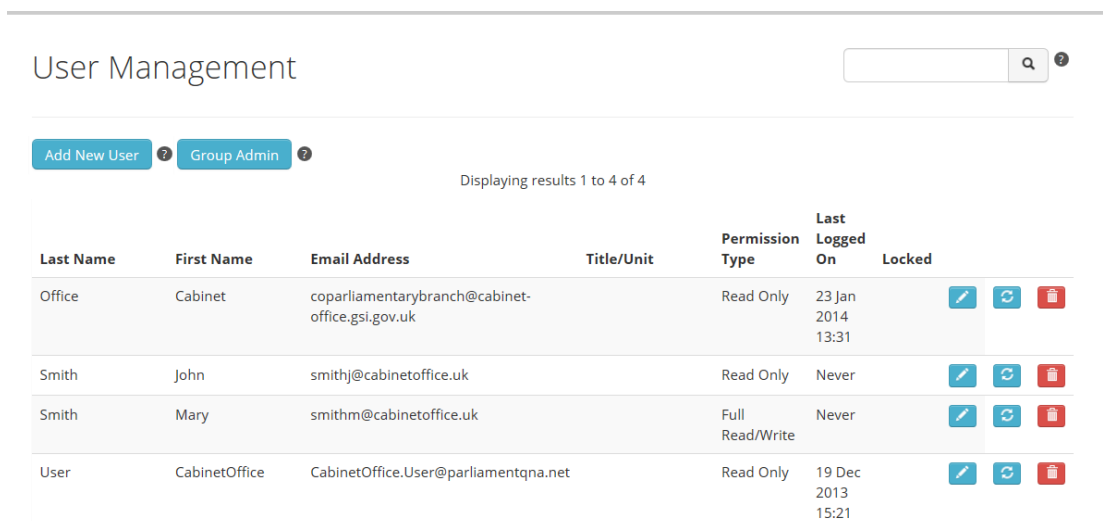
On this page you will see a list of the accounts for your Answering Body. This includes the name, e-mail address (used for login) and permission type for each user and also shows the date and time the user last logged into the system. You will not see the Super User accounts – please check with the Gatekeepers if you need information about Super User accounts.

Each user should be assigned a permission type which will determine the level of access they have in the system. The permission types are:

- **Read only**—suitable for users who require read-only access and do not need to enter, edit or answer questions;
- **Limited read/write**—suitable for users who need to enter and edit answer text but do not need to submit answers;
- **Full read/write access**— suitable for users who need to enter and edit answer text and submit answers for publication.













# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 59: User management page



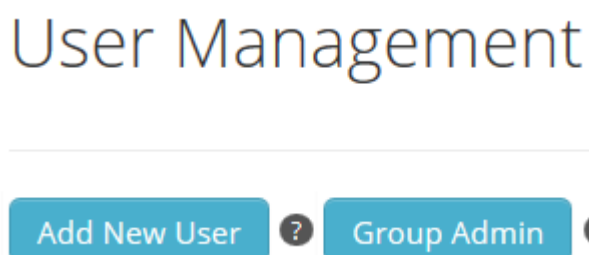
User Management

Displaying results 1 to 4 of 4

Last Name	First Name	Email Address	Title/Unit	Permission Type	Last Logged On	Locked
Office	Cabinet	coparliamentarybranch@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk		Read Only	23 Jan 2014 13:31	  
Smith	John	smithj@cabinetoffice.uk		Read Only	Never	  
Smith	Mary	smithm@cabinetoffice.uk		Full Read/Write	Never	  
User	CabinetOffice	CabinetOffice.User@parliamentqna.net		Read Only	19 Dec 2013 15:21	  

At the top of the page are two buttons, one for setting up a new account for a new user in your team and the other for carrying out group admin tasks.

Figure 60: Buttons for adding a new user or group admin



If you click on 'Add New User', you will see the page on which you can set up a new user. Enter the details for the individual. It is important to remember that on the Q&A system the login details are unique so there can only be one account for each e-mail address—some organisations will need to set up aliases if they need to access the questions for more than one Answering Body.

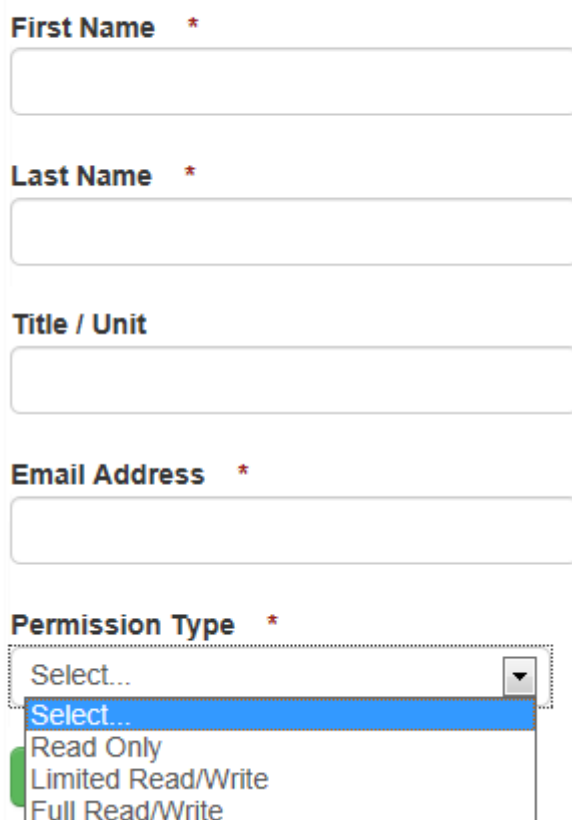
It is important to select the correct 'Permission Type'. The Q&A system gives you the flexibility to decide how many users should have access to the system. However, we recommend that accounts associated with group e-mail addresses should only have 'Read-only access'. You will probably want to limit the number of users who have full read-write access so that you can control the submission of answers to Members and reduce the risk of errors in answers.

When you have highlighted the correct 'Permission Type', click on the 'Save User' button at the bottom of the page.



Figure 61: Page for adding a new user

## User Management

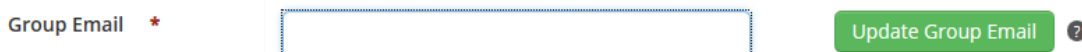


The form contains five fields: 'First Name' with a red asterisk, 'Last Name' with a red asterisk, 'Title / Unit', 'Email Address' with a red asterisk, and 'Permission Type' with a red asterisk. The 'Permission Type' dropdown menu is open, showing four options: 'Select...' (highlighted in blue), 'Read Only', 'Limited Read/Write', and 'Full Read/Write'.

When you return to the main 'User Management' page you will see that the new account has been added to the list of accounts. Upon their first login, the new user will need to accept the terms and conditions for using the system and then they must change their temporary password to one of their choice, which they will use to login to the system in future. The temporary passwords are only valid for a short period of time so we recommend users change these passwords when they log into the system. When a new account is created, the system will automatically generate a temporary password and send it to the new user via e-mail. The temporary password is valid for 7 days (but only for 48 hours after a password has been re-set). You may wish to change the group e-mail address for your Answering Body. This is the address which will receive most of the automatic e-mail notifications sent out by the Q&A system—for example, e-mails informing you that a question has been returned by the House of Lords' Gatekeeper or e-mails to say that a Written Statement has been accepted.


Figure 62: Page for group administration

## Group Administration





The form contains a 'Group Email' field with a red asterisk and an 'Update Group Email' button with a question mark icon.

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

If you want to change the 'Permission Type' for one of your users, you can do this on the 'User Management' page by clicking on the relevant  button—this takes you back to the page where you set up a new user. You can update the details and then click on 'Save User'. Please note that if you edit the e-mail address of a user, the system treats this in the same way it would a new user i.e. their password will be reset and they will need to log into the system using their new e-mail address and the temporary password that will be sent to them by e-mail. They will then have to change their password to one of their choice.

**Figure 63: Buttons for editing accounts, deleting accounts or resetting passwords**



If you click on the  button, this will reset the password for this user's account. The temporary password for reset passwords will expire after 48 hours. If you click on the  button, this will delete the user's account.

As a Super User it is your responsibility to ensure accounts are set up and maintained correctly. Full read / write access should only be granted to a relatively small number of people of appropriate grade and experience. What is appropriate within your individual Department is for you to decide. When members of staff leave, it is good practice to delete their account.

It is vital that individual users log in with their own individual user account. This enhances transparency and accountability. Passwords should remain confidential and should not be shared with other colleagues. This will help to control and manage use of the system and reduce the risk, albeit unlikely, of any rogue or mischievous use of the system.

Setting up Super User accounts, editing or deleting Super User profiles or resetting their password can only be done by Gatekeepers from the two Houses.

