Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in applying for a position in the House of Commons Service.

We are a diverse organisation, with staff from a range of backgrounds working in a wide variety of different roles. We are all dedicated to delivering the highest standards of service to the House of Commons, its MPs and the public.

We want talented individuals to join our team, who share our commitment to these objectives, and want to be part of a dynamic and modern organisation.

In regular surveys our staff consistently report that the House of Commons is a good place to work; a tribute both to the organisation itself and to the unique challenges and rewards of a career in Parliament. We value our staff highly, and are committed to helping everyone reach their full potential: it is only through individuals that we can deliver the high quality services that the House requires.

I hope that this booklet provides you with an insight into what it is like to work for the House of Commons and I would like to wish you the very best of luck with your application.

Malcolm Jack
Clerk of the House and Chief Executive
The House of Commons Service

The House of Commons Service supports the House and its MPs in performing their parliamentary duties, and provides public access and information to help increase understanding of the role of Parliament.

We work for Parliament rather than the Government, so employees are not civil servants – but our terms and conditions are very similar. We employ around 1700 staff across four departments, each providing its own specialist advice and resources. We are all passionate about our work, and we seek out talented individuals who share our enthusiasm and can bring the skills and experience we need to help us provide the best possible services.

Our staff work in a range of different roles and at all levels. But no matter where you find yourself or what you’re doing, you will be working in a stimulating and unique environment at the very heart of democracy in the United Kingdom.
The House of Commons Service is divided into four departments:

- Chamber and Committee Services
- Facilities
- Information Services
- Resources

There is also a small Office of the Chief Executive, and the separate Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology Department (PICT), which also works for the House of Lords.

Each department provides specific services to MPs, their staff and the public. The Management Board oversees the House Service and is comprised of the Director General of each department and chaired by the Clerk of the House. The service is ultimately accountable to the Speaker and the House of Commons Commission.
The early councils or Parliaments could be summoned to meet wherever the King happened to be, which might or might not be in Westminster. The House of Commons had no permanent home until 1547, when it was given permission by Edward VI to meet in St Stephen's Chapel in the Palace of Westminster.

The **Department of Chamber and Committee Services** supports the business of the House and its committees. Three directorates provide procedural advice and secretariat services to the House, the Speaker and the Deputy Speakers, to the committees appointed by the House, and to individual MPs. The department also reports the proceedings of the House and committees (Hansard) and is responsible for ceremonial and security services (Serjeant at Arms).
The Department of Facilities manages the Parliamentary Estate and provides a safe and functioning environment for everyone working in or visiting Parliament. This includes long term estate planning, the provision of expert advice on the preservation of the Palace of Westminster as a World Heritage Site, planning and delivery of maintenance work, placing contracts and management of capital projects. The department also manages all office accommodation, cleaning, mail delivery and room bookings.

The Catering and Retail Services arm of the department provides meals, refreshments and banqueting services and manages the souvenir kiosks.

The first so-called ‘Speaker’ was Sir Thomas Hungerford in 1377, but up until the 17th century the Speaker was often an agent of the King.
Civil war broke out in 1642 between Charles I and his Royalist supporters and the Parliamentarians led by Oliver Cromwell. The defeat of the Royalists in the civil war and execution of Charles I in 1649 led to a period of leadership under Cromwell as Lord Protector before the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660.

The Department of Information Services provides research, analysis, library and information services for the House of Commons. Its main responsibility is to serve MPs and their staff; it also provides public information services including outreach, parliamentary education and visitor services, media and communications and online services. The office of the Curator of Works of Art is also based here.
In 1688-9 the Glorious Revolution declared William of Orange and Queen Mary as joint sovereigns and established the Declaration of Rights which embodied the relationship between the monarch and Parliament.

The **Department of Resources** provides a range of professional and administrative services to the House of Commons. These include financial and HR services to MPs and their staff, covering pay, pensions, and allowances as well as HR, finance and other business services to staff of the House. The department also provides leadership in the corporate development of organisational capability in the areas of finance, human resources, and procurement.

**Ruggie Jalloh**
Validation Officer
During the reign of the Hanoverian, George I, the office of Prime Minister developed under Robert Walpole. He served almost 21 years and remains the longest-serving Prime Minister to date.

