

# Official Publications

## LOCATION

All current Government and Parliamentary material is located on the Gallery in bays 160 - 190. Some Parliamentary Papers are stored off-site, but can be retrieved within 24 hours. Lincoln's Inn Library specialises in Parliamentary materials and holds a more comprehensive collection, which members of Middle Temple are entitled to use.

Many publications are now freely available online through various government websites, and the Library subscribes to additional databases to supplement these materials. Remember to search the online catalogue to view the Library's full print holdings, or speak to a librarian if you have any questions about where to find a particular document.

## LEGISLATION

The Library holds copies of primary legislation from 1235 onward, with Local Acts from 1801 onward. Secondary legislation in the form of Statutory Instruments are held from 1890-2009.

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

Rules, Regulations and Orders all come under the heading of Statutory Instruments.

Rules and Regulations are issued to update parts of an Act so that a new Act need not be passed.

Commencement Orders are issued to bring into force whole or part of an Act that has not come into effect immediately upon Royal Assent.

The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple  
The Library, Ashley Building  
Middle Temple Lane  
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## CONTACT

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## PRIMARY LEGISLATION

There are several options for finding legislative commentary and amended versions of Acts. In addition to a range of textbooks and regularly updated looseleaf encyclopaedias, the following titles are particularly useful.

*Halsbury's Statutes* provide a comprehensive annotated record of all Acts of Parliament currently in force and is organised by subject. It has regular looseleaf releases and supplements to ensure coverage is fully up-to-date.

*The JustisOne database hosts pdf versions of all Public General and Local Acts in their original form.*

### LOCAL ACTS

To determine whether a Local Act has been amended or repealed, search the *Chronological Table of Local Legislation* [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

The tables are not completely current, so it is necessary to follow up by checking a resource like the *Current Law Legislation Citor* for recent changes.

*Current Law Statutes Annotated* (1948 onwards) provide a means of monitoring legislative change in the UK through tables of statutes and bills, lists of SIs, details of white and green papers and references to Hansard. It is annotated by experts offering analytical commentary on the legislation and has an updating service for material not yet covered in the bound volumes.

*Butterworths Annotated Legislation* provides authoritative commentary on Acts, with informative explanatory notes written by experts in relevant fields.

*Halsbury's Laws* is an encyclopaedia of current law in England and Wales. Although it does not provide full text cases or Acts, it is a useful resource for starting research in a particular area of law. Organised by subject, footnotes provide details on relevant case law and legislation for each area.



**UK Parliament Buildings.** Image reproduced with the permission of Parliament.

## BILLS

Bills generally fall into two categories: public and private.

Public bills relate to matters of public policy applying to the general population and are the most common type of bill. Either House can introduce a bill. Bills will have three readings in each House (reported in *Hansard*). Between readings, bills are sent to Public/Standing Bill Committees for debate and scrutiny (Standing Committee Reports are held at Lincoln's Inn). If a Bill begins in the Lords the debate and scrutiny is of the whole house and is entirely reported in *Hansard*.

Private bills are directed at the interests of an individual, corporation or local authority. Historically, these were marriage enabling or estate settlements, or promoted by commercial promoters of roads, canals and railways. The Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship) Act 1986 and the Transport and Works Act 1992 reduced the amount of private legislation required for these purposes, and today Parliament considers very few private bills. Private bills can also be introduced in either House and will similarly follow the same stages as public bills.

## HYBRID BILLS

A third type of bill, hybrid bills, are comparatively rare.

These are promoted by the government but affect private interests. Examples include the Channel Tunnel bills of the 1970's and Crossrail bill of 2005-07.



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## TREATIES ONLINE

### *Flare Index to Treaties*

Searchable database of significant multi- and bilateral treaties. Hosted by IALS.

[ials.sas.ac.uk/library/flag/introtreaties.htm](http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/flag/introtreaties.htm)

### *Foreign and Commonwealth Office*

Information on tracking treaties, database of UK treaties and enquiry service.

[www.gov.uk/uk-treaties](http://www.gov.uk/uk-treaties)

### *Law Library of Congress*

Information on researching treaties and links to treaty texts.

[www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/treaties.php](http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/treaties.php)

### *United Nations Treaty Collection*

Full text, information on ratification and status of treaties deposited with UN since 1946 and League of Nations Treaty Series 1920-1944. [treaties.un.org](http://treaties.un.org)

## PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

The official report of the House of Commons or Lords (*Hansard*) is a full, although not verbatim, report of the proceedings of the Houses as recorded by reporters. It is published in daily, weekly, and fortnightly editions. The library keeps the bound volumes, which incorporate any corrections off-site. A sessional index in the final volume covers all debates, motions, and questions recorded, with the names of all Members contributing to business.

Debates are cited by reference to the House, volume number, year, and column number. For example: HC 239 (1907) col.1356.

## WHITE AND GREEN PAPERS

White papers always appear as Command Papers. They are statements of intent or policy by the Government. The paper usually outlines proposals for changes in legislation and a Bill will always follow a white paper.

Green papers are consultation papers and do not necessarily lead to a bill. Green papers are published by individual Government Departments as a consultative or discussion paper, and they invite comments from the public. Some green papers are issued as Command Papers.

*Access 18th, 19th and 20th century House Papers and Command Papers on UK Parliamentary Papers from ProQuest.*

## HOUSE PAPERS

House of Commons Papers include many documents such as: reports from Select Committees of the House of Commons, annual reports and accounts, supply estimates, and reports of government departments or commissions. House of Lords papers, meanwhile, include reports from Select Committees of the House of Lords, Acts of Parliament, and Bills.