## 13 Written Statements

### *Summary of key points*

#### **PROCEDURE in Summary: (Both Houses):**

Written statements can only be made through the Q&A system.

- ❖ You do not need to send written statements to the Vote Office (HoC) / Printed Paper Office (HoL);
- ❖ A Commons Written Statement must always be preceded by a Notice entered on the Order Paper portal for printing in the Order Paper on the day the written statement is to be made. This means you must upload your Notice the day before you intend to publish your Written Statement.
- ❖ Documents relating to written statements should be attached to your Statement in the Q&A system wherever possible;
- ❖ Written statements are published in a separate tab on the Q&A web pages: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenstatements> This is the permanent and authoritative record copy of the statement made by your Minister;
- ❖ Written statements will also be reproduced in the next edition of the House of Commons *Hansard* and the House of Lords Daily Report for the convenience of Members;
- ❖ All statements will be checked by the Gatekeeper. The Gatekeeper checks for example whether the title matches the Commons notice (except for statements made in the Lords only), and that attachments and corrections to previous answers or statements are done correctly. The Gatekeeper does not check the substance of your statement.
- ❖ Until the statement has been accepted by the Gatekeeper, the status will be listed as 'pending' on the Q&A System.
- ❖ In the Commons the Vote Office have responsibility for publishing Written Statements (020 7291 3631)
- ❖ If you have given Notice of a Written Statement on the Commons Order Paper but no longer wish to publish the statement on the day then you must publish something using the advertised title (even if it is to say that you no longer intend to publish the statement).

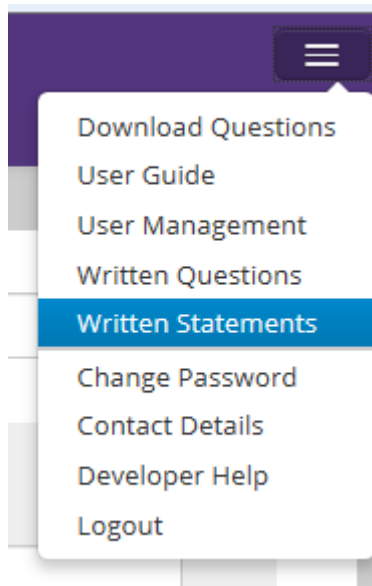
When a statement has been accepted by the Gatekeeper, it will be given a written statement ID. For example, Foreign Affairs Council and Foreign Affairs Council (Defence) = HLWS651 in the Lords and HCWS674 in the Commons. Statements made before 17th November 2014 do not have these reference numbers.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Navigating to the written statements page*

Click on the menu button and then click on 'Written Statements' in the drop-down menu to navigate to the relevant page.

**Figure 64:** Menu for navigating to written statements page



You will then see the page that lists all the written statements for your Answering Body. This 'list page' will show all the written statements submitted through the Q&A system in the current Session

As with questions data, the written statements will be wiped from the Q&A system at the end of the current session but will remain on the Q&A web pages: <http://www.parliament.uk/writtenstatements>.

**Figure 65:** Written statements page

Written Statements Create a Statement  Q

To filter items select from the following options:

House:  Member:

Date Submitted:  Status:  Statement made within the last:

Filter Written Statements Reset Filters

Displaying results 1 to 17 of 17

WSID ^	House	Member	Status	Date Submitted
HCWS11	HoC	Mr Francis Maude	Statement Made	07 Oct 2014 12:48

## *Viewing, filtering and sorting written statements on the list page*

The written statements list page has been designed to be similar to the 'Written Questions' page—you can filter and sort your statements on a number of parameters.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## Sorting

To sort your statements in different ways, click on the heading at the top of each column—e.g. 'House', 'Member' (who made the statement), 'Status', 'Date submitted' and 'WSID' (Written statement Identifying – a unique number that is allocated to a statement once accepted by the Gatekeeper).

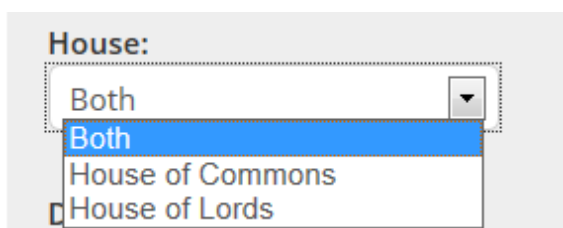
For example, to sort statements by the 'Date submitted', click on the heading 'Date submitted'. If the small arrow is pointing downwards, the statements are listed with the most recently submitted first. If you click on the heading again, the order is reversed. You can follow the same process to sort on other columns.

## Filtering

As with questions, the list of statements for your AB can be filtered by using the filter options at the top of the page.

For example, you can filter by '**House**' by selecting the relevant House from the drop-down menu and then clicking the 'Filter Written Statements' button.

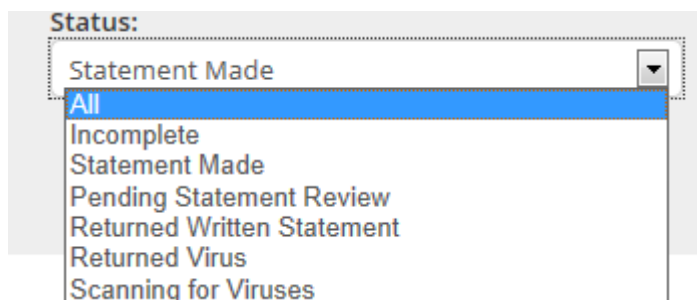
Figure 66: Filtering by House



You can filter your statements by '**status**' by selecting one of the following options from the drop down list:

- '**All**'—all statements;
- '**Incomplete**'—draft statements which have been saved but not yet submitted to Parliament;
- '**Statement made**'—statements which have been accepted by the Gatekeeper and published;
- '**Pending statement Review**'—statements which have been submitted to Parliament and are waiting for Gatekeeper review;
- '**Returned Written statement**'—statements which the Gatekeeper in the relevant House has returned and which will usually need to be updated by the AB before re-submission;
- '**Returned Virus**'— statements returned to you because an attachment has failed the virus scan (note: the statement submitted will need to be resubmitted with a new acceptable file in order for the answer to be successfully submitted to Parliament);
- '**Scanning for Viruses**'—statements where an attachment is in the process of being scanned for viruses (note: the virus scanning service runs every minute so statements will not remain in this status for long).

**Figure 67: Filtering by 'Status'**



The screenshot shows a web interface with a label 'Status:' followed by a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, displaying a list of status options. The first option, 'All', is highlighted in blue. The other options are listed below it.

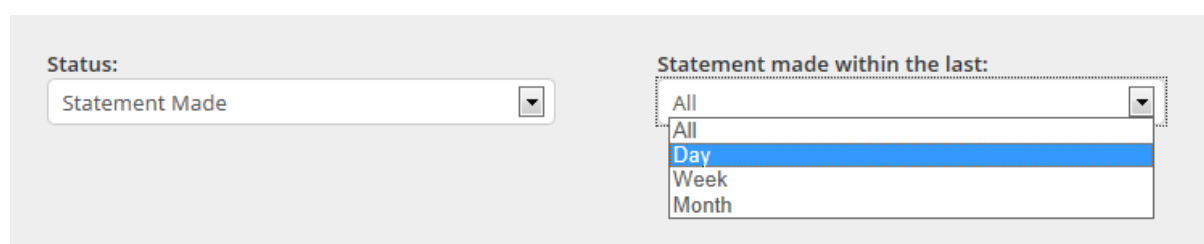
Status
All
Incomplete
Statement Made
Pending Statement Review
Returned Written Statement
Returned Virus
Scanning for Viruses

Select which 'Status' you want from the drop-down menu and then click on the 'Filter Written Statements' button.

If you decide to filter by the status 'Statement Made' you can also filter by 'Statement made within the last' *day, week* or *month*.

Select the period you want and then click on the 'Filter Written Statements' button:

**Figure 68: Filtering by statement made within the last *day*:**



The screenshot shows a web interface with two dropdown menus. The first dropdown menu, labeled 'Status:', has 'Statement Made' selected. The second dropdown menu, labeled 'Statement made within the last:', has 'Day' selected. The 'Day' option is highlighted in blue.

Status
Statement Made

Statement made within the last:
All
All
Day
Week
Month

## **Statements can be filtered by the name of the Member who made the statement.**

If you start to type the name of the relevant Member in the 'Member' box, a drop-down list will appear. Ministers in your Department (in the Lords this includes whips) will appear in bold. Click on the name of the Member you want to select and the name will appear in the box (note: you may have to double click on the Member in order for your selection to 'stick'). Then click on the 'Filter Written Statements' button and the statements will be filtered by Member.