The **Office of the Chief Executive** supports the Clerk of the House in his role as Chief Executive, Accounting Officer and Corporate Officer, and the Management Board in its strategic leadership of the House of Commons Service. Its aim is to contribute to the provision of a high quality service to MPs, their staff and the public, by co-ordinating strategic planning, performance management and communications across the House Service and providing assurance to the Chief Executive about the effectiveness of internal controls and risk management.
In 1832, the First Reform Act doubled the franchise (right to vote) so that 20% of males could vote.

The House of Lords

The House of Lords is the second chamber of the UK Parliament. It plays an important part in revising legislation and scrutinising Government. Members of the Lords are unelected, unpaid, and have a wide range of experience and independent expertise.

The House of Lords is a separate employer, with over 430 staff employed across 13 offices, largely mirroring the range of activities in the Commons. Some deal with the business of the House, including the Legislation Committees Offices and Hansard. Others, such as Human Resources, Finance, Library and the Information Office, work in support of the House. Black Rod’s Office provides ceremonial and security services for the House of Lords. The Department of Facilities provides Refreshment and accommodation services. The Refreshment Department provides catering services and manages the souvenir kiosks.
Progress was slow, with women not gaining the right to vote until 1918, and Nancy Astor being the first woman to take her seat in the Commons in 1919. Finally, in 1928, all men and women over 21 gained the right to vote on equal terms. The voting age was lowered to 18 in 1969.

Parliamentary Information and Communications Technology (PICT)

PICT works for Parliament as the provider of ICT services, and as a business partner working with the administrations of both Houses to build infrastructure and systems which enable Parliament to work effectively and engage with the public. PICT has combined expert knowledge and skills from both Houses, covering disciplines such as IT, Project Management, Business Analysis and Change Management. It aims to achieve world class standards in the delivery, support and exploitation of ICT in Parliament.

If you are interested in opportunities at the House of Lords or PICT you can view specific vacancies by visiting their recruitment page at www.parliament.uk.
Some of our benefits

As well as a generous annual leave entitlement of 28 days (rising to 40 days with continuous service) our staff have access to a range of other excellent benefits:

Pension scheme
The House of Commons Staff Pension Scheme (HOCSPS) is open to all staff and provides high quality benefits. The HOCSPS is similar to the Civil Service Pension Scheme, and includes the option of a defined benefit occupational pension scheme or a money purchase scheme. Further details are available on request.

Childcare voucher scheme
Staff with childcare responsibilities are entitled to Childcare Vouchers/Playscheme Vouchers (subject to certain criteria). The scheme is run by Childcare Vouchers Ltd.

Flexible working options
The House of Commons is committed to supporting staff who wish to work flexibly and we support a range of alternative working patterns across the organisation. We cannot guarantee that all of our posts are suitable for flexible working, but we will be happy to discuss your requirements, and will do our best to find a solution that balances your needs with those of the House.

Union membership
A Trade Union can support claims and represent points of view of individuals on questions affecting welfare and terms and conditions of service, and staff are strongly encouraged to join.

There are four main unions recognised by the House: PCS, GMB, Prospect, and the FDA. Each Union has different benefits, including individual advice, legal help, loans, insurance and other non-work related services.

Contact TUSA@parliament.uk for information on how to join.

Training and development
Every department of the House has a budget for staff development, and employees are actively supported in undertaking training or study that will improve their skills to the benefit of the House.

Season Ticket Loan
Interest-free loans can be provided for season tickets for travel between home and office within certain limits. These are available to staff when they have completed two months of service.

Bicycle Loan
Interest-free loans can be provided for bicycles for travel between home and office within certain limits. These are available to staff when they have completed two months of service.
Catering
Staff have access to a range of cafes, bars and restaurants catering for all preferences and budgets in both traditional and contemporary surroundings.

Sports and Social
The Houses of Parliament Sports and Social Club is open to all staff with a permanent security pass. There is a small annual subscription. The club’s facilities include a bar with hot and cold snacks.

Westminster Gymnasium
Membership of the in-house gym is available to employees for a subscription fee. Facilities include, saunas, steam room and a fully equipped gym with weights, resistance machines and an array of cardiovascular equipment.

Other benefits
Other benefits include the use of 2 post offices, a travel office and facilities for prayer and contemplation, as well as access to many areas of the historic Palace of Westminster.

FURTHER INFORMATION
The accompanying booklet, Applying to the House of Commons, can be downloaded from our recruitment website, and provides guidance to help you complete your application form.

For general enquiries about your application, or to give us feedback on this booklet or any other aspect of recruitment, please contact recruitment@parliament.uk

You can find out more about the work, role and history of Parliament at www.parliament.uk.