

House of Lords – New Peers Briefing

Electoral Reform Society, August 2020



Key findings

- **A majority of new peers (58%) were primarily elected politicians prior to entering the Lords** – more than double the proportion of current peers in the Lords as a whole. Once they formally join the Lords, 30% of peers will have been in representative politics (primarily MPs and council leaders). Another 8% were primarily political staff or activists, compared to a tiny fraction of the public.
- In addition to representative politics, the most common primary professions of peers remain political staff/activists, and business and commerce.
- Four new peers (11%) have a primary background in journalism, media or publishing. The proportion of peers with this background will increase by 0.3 percentage points once they formally join the Lords.
- [ONS data](#) shows that 5.2% of all those in paid work in the UK worked for the NHS *alone* as of December 2019. The [King's Fund](#) says that one in 10 UK workers are in health or social care. Yet just 1.9% of peers have a primary background in medical and healthcare work.
- Only 3% of the UK workforce was employed in the financial and insurance industry as of March 2020, which compares with 6.4% of peers in banking and finance (Figures are not like for like but provide a comparison: [data](#) from ONS).

Professions

Primary profession	Current peers	%	New peers	%	All peers	%
Representative politics	218	28.2%	21	58.3%	239	29.6%
Political staff and activists	66	8.5%	1	2.8%	67	8.3%
Business and commerce	65	8.4%			65	8.0%
Legal professions	53	6.9%			53	6.6%
Banking and finance	49	6.3%	3	8.3%	52	6.4%
Higher education	40	5.2%	1	2.8%	41	5.1%
Clergy or religious	37	4.8%			37	4.6%
Voluntary sector, NGOs and think tanks	33	4.3%			33	4.1%
Journalism, media and publishing	31	4.0%	4	11.1%	35	4.3%
Other private sector	28	3.6%	1	2.8%	29	3.6%
Trade unions	20	2.6%	1	2.8%	21	2.6%
Culture, arts and sport	19	2.5%	2	5.6%	21	2.6%
Agriculture and horticulture	15	1.9%			15	1.9%
Medical and healthcare	15	1.9%			15	1.9%
Armed forces	15	1.9%	1	2.8%	16	2.0%
Other public sector	12	1.6%			12	1.5%
Civil service (UK)	10	1.3%	1	2.8%	11	1.4%
International affairs and diplomacy	10	1.3%			10	1.2%
Unclassified	9	1.2%			9	1.1%

Architecture, engineering and construction	8	1.0%			8	1.0%
Police	8	1.0%			8	1.0%
Education and training (not HE)	5	0.6%			5	0.6%
Transport	3	0.4%			3	0.4%
Royal family staff	2	0.3%			2	0.2%
Local authority administration	1	0.1%			1	0.1%
Manual and skilled trades	0	0.0%			0	0.0%

Sources used for the new appointments were the [Spectator](#), Politico [Playbook](#) and referenced Wiki sources. Dods, online CVs, and referenced Wiki entries were used for the current peers.

Grouping

- The majority new peers belong to the Conservative grouping (53%), which increases the Conservatives' presence in the Lords by 0.9 percentage points
- Only 13.9% of new peers belong to the Labour Party group, whose proportion of peers in the Lords decreases from 22.9% to 22.5%
- The presence of Crossbenchers is also slightly diminished (0.6 percentage points)

	Current peers	% of current peers in this group	New peers	%	All peers	%
Bishops	26	3.4%	0	0	26	3.2%
Conservative (inc. Conservative Independent)	243	31.5%	19	52.8%	262	32.4%
Crossbench	178	23.1%	4	11.1%	182	22.5%
Labour (inc. Independent Labour and Labour Independent)	177	22.9%	5	13.9%	182	22.5%
Liberal Democrat	89	11.5%	0	0.0%	89	11.0%
Lord Speaker	1	0.1%	N/A	-	1	0.1%
Non-affiliated	47	6.1%	7	19.4%	54	6.7%
Other	11	1.4%	1	2.8%	12	1.5%

Gender

- Less than a third of new appointments are female, which will do little to combat the gender imbalance in the HoL. Out of the now 808 peers, almost 600 of them (almost three quarters) are male.

	Current peers	New peers	All peers
Male	560	25	585
% male	73%	69%	72%
Female	212	11	223
% female	27%	31%	28%