Figure 69: Filtering by the Member making a statement

The screenshot shows a web interface with a 'Member:' label above a search box containing the text 'cam'. A dropdown menu is open, displaying a list of members with their portraits and names. The first item, 'Mr David Cameron', is highlighted with a blue bar. Other visible items include 'Lord Cameron of Dillington', 'Lord Cameron of Lochbroom', 'Mr Alan Campbell', 'Mr Gregory Campbell', and 'Sir Menzies Campbell'. To the right of the dropdown, parts of other filters like 'Status' and 'Statement' are visible.

Member
Mr David Cameron
Lord Cameron of Dillington
Lord Cameron of Lochbroom
Mr Alan Campbell
Mr Gregory Campbell
Sir Menzies Campbell

Finally, you can also filter statements by the date on which they were submitted—click in the 'Date Submitted' box, select which date you want from the calendar and then click on the 'Filter written statements' button.

Figure 70: Filtering by the date a statement was made

The screenshot shows a web interface with a 'Date Submitted:' label above a date input box containing '27/01/2015'. A calendar dropdown is open, showing the month of January 2015. The date '27' is highlighted with a blue square. A green button labeled 'Set Filters' is visible to the right of the calendar. Below the calendar, parts of other filters like 'House' are visible.

January 2015						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Submitting a statement through the Q&A system*

### **PROCEDURE: Notices of written statements in the Commons**

A **notice** of a written statement must always be made on the Order Paper portal the day before you wish to make a written statement.

### **PROCEDURE: Timing of the submission of written statements in both Houses**

Written Statements should be submitted in accordance with existing rules and guidance in the Houses. There is no change to these rules as a result of the Q&A system going live with written statements.

### **PROCEDURE: Timing of the release of written statements to key stakeholders and the press when issuing a written statement in both Houses**

When the Gatekeeper in one House has accepted a written statement, you can release that statement to key stakeholders and the media. You do not have to wait till the Gatekeeper in the second House has accepted your statement before releasing it. Once the statement has been accepted in one House, it will be published on the Parliament web-site a short while later, and any Members who have signed up to receive the RSS feed of WSs will receive an alert.

You do not have to wait till the statement appears on the parliamentary web pages before you can publicise it to your stakeholders. You can do this as soon as the Gatekeeper has accepted the statement, at which point it will be available to Members from the Vote Office.

### **PROCEDURE: Market sensitive written statements in the Commons**

Where a statement is market sensitive and requires publication before the markets open, you should contact the Commons Table Office as far in advance as possible to seek permission for early publication. Where the Table Office grants permission to do so, a Gatekeeper in the Vote Office will accept the statement for publication at the time agreed by the Table Office. This process can only be used in exceptional circumstances on demonstration of clear need. The use of this process will be monitored closely by the Table Office, and it may be reviewed from time to time.

## ***Knowing when a statement has been accepted by the Gatekeeper***

From 8 December 2014, you will receive an automatic e-mail from the Q&A system telling you when your statement has been accepted by the Gatekeeper in the relevant House. This e-mail will go to your nominated group mailbox. You can also see on the system when the Statement has been accepted—its status then changes from 'Pending Statement Review' to 'Statement made'. This change happens immediately, but you will need to refresh your screen to see it. If you are keen for your statement to be published as soon as possible in the Commons contact the Vote Office (020 7219 5300).



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

To submit your statement carry out the following steps:

**Step 1**—click on the 'Create a statement' button at the top of the statements list page:

Figure 71: 'Create a statement' button



**Step 2**—you are now taken to the page where you can create the statement:

Figure 72: Create a written statement page

Written Statement

Member	WSID	Statement Submitted	Statement Made	House	Status
		Pending		HoC	

---

Select house \*

Select Member \*

Enter Member Post \* ?

Enter statement title \* ?

Enter written statement text \* ?

**B** *I*

**Step 3**—in the 'Select House' field select the House where you wish to make the statement. You should start with the primary House—the House where the Minister actually making the statement is a Member. If you wish to make the statement in both Houses, there will be an option to do so later.

**Step 4**—in the 'Select Member' field enter the name of the Minister (or other Member) who is making the statement. When you start to type the name of the Member in the 'Member' box, a drop-down list will appear. The Ministers for your Department (and Whips in the Lords) will appear in bold. Click on the name of the Member you want to select and the name will appear in the box

**Step 5**—in the 'Enter Member Post' field type in the post of the Minister/Member making the statement. This will usually start with 'The'. You may wish to copy the title from the list printed regularly by Hansard, e.g. beginning of each 'term', but remembering to add 'The' in front. All words apart from prepositions should be capitalised (e.g. The Secretary of State for Transport.)

Figure 73: Pasting ministerial titles in Hansard

**HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT**

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

(FORMED BY THE RT HON. DAVID CAMERON, MP, MAY 2010)

PRIME MINISTER, FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY AND MINISTER FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE—The Rt Hon. David Cameron, MP  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL—The Rt Hon. Nick Clegg, MP  
FIRST SECRETARY OF STATE AND LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS—The Rt Hon. William Hague  
CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER—The Rt Hon. George Osborne, MP  
CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY—The Rt Hon. Danny Alexander, MP

**Culture, Media and Sport—**  
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Sajid Javid, MP  
MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY—Edward Vaizey, MP §  
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE—Helen Grant, MP

**Defence—**  
SECRETARY OF STATE—The Rt Hon. Michael Fallon, MP  
MINISTERS OF STATE—  
The Rt Hon. Mark Francois, MP (Minister for the Armed Forces)  
Anna Soubry, MP  
PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARIES OF STATE—  
Philip Dunne, MP  
Julian Brazier, MP  
Lord Astor of Hever, DL

**Step 6**—in the 'Enter Statement Title' field type in the title of the statement (as it appears on the Order Paper for statements made in the Commons) You might wish to copy titles from the Commons notice printed on the Order Paper—see Figure 74 below.

## PROCEDURE: Titles of written statements in the Commons

In the House of Commons, no written statement can be made without a prior notice of the statement, printed on the Order Paper on the Day.

The title that you enter when submitting the actual statement should be the same as the Notice printed in the Order Paper. You might want to copy and paste the title from the Order Paper of the day—see figure 74 below.

The Gatekeeper will not normally accept a statement where the title does not match the Order Paper. In the unlikely event of an error on the Order Paper, please contact the Gatekeeper or a clerk in the Table Office at the earliest opportunity.

## PROCEDURE: Titles of written statements in the Lords

In the House of Lords, a Lords Written Ministerial Statement is made without prior notice.

When a statement is made in both Houses, the Lords title on the Q&A site should be identical with the notice given and the title of the statement made in the House of Commons.

Where a written statement is only made in the House of Lords, it should be given an appropriate title in accordance with the usual principles.

Statement headings in the printed version of the House of Lords Daily Report may vary from the online version. Headings in the House of Lords Daily Report match headings in the printed version of Written Ministerial Statements in the House of Commons *Hansard*.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 74: Notices of written statements in the Commons Order Paper

**WRITTEN STATEMENTS**

**STATEMENTS TO BE MADE TODAY**

**Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer**

- ECOFIN 14 October 2014**
- Public spending**

**Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills**

- British Business Bank**
- Paperwork review of the Agency Workers Regulations**

**Step 7**—in the 'Enter Statement Text' box, type or paste the text of the statement. Remember that you should not include the name of the Minister / Member here as you have already entered this above in steps 4 and 5.

Figure 75: Example of the key information for a written statement (Commons)

Select House \*  
House of Commons

Select Member \*  
Mr Patrick McLoughlin

Enter Member Post \* ?  
The Secretary of State for Transport

Enter Statement Title \* ?  
HS2 Safeguarding Consultation

Enter Statement Text \* ?  

**B** *I*

Further to my statement of 27 October, *Official Report*, column 7WS, in which I welcomed the key recommendations in Sir David Higgins' report "Rebalancing Britain", I am today announcing to the House the launch of a consultation on safeguarding directions for the western leg of HS2 phase 2 between Fradley, near Lichfield, to Crewe.

Safeguarding is an established part of the planning system in the UK. It ensures that land which has been identified for major infrastructure is protected from conflicting development. The consultation will run for nine weeks, closing on 6 January 2015

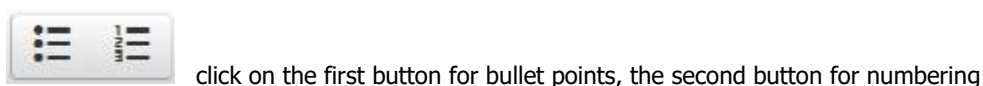
You can now format the text in the same way that you can format answers to written questions by using the buttons above the 'Enter Statement Text' box.