## COMMAND PAPERS

There are six series of Command Papers. These are cited as:

- C. 1870-1899
- Cd. 1900-1918
- Cmd. 1919-1955/56
- Cmnd. 1956-1986
- Cm. 1986-2018
- CP 2019 onwards

Command Papers are formally presented to Parliament by command of the Queen; although, in practice the responsible government department presents the paper. Command papers encompass several types of documents, including: annual reports of certain bodies, treaties, Government replies to Select Committee reports, reports of Royal Commissions, state papers, white papers, some green papers, and reports of some major Committees, Commissions, and non-Parliamentary bodies.

## PEPPER V HART RESEARCH

The decision in *Pepper (Inspector of Taxes) v Hart* [1993] AC 593 allows for Parliamentary statements to be considered in court in certain circumstances. For example, speech made in Parliament by Ministers or other promoters of a Bill in construing that legislation may be referenced when legislation is ambiguous or obscure.

*Public Information Online* allows users to conduct Pepper v Hart research by building a collection of materials around a specific bill. The database includes Lords papers, Bills, Standing Committee/Public Bill Committee reports and Hansards dating back to 1919.



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## SUBSCRIPTION DATABASES

The Library subscribes to several databases that provide access to various official publications and related commentary.

**JUSTISONE**

**LEXIS**

**WESTLAW**

**PROQUEST (UK PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS)**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION ONLINE**

These databases are only accessible from computers in the library, and their coverage of primary and secondary legislation is outlined on the last page of this guide.



*Subscription databases are available from any Library computer terminal.*

### PARLIAMENTARY ONLINE

*British History Online* - Primary and secondary sources of British history by the Institute of Historical Research, University of London.  
[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

*Digitised Historical Parliamentary Material* - Links to legislation, debates, papers, proceedings, journals, judgments, devolved parliaments and archives.

[archives.parliament.uk/online-resources/](http://archives.parliament.uk/online-resources/)

*Hansard* - Hosted by Parliament. Searchable Hansard from 1803–current  
[hansard.parliament.uk/](http://hansard.parliament.uk/)

### LEGISLATION ONLINE

Many official publications are freely available in official and unofficial formats online.

*BAILII* - Statutes, SIs and other legislation. [www.bailii.org](http://www.bailii.org)

*Government* - Legislation and information on local government, political parties and government departments, offices and agencies.  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

*Law Commission* - Reports and Consultation Papers since 1996.  
[www.lawcom.gov.uk/document/](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/document/)

*Legislation.gov* - Legislation, SIs and selected legislation from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

*UK Parliament* - Information about the Houses of Commons and Lords, Hansard and Bills. Live broadcasting from Parliament.  
[www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)



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## DEVOLVED PARLIAMENTS

For questions relating specifically to Northern Ireland, Scotland, or Wales, it may be necessary to see materials produced by the relevant devolved Assemblies or Parliaments. Selected print resources from these jurisdictions are held at the library, but for specialist collections see either Inner Temple's library (for Scotland) or Gray's Inn Library (for Northern Ireland).

Some materials and information about the devolved Parliaments are freely available online.

*National Assembly for Wales* - Publications from committees, Plenary sessions and records of proceedings. [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org)

*Northern Ireland Assembly* - Legislation, End of Session Reports, Order Papers, Official Reports, and Standing Orders. [www.niassembly.gov.uk](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk)

*Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* - Searchable database produced by Scottish Parliament Project researchers at the School of History, University of St Andrews. Includes proceedings of the Scottish parliament from 1235-1707. [www.rps.ac.uk](http://www.rps.ac.uk)

*Scottish Parliament* - Publications from Parliamentary committees, bills and official reports. [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

## PARLIAMENTARY ONLINE

*The History of Parliament* - Parliamentary and political history from 1386-1868.

[www.histparl.ac.uk](http://www.histparl.ac.uk)

*Online Historical Population Reports (OHPR)* - Population reports of Britain and Ireland from 1801-1937. Includes censuses, registrar general reports, essays, legislation, a bibliography and national archive documents.

[www.histpop.org](http://www.histpop.org)

*Parliamentary Publications and Records* - Recent Parliamentary documents including Hansard, Commons and Lords business papers, committee publications, research briefings, agendas, minutes and links to historical materials.

[www.parliament.uk/business/publications/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/)

*Official Documents* - Papers presented to Parliament by outside bodies. Includes Command Papers and departmentally sponsored House of Commons Papers from 2005 onward.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>

## ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

See the tables to the right for coverage of primary and secondary legislation freely available through [legislation.gov.uk](http://legislation.gov.uk), and through the Library's subscription databases: JustisOne, Lexis, Public Information Online (PIO) and Westlaw.

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### PUBLIC GENERAL ACTS

TITLE	DATES	AS ENACTED	POINT IN TIME	AMENDED	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
JustisOne	1235 - present	✓			
Legislation.gov	1267 - present	✓	✓	✓	Free. Incomplete 1267-1987.
Lexis	Currently in force		✓	✓	Historic versions from 1988-
PIO	1919-	✓			
Westlaw	1949 - present	✓	✓	✓	Includes all Acts that were in force as of 1991.

### LOCAL ACTS

TITLE	DATES	AS ENACTED	POINT IN TIME	AMENDED	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
JustisOne	1797 - present	✓			
Legislation.gov	1857 - present	✓			Free. Incomplete 1857-1990.
PIO	1991-	✓			
Westlaw	1991 - present	✓	✓	✓	Incomplete amended coverage.

### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

TITLE	DATES	AS ENACTED	POINT IN TIME	AMENDED	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
JustisOne	1671 - present	✓			
Legislation.gov	1948 - present	✓			Free. Incomplete 1948-1986.
Lexis	Currently in force			✓	
Westlaw	1948 - present	✓	✓	✓	Incomplete 1948-1991.