Highlight the text that you wish to format and click on the relevant button:

Figure 76: Buttons for formatting text in bold or italics



Figure 77: Buttons for formatting text in bullet points or a numbered list



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

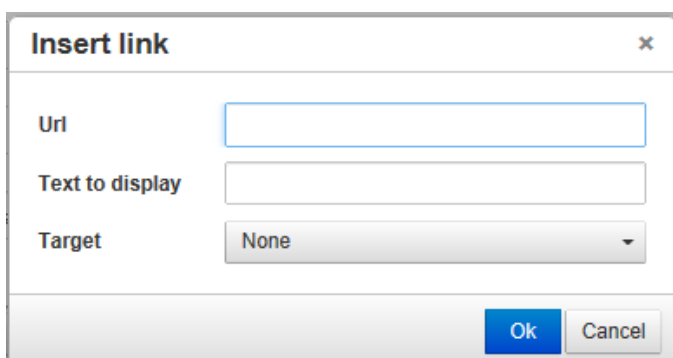
**Figure 78: Button for inserting a hyperlink into the answer**



click on this link if you want to insert a hyperlink. You will then see a box (figure 79) which gives you the option of copying and pasting a URL straight into the top field and text in the middle field if you want text to be displayed (such as the name of a document) rather than the full URL. If you do not want different text in the middle field, the URL will automatically appear in that field as well.

Click 'OK' to save this and to return to the 'Enter Statement text' field.

**Figure 79: Fields for inserting a hyperlink into the answer**

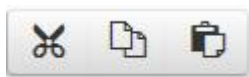
A dialog box titled "Insert link" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains three input fields: "Url" (a text box), "Text to display" (a text box), and "Target" (a dropdown menu currently showing "None"). At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "Ok" (blue) and "Cancel" (grey).

**Figure 80: Button for indenting text for a quote**



click on this button to indent text for a quote

**Figure 81: Buttons for cutting, copying and pasting**



click on these buttons to cut, copy or paste text

**Figure 82: Buttons for undoing and redoing**



click on the first button to undo any action, click on the second to reverse the action

At the bottom of the page you can choose between clicking on 'Save as Incomplete'—if you wish to continue working on the statement—or 'Save and Proceed' (figure 83) if you wish to go to the 'written statement preview page'. If you click on 'Save as Incomplete' the next page will also give you the option to 'Discard draft statement' if you decide to start afresh again.

**Figure 83: Buttons for saving or proceeding with the answer**



The 'Written Statement Preview page' allows you to check that the answer is correct before submitting it to the Gatekeeper for publication.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Please note that there is an extra step when submitting a statement in the House of Lords. You must tick the box to confirm that the Member of the House of Lords making the statement has approved it (figure 84).

**Figure 84: Confirming the Minister has approved the statement**

I confirm that the Member of the House of Lords making this statement has approved this statement \* ☐ ?

Submit Written Statement ?

## *Documents relating to a written statement*

### **PROCEDURE: Attachments and deposits relating to written statements in both Houses**

Subject to the principles set out below, documents that form part of the statement should be attached to the statement in the Q&A system rather than being deposited in the Library wherever possible. Attached documents will be published together with the statement itself on the Q&A website. Where a written statement serves to correct previous written answers, the tabling Member(s) will also receive the documents directly by e-mail together with the text of the statement.

Attachments should be used in the following circumstances:

1. The statement is made in connection with the publication of one or more documents, such as a report, data or statistics or some correspondence;
2. Some element of the statement is not suitable for pasting into the statement box – e.g. graphs, large tables, maps or other graphic material, and
3. Papers have been deposited for any reason other than being too large for the Q&A system.

The number of documents that can be attached to a written statement is unlimited – but there is a total size limit of 12MB on all the documents attached to one statement.

### **Deposits in the Library should be made in the following circumstances:**

There are still a small number of situations when you need to “deposit” documents for a written statement in the Library:

1. If a Minister has made an explicit commitment to “deposit” a document in the Library either in the statement itself or elsewhere;
2. If there is some other obligation or commitment specifically to “deposit” a document;
3. All the documents put together exceed 12MB in total size;

If you deposit documents for reasons 1 or 2 above, you must *also* attach them to the statement.

### **Terminology relating to attachments and deposits**

It is critical that you use the correct terminology in your statement when referring to documents that are attached or deposited:

- ❖ If attaching documents to the statement: you must always refer to them using the phrase “**attached**”;

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

❖ If depositing documents in the libraries: you must always refer to them using the phrases “**placed in the Library**” or “**deposited in the Library**”;

❖ You should never use the term “**laid**” about documents that you attach or deposit.

Please refer to the document “Rules for depositing papers in the Libraries of the House of Commons and House of Lords”.

**Note:** Library deposits of other documents, not related to written answers and written statements, remain unchanged.

### *Uploading attachments*

#### **PROCEDURE: Attachment formats, names and descriptions in both Houses**

##### **Attachment formats**

Word documents should be saved in .doc format and Excel spreadsheets should be saved as .xls format. This is because .docx and .xlsx are not compatible with older versions of Microsoft Office.

##### **Attachments: descriptions of contents**

It is compulsory to enter a description of each attachment in the ‘Description’ field. The description should describe the content of each file accurately and comprehensively so that Members and the public are able to understand easily what information is contained in the attachment.

##### **Attachments: file names**

The filenames of attachments should be meaningful to Members and the public as they are published on the internet.

Descriptions of attachments and filenames should not have spaces—use underscores or hyphens instead. The reason for this is that indexing and search work better if there are no spaces in filenames.

To upload one or more attachments, tick the box next to ‘Attach files to submit for publication...’ (figure 85 below)

Figure 85: Check box for attaching a file

Use this written statement to correct an answer to a written question (*skip this step if not applicable*) ☒ ?

Use this written statement to correct a written statement (*skip this step if not applicable*) ☐ ?



Attach files to submit for publication with this written statement (*skip this step if not applicable*) ☐ ?

The following extra button and boxes will then come into view (figure 86). Clicking on the ‘Browse’ button opens a file search window—you can now attach a file from your network drive or hard drive to

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

the statement. Click on the 'Add another attachment' button to add further files. It is compulsory to add a description of the contents of the attachment as described above.

**Figure 86: Uploading attachments**

Attach files to submit for publication with this written statement (*skip this step if not applicable*)  

1. File   Description \*



## ***Submitting a statement which corrects a previous answer***

You can submit a statement that corrects an answer or answers which have been published.

You should enter the text of the statement in the way described above and then carry out the following steps to link the statement to the corrected answer and to ensure that an email is sent to the Member who tabled the original question.

The first step is to tick the box—this will open up a new section of the page where you can enter the details of the answer or answers you want to correct (figure 87).

**Figure 87: Correcting an answer**

**Use this written statement to correct an answer to a written question**    
(*skip this step if not applicable*)

There are two slightly different processes depending on whether the answer you want to correct was submitted in the current or previous sessions of Parliament.

If you want to use the statement to correct an answer given in the current Session, enter the UIN of the question in the field shown below. Then click the 'Update' button and you will see the details of the question on the page (see figure 88).

**Figure 88: Entering a UIN from the current session**

Correct written answer(s) from this session

Please enter the UIN for each question whose answer is to be corrected. If entering multiple UINs, separate them with a comma.

If you want to use the statement to correct an answer given in a previous session, click on the blue 'Add answer' button and then enter the UIN of the question in the field which opens underneath. In this case, you will also need to add the date when the question was tabled (figure 89).

**Figure 89: Entering a UIN from a previous session**

Correct written answer(s) from an earlier session

Enter the UIN and Tabled Date for each question whose answer is to be corrected.

	UIN *	Tabled Date *	
Question 1	<input type="text" value="193781"/>	<input type="text" value="26/03/2014"/>	
<input type="button" value="Add answer"/>			

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

When you have entered the relevant information, click on 'Save and Proceed'—you will now see the 'Written Statement Preview Page'. The 'Written Statement Preview page' allows you to check that the answer is correct before submitting it to the Gatekeeper for publication.



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Submitting a statement which corrects a previous statement*

You can submit a statement which corrects information given in a previous statement.

First tick the box (figure 90)—this will open up a new section of the page where you can enter the details of the statement you want to correct.

**Figure 90: Correcting a statement**

**Use this written statement to correct a written statement (*skip this step if not applicable*)**



There are two slightly different processes depending on whether the statement you want to correct is in the current or previous Session.

If you want to use the statement to correct a statement submitted in the current Session enter the WSID of the statement in the field shown below. Then click the 'Update' button and you will see the details of the statement on the page.

**Figure 91: Correcting a statement made in the current Session**

**Correct written statement(s) from this session**

Please enter the WSID(s) for each statement(s) to be corrected. If entering multiple WSIDs, separate them with a comma.

<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Update"/>
----------------------	---------------------------------------

If you want to use the statement to correct a statement submitted in a previous Session, click on the 'Add written statement' button and then enter the title of the statement in the field shown below and the date when the statement was made.

**Figure 92: Correcting a statement made in a previous Session**

**Correct written statement(s) from an earlier session**

Enter the WSID and Statement Made date for each statement to be corrected. If the WSID is not available, enter the Title of the statement instead.

	WSID *	or	Title *	Statement Made *	
Statement 1	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Add written statement"/>

When you have entered the relevant information, click on 'Save and Proceed'—you will now see the 'Written Statement Preview Page'.

The 'Written Statement Preview Page' allows you to check that the answer is correct before submitting it to the Gatekeeper for publication.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

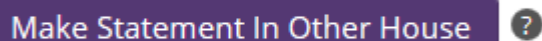
## ***Making the statement in the other House***

The system is designed to make it easy for you to repeat a statement in the second House, where a Minister or other Member repeats what the Minister responsible for the policy has said in their own House.

You will always need to change the text before the statement is submitted in the second House to include the usual introductory text along the lines of "My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Michael Fallon) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement."

To repeat a statement in the other House click on the 'Make Statement in Other House' button at the bottom of the page.

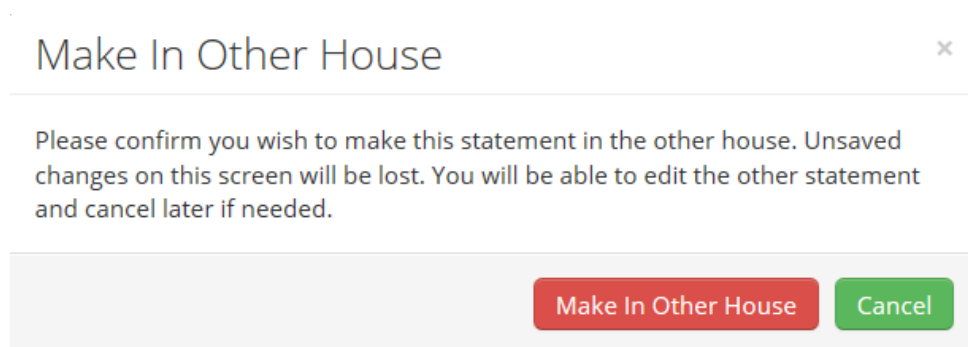
**Figure 93: Making the statement in the other House**



Make Statement In Other House ?

You will then see the following warning (which is just to remind you to save the information you have already input for the first House). Click on the red 'Make in Other House' button (figure 94).

**Figure 94: Saving your work and making the statement in the other House**



Make In Other House X

Please confirm you wish to make this statement in the other house. Unsaved changes on this screen will be lost. You will be able to edit the other statement and cancel later if needed.

Make In Other House Cancel

You will then see a 'Written Statement' page which already has the text of the statement in the first House pre-entered (figure 95).

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

**Figure 95: Making a statement in the other House**

Select Member \*

Enter Member Post \* ?

Enter Statement Title \* ?

Enter Statement Text \* ?

**B** *I*

Further to my statement of 27 October, *Official Report*, column 7WS, in which I welcomed the key recommendations in Sir David Higgins' report "Rebalancing Britain", I am today announcing to the House the launch of a consultation on safeguarding directions for the western leg of HS2 phase 2 between Fradley, near Lichfield, to Crewe.

Safeguarding is an established part of the planning system in the UK. It ensures that land which has been identified for major infrastructure is protected from conflicting development. The consultation will run for nine weeks, closing on 6 January 2015

You will need to add the name of the Minister/Member making the statement and their post.

You should also check again that the title entered is correct.

You can then follow the steps described above to save, preview and then submit the statement to the Gatekeeper.

## ***Submitting a Written Statement: Checklist***

### **Have you...**

- ❖ Checked that you picked the correct Member (Minister)?
- ❖ Ensured that you have typed / pasted their title in full in the correct Hansard format?
- ❖ Entered the correct title—in the Commons this is the Notice?
- ❖ Submitted the Statement in both Houses (if relevant)?
- ❖ Adjusted the Statement text as required in the second House (if relevant)?
- ❖ Confirmed that any cross-references to previous Written Answers / Statements (i.e. corrections) refer to the correct items?
- ❖ Attached and deposited documents relevant to the Statement?
- ❖ Got the permission of the clerks in the Commons Table Office to publish a Commons statement earlier than normal if it is deemed to be market-sensitive (e.g. before 9am)?
- ❖ Informed the Gatekeeper the day before, if you have a market-sensitive Statement that requires early publication or a statement that you need to be published at a specific time after 12.30pm?

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Correcting a written statement*

### **PROCEDURE: Corrections to written statements (Commons)**

Editorial corrections are permitted in the House of Commons.

Substantial changes to statements should be corrected by issuing a new statement.

### **PROCEDURE: Corrections to written statements (Lords)**

Editorial corrections are not permitted in the House of Lords.

Substantial changes to statements should be corrected by issuing a new statement.

## *Making an editorial correction to a statement (HoC only)*

In the Commons you can make an editorial correction to a written statement which has been published. This procedure would be only be appropriate for correcting a typo, a spelling mistake or other minor change. The change will be silently updated on the Q&A web pages without any marking up. Click on the 'WSID' for the statement which you want to correct. You will see the full text for that statement. Click on the 'Make Editorial Correction' button.

**Figure 96: Editorial Correction button**



A series of new boxes will emerge (figure 97). You must enter your contact details as well as a comprehensive explanation of the correction you wish to make to the written statement. This information will not be published—only the Commons Gatekeeper will be able to see it. This is important as corrections to statements cannot be marked up in the same way that corrections to answers are. You cannot submit an editorial correction without this information.

**Figure 97: Fields for sending a note to the Gatekeeper**

## Editorial Correction

Send a note to the Parliamentary Gatekeeper with the information required. This note will NOT be published with the statement ?

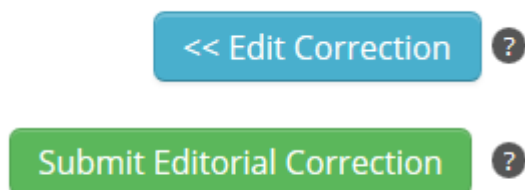
Name *	<input type="text" value="David Smith"/>	Team	<input type="text"/>
Contact Tel *	<input type="text"/>	Email address *	<input type="text" value="David.Smith@parliamentqna.net"/>
Note to Gatekeeper *			
<input type="text"/>			

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Make the changes to the text that you wish. You do not need to mark up (highlight) these changes. Then press 'Save and proceed'.

You will now see the 'Editorial Correction Preview' page. If you are happy with your correction, click on the 'Submit Editorial Correction' button and your correction will be submitted to the Commons Gatekeeper (figure 98).

**Figure 98: Submit Editorial Correction button**



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

## *Gatekeeper review of written statements*

### **PROCEDURE: Gatekeeper review of written statements (both Houses)**

Each statement will be reviewed by the Gatekeeper in the relevant House before publication.

The Gatekeeper will return statements to you for remedial action if:

- ❖ the post of the Minister (or Member) making the statement is incorrect;
- ❖ attachments are missing or clearly incorrect;
- ❖ HoC only: no notice for this statement has been received by the Table Office, and
- ❖ HoC only: the title of the statement is different to the Notice printed in the Order Paper except where you have alerted the Gatekeeper to a mistake on the Order Paper.

**You should not publicise or circulate your statement externally until the Gatekeeper has approved your written statement.**

### *If the Gatekeeper returns a statement*

If the Gatekeeper has returned a written statement, you will receive an e-mail alert to your nominated group mailbox (not your individual mail account). The Gatekeeper will have indicated a reason for returning a statement – it could be, for example, that you have forgotten to add the relevant attachments or that you have forgotten to adapt the statement for the second House as required. If you are in any doubt about the reason for the return, please phone the Gatekeeper as soon as possible.

You will need to correct the error made, in consultation with the Gatekeeper if necessary, and re-submit the statement as quickly as possible.

### *Referring to a previous written statement*

#### **Referring to a previous written statement made in House of Commons**

When referring to a previous written statement made in the House of Commons, you should always use the following format:

**HCWS123 [of Session 2014-15], on vocational training made on 30 October 2014**

You need only include session information [shown in square brackets] if the statement was made in a previous session.

#### **Referring to a previous written statement in the House of Lords**

When referring to a previous written statement made in the House of Lords, you should always use the following format:

**HLWS123 [of Session 2014-15], on vocational training made on 30 October 2014**

You need only include session information [shown in square brackets] if the statement was made in a previous session.

## ***14 Performance management and reporting***

The Q&A System contains functionality to make it easy for Answering Bodies and Members of Parliament to track and manage their own questions and answers. This improves transparency and fairness for all concerned. Gatekeepers can also monitor and collate performance statistics across all questions tabled in their own House. The House of Commons Gatekeeper will produce performance figures on all ABs for the House of Commons Procedure Committee in future.

Full reporting functionality was introduced in the House of Lords on 1 January 2015, but in the House of Commons full functionality can only be implemented once another, external IT system has been completed. An interim reporting system has been implemented in the House of Commons from the beginning of the new 2015 Parliament.

The date and time stamps recorded in the Q&A system are the only authoritative source of performance data on written answers. You should therefore consider using this data rather than anything generated on your internal systems for your own reporting purposes. This chapter explains how to view, interpret and download this information into spreadsheets that you can save for your own records.

### ***14.1 Performance management and reporting in the House of Lords***

For House of Lords questions, the Q&A system receives the due date for each question with the question itself. This means that the Q&A system is able to show whether the due date for an unanswered question has passed and, for an answered question, whether the answer was approved before or after the due date.

There is only one due date for written questions in the House of Lords, as set out [on page 23 in chapter 6](#).

#### ***14.1.1 The list page—quick-view flags in the Lords***

On the question list pages, seen in some form by all system users<sup>3</sup>, all questions will be marked with one of the following five 'flags' (see also figure 99):

1. Green flag – an answer has not yet been submitted, and the due date has not yet passed;
2. Red flag—an answer has not yet been submitted, but the due date has passed;
3. Green tick—an answer was submitted on or before the due date;
4. Red tick—an answer was submitted after the due date, and
5. Dash—no data is available, for example because the question has been withdrawn.

---

<sup>3</sup> Members see all questions tabled by them in the current Session on their private Q&A system pages; Answering Bodies see all questions tabled to (or transferred to) them in the current Session; Gatekeepers see all questions tabled in their House in the current Session.

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

**Figure 99: Quick-view performance indicators on the questions list page**

HL3561	HoL	Lord Marlesford	Ordinary	09 Dec 2014	23 Dec 2014	Tabled		
To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Taylor of Holbeach on 21 July (HL1039), whether they can now give a date to date of the e-Borders system,...								Unanswered on/before due date
HL2163	HoL	Lord Taylor of Warwick	Ordinary	16 Oct 2014	30 Oct 2014	Answered	27 Oct 2014 12:32	
To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the report by the Legal Action Group, Chasing Status, on the experience of legal l... under new immigration laws.								Answered on/before due date
HL2110	HoL	Lord Browne of Belmont	Ordinary	15 Oct 2014	29 Oct 2014	Tabled		Unanswered after due date
To ask Her Majesty's Government how much has been spent on immigration security at United Kingdom airports since January 2013.								
HL2117	HoL	Lord Blencathra	Ordinary	15 Oct 2014	29 Oct 2014	Answered	20 Nov 2014 16:49	Answered after due date
To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made any requests for account information from Dropbox using the Mutual Legal As... ates.								
HL2233	HoL	Lord Stoddart of Swindon	Ordinary	20 Oct 2014	03 Nov 2014	Withdrawn		Not available
To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Taylor of Holbeach on 30 July (HL1114) concerning the European Arrest W... consider that the European Arrest								

## 14.1.2 The Excel download—detailed performance management and record keeping in the Lords

By using the Excel download function, data on any selection of questions from your list page can be downloaded into an Excel file for analysis or simply for saving as a record for future reference.

You can use the standard filters on the list page (see [Chapter 4](#) above) to select the questions you wish to include in the downloaded file. If you do not set any filters at all, your download will contain all your questions from the current Session, Commons and Lords.

You could, for example, set the filters to:

1. Show all questions from the House of Lords in the current Session. You might want to use this option to:
  - a. Analyse your performance on answering Lords questions so far in the current Session—what proportion of all your Lords questions are outstanding or overdue? What proportion have been answered on time so far in the current Session?
  - b. Download and save the information on all your Lords questions before they are wiped from the Q&A system at the end of a parliamentary Session.
2. Show only your *outstanding* Lords questions to provide an easy list to work from;
3. Generate a list of all questions from a particular Lords Member so as to analyse particular interests or patterns;

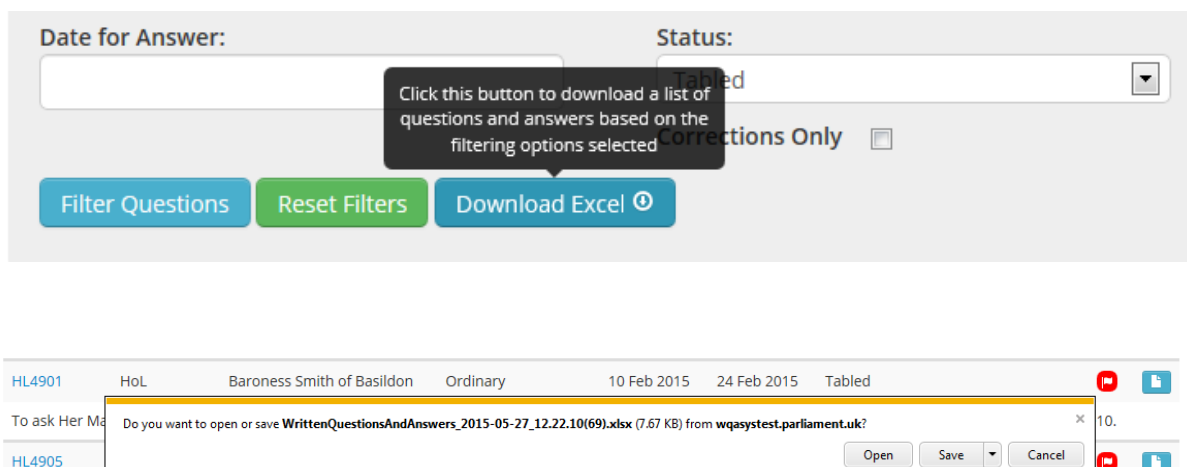
And so on.

Once you have applied any filters you wish, click the “Download to Excel” button (figure 100). The spreadsheet will take a few seconds to generate and you will then see three options at the bottom of the screen (figure 100). You can choose to open the spreadsheet or save it to your network.



# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 100: The “Download Excel” button and the buttons for opening or saving the spreadsheet



Your Excel file will contain all the key data on each question included in the selection you have made. The columns are:

- **UIN;**
- **House** (because you could choose not to set the House filter—you will then download questions from both Houses);
- **Tabled Date;**
- **Question type** (all Lords Questions are “Ordinary” but if you had included Commons Questions in your selection, you might have had both “Ordinary” and “Named Day” questions);
- **(Tabling) Member;**
- **Status** (e.g. Tabled, Answered, Withdrawn);
- **Date for Answer** (in the Lords, this is the 10-day deadline for answer);
- **Date Answer submitted** (i.e. the date you submit the answer to the Gatekeeper for approval);
- **Date Answered** (i.e. the date and time the answer was approved by the Gatekeeper);
- **Performance Status** (e.g. “Answered on/before due date”, “Unanswered after due date” etc.);
- **Flag** (indicator of performance status as described in section 14.1.1 The list page—quick-view flags in the Lords);
- **Answering Minister;**
- **Group ID** (blank if the question was not grouped for answer). You can filter on group ID in order to see all the questions in one specific group;
- **No. of attachments;**
- **Holding Answer** (this is only relevant to Commons Answers, but the column is always there as you could include Commons answers in your selection).

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

**Figure101: Example of downloaded Excel spreadsheet with selection of Lords answers**

UIN	House	Question	Member	Status	Date For Answer	Answer Submitted	Date Answered	Performance status	Flag	Answering Minister	Group Id	No of Attachments
HL3692	HoL	12/12/2014 Ordinary	Lord Marlesford	Tabled	30/12/2014			Unanswered on/before due date	►			
HL3300	HoL	01/12/2014 Ordinary	Lord Morrow	Tabled	15/12/2014			Unanswered on/before due date	►			
HL3209	HoL	27/11/2014 Ordinary	Lord Pearson of Rannoch	Tabled	11/12/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			
HL3247	HoL	27/11/2014 Ordinary	Lord Taylor of Warwick	Tabled	11/12/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			
HL2846	HoL	17/11/2014 Ordinary	Lord Ashcroft	Answered	01/12/2014	20/11/2014 15:46	20/11/2014 15:10	Answered on/before due date	✓	Baroness Evans of Bowes Park		3
HL2703	HoL	06/11/2014 Ordinary	Lord Noon	Answered	20/11/2014	20/11/2014 15:49	20/11/2014 14:59	Answered on/before due date	✓	Baroness Smith of Basildon		3
HL2410	HoL	24/10/2014 Ordinary	Baroness Smith of Basildon	Answered	07/11/2014	20/11/2014 15:44	20/11/2014 15:50	Answered after due date	✓	Lord Allen of Kensington		2
HL2411	HoL	24/10/2014 Ordinary	Baroness Smith of Basildon	Answered	07/11/2014	20/11/2014 15:34	20/11/2014 15:36	Answered after due date	✓	Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon		0
HL2412	HoL	24/10/2014 Ordinary	Baroness Smith of Basildon	Answered	07/11/2014	28/10/2014 14:30	28/10/2014 15:11	Answered on/before due date	✓	Lord Cameron of Dillington	3507	0
HL2323	HoL	22/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Black of Brentwood	Tabled	05/11/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			
HL2325	HoL	22/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Black of Brentwood	Tabled	05/11/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			
HL2330	HoL	22/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Blencathra	Answered	05/11/2014	28/10/2014 14:30	28/10/2014 15:11	Answered on/before due date	✓	Lord Cameron of Dillington	3507	0
HL2333	HoL	22/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Blencathra	Answered	05/11/2014	28/10/2014 14:30	28/10/2014 15:11	Answered on/before due date	✓	Lord Cameron of Dillington	3507	0
HL2260	HoL	21/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Inglewood	Answered	04/11/2014	28/10/2014 15:22	28/10/2014 15:23	Answered on/before due date	✓	Baroness Cox	3508	0
HL2277	HoL	21/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Roberts of Llandudno	Answered	04/11/2014	28/10/2014 15:31	28/10/2014 15:23	Answered on/before due date	✓	Baroness Benjamin		0
HL2278	HoL	21/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Roberts of Llandudno	Tabled	04/11/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			
HL2279	HoL	21/10/2014 Ordinary	Lord Roberts of Llandudno	Tabled	04/11/2014			Unanswered after due date	►			

## *Using Excel functionality to filter, sort and analyse your questions and answers*

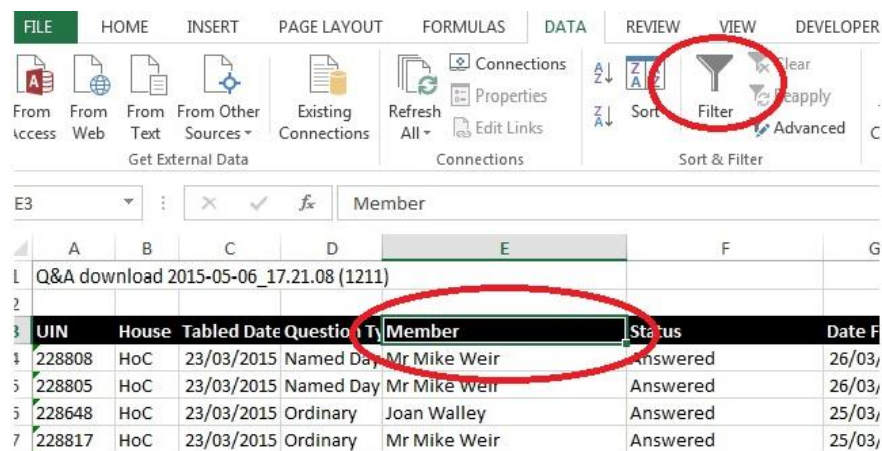
Excel and other spreadsheet packages offer rich possibilities to sort, filter and analyse your questions and answers data. The precise functionality and the way it is presented on screen will depend on the precise package and version of the software that you have. Parliament cannot provide training, documentation or advice on using Excel or similar packages. This short section serves exclusively to give you a very flavour of what can be done very easily. If you wish to know more, please consult colleagues in your own organisation.

### *Filtering / sorting*

It is easy to filter and sort in Excel. Depending on the version of Excel you have, you will do something similar to the following steps:

1. Place the cursor in the row on which you wish to filter (e.g. the black row of headings in the downloaded sheet)—see Figure 102 below (showing an example with Commons questions);
2. Go to the "Data" menu at the top
3. Select the "Filter" option
4. Each cell in the row selected (i.e. the Header) will then display a little arrow on the right side. If you click the arrow in one of the cells, you have the option of filtering the data on any value given in that column by ticking or unticking particular values such as "Unanswered after due date".
5. When you have filtered on one or more cells, the arrow on the right will turn into a funnel icon (see 103 below). To remove filtering again, click the funnel icon and tick the "Select All" option and press OK;
6. Use the same functionality to sort records, for example in date order.

**Figure 102: Filtering in Excel I**



**Figure 103: Filtering in Excel II**



## Other helpful spreadsheet functionality

Using a spreadsheet such as MS Excel, you can easily:

1. Create tables showing, for example the number or percentage of questions answered "on Named Day" or "after Named Day", "Not Available", or the numbers of questions answered by individual ministers etc.
2. Create graphs showing your performance management information in a more visual way.

## 14.2 Performance reporting in the House of Commons

In the House of Commons, the way in which performance data is produced depends on the type of question.

**Named Day Questions:** Performance data is generated and displayed exactly as outlined for the House of Lords in sections [14.1.1](#) and [14.1.2](#) above. Complete data is included in the Excel download file that you can generate yourself.

**Ordinary Questions:** the Q&A system does not have access to all the data required to produce complete performance data for ordinary questions and it is therefore generated by the Gatekeeper on the basis of the time-stamped records contained in the Q&A system along with a calendar spreadsheet and an Excel macro. The Gatekeeper will provide this data to you on a term by term basis.

The remainder of this section relates to ordinary Commons Questions.

## 14.2.1 The “target date” calendar for ordinary Questions

At regular intervals, subject to the availability of sitting day information, the Commons Gatekeeper will send ABs a calendar setting out target dates for questions tabled in the forthcoming months. It is against this calendar that AB performance will be recorded and reported to the Procedure Committee in due course.

Target dates for written answers to ordinary questions in the House of Commons derive from a Procedure Committee recommendation from 2009:

*“[...] we firmly believe that ordinary WPQs should receive an answer within five working days, and certainly no later than ten working days. We urge the Government to work to this timetable.”<sup>4</sup>*

We therefore have two “target dates” for questions in the House of Commons:

- **Green target:** five working days
- **Amber target:** ten working days

Target dates will be calculated from the Date for Answer—i.e. the first day on which you are *allowed* to answer the question.

The calendar generated by the Gatekeeper will generate all days into one of the following categories:

- **Count days:** count towards calculation of target dates and could itself be a target dates,
- **Non-Count days:** Do not count towards target dates and cannot themselves be target dates.

In rare and unusual circumstances, you might also find a third category used:

- **Blank days:** count towards calculation of target dates but could not themselves be target dates.

Figure 104 below shows an illustration (not a genuine example) of a sitting day calendar that the Gatekeeper will be sending out to Answering Bodies.

Every line in the calendar corresponds to a date, as displayed in the “Date for answer” column. So if you have a Commons “Ordinary” written Question with a date for answer of “X”, you find the line in the spreadsheet corresponding to date for answer “X”. Like every other day in the calendar, you will see that it has been classified with “Day details” (i.e. sitting day, non-sitting day, Weekend or Recess) and “Day Type” (i.e. “Count” or “Non-Count”). In figure 104 below you will see that the questions with a “Date for Answer” on Wednesday 16 July 2014 would have had five and ten day deadlines on Tuesday 22 and Tuesday 29 July 2014 respectively – however, this is just an illustration not a genuine example.

---

<sup>4</sup> Procedure Committee, July 2009, Third Report of Session 2008-09, para 94

# Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

Figure 104: Example of the Gatekeeper's target date calendar

The Date for Answer is the basis for calculation of Commons target dates

The Table Office will determine how days are marked in the calendar on the basis of the decisions of the Procedure Committee. How the day is marked determines how it is used in the calculation of target dates.

Session	Date for answer	Day details	Day Type	5 day Target	10 day Target
2014/15	13 Jul 2014 (Sun)	Weekend	Non-Count		
2014/15	14 Jul 2014 (Mon)	Sitting Day	Count	18 Jul 2014 15:00:59 (Fri)	25 Jul 2014 15:00:59 (Fri)
2014/15	15 Jul 2014 (Tue)	Sitting Day	Count	21 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Mon)	28 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Mon)
2014/15	16 Jul 2014 (Wed)	Sitting Day	Count	22 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Tue)	29 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Tue)
2014/15	17 Jul 2014 (Thu)	Sitting day	Count	23 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Wed)	30 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Wed)
2014/15	18 Jul 2014 (Fri)	Non-sitting Friday	Count		
2014/15	19 Jul 2014 (Sat)	Weekend	Non-Count		
2014/15	20 Jul 2014 (Sun)	Weekend	Non-Count		
2014/15	21 Jul 2014 (Mon)	Sitting day	Count	25 Jul 2014 15:00:59 (Fri)	01 Aug 2014 15:00:59 (Fri)
2014/15	22 Jul 2014 (Tue)	Sitting Day	Count	28 Jul 2014 18:00:59 (Mon)	04 Aug 2014 18:00:59 (Mon)
2014/15	23 Jul 2014 (Wed)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	24 Jul 2014 (Thu)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	25 Jul 2014 (Fri)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	26 Jul 2014 (Sat)	Weekend	Non-Count		
2014/15	27 Jul 2014 (Sun)	Weekend	Non-Count		
2014/15	28 Jul 2014 (Mon)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	29 Jul 2014 (Tue)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	30 Jul 2014 (Wed)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	31 Jul 2014 (Thu)	Recess day	Count		
2014/15	01 Aug 2014 (Fri)	Recess day	Count		

A question with DfA on Wednesday 16 July would have target dates on Tuesday 22 July and Tuesday 29 July in this example.

Under normal circumstances, non-sitting Fridays and Recess days will be classified as "Count" days. Weekends and Bank Holidays are "Non-Count" days.

## 14.2.2 The Gatekeeper's performance report for ordinary questions—detailed performance management and record keeping in the Commons

Just as the Gatekeeper produces the forward-looking calendar setting out the classification of future days, so s/he will send you spreadsheets looking back over the last few months, showing performance against the five and ten day targets for each question. Whilst you can download all the information on Named Day Questions from the system yourself, the file from the Gatekeeper will contain all the information on both Ordinary and Named Day questions. Performance Status for both types of questions are contained in the colour-coded column named "Performance Status 2" (see 105 below).

Figure 105: Example of the performance spreadsheet produced by the Gatekeeper

UIN	Tabled Date	Question Ty	Member	Status	Date For An	5-day target	10-day target	Answer Submitted	Performance Status 2	Flag	Answering Minister	Group Id	No of Attach	Holding
228599	20/03/2015	Ordinary	Katy Clark	Answered	24/03/2015	26/03/2015 18:00	26/03/2015 18:00	26/03/2015 15:10	Answered within 5 day target	✓	Matthew Hancock		0	
228763	23/03/2015	Named Day	Kerry McCarthy	Answered	26/03/2015			26/03/2015 14:41	Answered on Named Day	✓	Jo Swinson		0	
226986	10/03/2015	Ordinary	Mr Andrew Smith	Answered	12/03/2015	18/03/2015 18:00	25/03/2015 18:00	19/03/2015 16:17	Answered within 10 day target	✓	Greg Clark		0	
228204	18/03/2015	Named Day	Nick Smith	Answered	23/03/2015			26/03/2015 15:26	Answered after Named Day	✓	Matthew Hancock		0 Y	
225608	26/02/2015	Ordinary	Mr David Ward	Answered	02/03/2015	06/03/2015 15:00	13/03/2015 15:00	20/03/2015 10:40	Answered after 10 day target	✓	Greg Clark		0	
225226	24/02/2015	Named Day	Mr Chuka Umunna	Holding	27/02/2015				Unanswered after Named Day	✗	Greg Clark		0 Y	
225083	24/02/2015	Ordinary	Sir Alan Haselhurst	Tabled	26/02/2015	04/03/2015 18:00	11/03/2015 18:00		Unanswered After 10 day target	✗				
225484	25/02/2015	Named Day	Liz Kendall	Withdrawn	02/03/2015				Not available					

The Performance Status can be classified as follows:

- **Green**—unanswered within 5 day target
- **Green**—answered by 5 day target / on named day
- **Amber**—unanswered within 10 day target
- **Amber**—answered by 10 day target
- **Pink**—unanswered after 10 day target / named day
- **Red**—answered after 10 day target or named day
- **Clear**—not available (e.g. question withdrawn)

### ***14.2.3 Reporting to the Procedure Committee***

With effect from the beginning of the 2015 Parliament, the Gatekeeper will produce performance reports for the Procedure Committee. Note that performance reporting for the 2014-15 Session of the last Parliament remains the responsibility of Answering Bodies through the Office of the Leader of the House.

The Gatekeeper will produce summaries of the data across all ABs in tabular or graphical form for the Procedure Committee. You will always have the opportunity to see the data on which the analysis is based before it is submitted to the Committee.

It may be appropriate in some circumstances for ABs to submit additional explanatory information in relation to performance data.

## ***15 Prorogation***

Detailed procedural guidance about prorogation will be issued by the Gatekeepers in the final weeks of the session.

The Q&A system will cease to accept answers at the moment of prorogation therefore the usual deadlines do not apply on the day of prorogation.

The exact timing of prorogation is hard to predict and ABs should try to answer questions the day before prorogation is planned.

ABs should remember that question and answers data will be deleted from the Q&A system after the session has ended but will remain on the public web pages. ABs are advised to use the 'Excel download' function to download their data after the session has ended for their own reference.

## *16 Glossary of terms used in this user guide*

Answering Body (AB)	all Government Departments and the Leader of the House—also organisations such as the Church Commissioners and Committees of either House for which a Member is responsible for answering questions (for example, the Speaker’s Committee on IPSA).
API	Application Programming Interface an interface which will allow Answering Bodies to import questions data from, and export answer data directly back into, the Q&A system.
Gatekeeper	Parliamentary users with extra functionality and extra responsibility including the ability to check corrections and return them to Answering Bodies. The Gatekeeper in the Lords will review all answers before they are received by the Members and published. The Gatekeeper in the Commons will only review corrections to questions that have been answered.
Super user	user in Answering Body with extra functionality including the ability to set up new accounts for that Answering Body.
UIN	Unique Identifying Number. Commons questions currently have a six digit Unique Identifying Number (e.g. 144425) while House of Lords questions are a number prefixed with “HL” (e.g. HL4865).



## *17 Queries/problems with the system*

If you experience any issues with the Q&A System or have any questions on how to use the system, please contact the dedicated Q&A Super Users in your team/Department.

If they are not available or cannot answer your question, please contact the two Houses.

### **COMMONS:**

Commons Gatekeeper (based in the Table Office)

By phone: **020 7219 3731** or

By e-mail: [tableoffice@parliament.uk](mailto:tableoffice@parliament.uk)

### **LORDS:**

*For questions about relating to Members, transfers or the content of questions*

HL Table Office:

By phone: 020 7219 3036

By e-mail: [minute@parliament.uk](mailto:minute@parliament.uk)

*For questions about the gatekeeper role*

HL Hansard Gatekeeper:

By phone: 0207 219 1596 or

By e-mail: [QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk](mailto:QWA.HoL.Gatekeeper@parliament.uk)

Before contacting us about a problem with the system, please make sure you are in a position to tell us:

1. **What exactly is the problem?** Please provide details (Date and time of the problem)
2. The UIN of the question or details of the statement.
3. **User/s affected** including user name and access permission.
4. **Supporting information:** e.g. screenshot of any error message or screen/page causing the problem, if relevant.
5. **Severity** ranging from:
  - a. **Highest** – we can't do our job until this is fixed, immediate fix required;
  - b. **High** – we can work around/with this temporarily but it should be fixed ASAP;
  - c. **Medium** – the problem is irritating but we can work with this until it is fixed, and
  - d. **Low** – we can live with the problem but it would be nice to fix it sometime.

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

<b>Version History of this User Guide</b>			
<b>Document Version</b>	<b>UAT System Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Summary of Change</b>
0.1	V1.0.1.435-UAT	5 June 2013	First draft for initial “Show and Tell” session with answering bodies in June 2013
0.1a	V1.0.1.435-UAT	6 June 2013	AT, MB and TY amendments incorporated
0.2	V1.0.2.521-UAT	2 July 2013	Updated URL link to UAT, added contact details, Added User Management, sign-in, menu bar and navigation to different parts of the system, updated question status, added paragraph on Written Statements and a note on reports
0.3	V.1.0.3.11-UAT	November 2013	Updated to include the guidance on downloading the questions file and new functionality such as formatting of answers. Also extra screen shots included. This version is intended for use by the Answering Bodies during user testing in November.
0.4	V.1.0.3.11-UAT	November 2013	Updated to include searching by UIN.
0.5	V.1.0.5.5	December 2013	Updated to include changes to the AB home page such as extra filters and extra statuses.
0.6	V.1.0.6.5	January 2014	Updated to include changes to the AB answer page and answer preview page.
0.7	V.1.	February 2014	Updated to include guidance for roll-out in March 2014.
0.8	V.1.	February 2014	Updated to include both Commons and Lords procedural guidance.
0.9.	Live System Version V.1.4.25.0	June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advice on the process for transfers (incl rule changes in the Commons) included</li> <li>Amendments throughout from both Houses and project team included for new session</li> </ul>
0.9..1	Live System Version V.1.4.25.0	June 2014	Guidance on corrections added
1.0	Live system Version 1.8	September 2014	Guidance added for Commons go live
1.1	Live version system 1.9	October 2014	Guidance added for Lords go live.

## Parliamentary Written Questions and Answers

1.2	Live version 2.1	December 2014	Guidance on written statements for go live.
1.3	Live version 2.5	June 2015	Guidance on reporting and minor changes made.
1.4	Live version 2.5	July 2017	General updating of guidance from both Houses.