



# Who are the key Select Committee chairs?

The Chairs of the House of Commons Select Committees were elected on Wednesday night and these MPs will now guide their respective Committees over the coming parliament. But what do Select Committees do, and why are they important?

## Purpose

First and foremost, select committees scrutinise the work of the Government. They focus on three main aspects in this respect: finance, policy and administration. Departmental committees will have at least 11 members who will choose subjects for inquiries, whose evidence will form a report to be presented to the House of Commons and made public.

## Composition

The balance of Committee chairs reflects the split of seats in the House of Commons, and which committee is chaired by who can be negotiated by party whips, depending on which policy area the party is most interested in. When Committee chairs are elected the alternative vote system is used, with every MP given a vote on every chair. In the event only one MP is nominated, they will be elected unopposed. For the remaining members of the select committee, the number of seats allocated to each party is also arranged to reflect the split of seats in the House of Commons.

We've selected our top picks of the newly elected chairs - read on for background information and key points.



## Treasury Committee Nicky Morgan

- Morgan is the new Chair of this committee replacing Andrew Tyrie who did not stand in the 2017 General Election
- Previously Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities (July 2014- July 2016), Morgan has also held various positions in the Treasury which may be of benefit in her new role.
- A critic of the approach being taken towards Brexit.
- Is the first woman MP to hold the position of Treasury Committee Chair.



## Home Affairs Committee Yvette Cooper

- Was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (June 2009-May 2010) and served as Shadow Home Secretary for four years (January 2011-September 2015).
- Married to former MP Ed Balls who was a key figure under Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Ed Miliband and has held various positions.
- Worked for Bill Clinton on his successful 1992 election campaign.
- Has been Chair of the committee since October 2016.



## Foreign Affairs Committee Tom Tugendhat

- Tugendhat is the new Chair of this committee after beating incumbent Crispin Blunt
- Served in the British Army (2003-2013) and served as military assistant to the Chief of the Defence Staff, received an MBE in 2010.
- Established one of the first public relations companies in Lebanon.
- Is an active supporter of the Alzheimer's Society.



## Exiting the European Union Committee Hilary Benn

- Has served on both the Cabinet and the Shadow Cabinet in a variety of roles including Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (October 2011-May 2015) and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (June 2007-May 2010).
- He is a fourth generation MP and son of iconic Labour MP Tony Benn.
- He is teetotal and a vegetarian.
- Has been Chair of the committee since October 2016.



## Defence Committee Julian Lewis

- Has had two separate spells as a Shadow Defence Minister (July 2002-July 2004 and May 2005-May 2010).
- Does not use email.
- Has a DPhil in Strategic Studies from the University of Oxford.
- Has been Chair of the committee since June 2015.



## Health Committee Sarah Wollaston

- Has worked in hospital paediatrics and as a general practitioner, as well as a police surgeon - she stopped practising medicine when elected in 2010.
- Her husband is a psychiatrist and registrar of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and one of her children works as a foundation doctor.
- Initially campaigned to leave the European Union but then switched her view and campaigned for the UK to remain.
- Has been very critical of the Government in relation to NHS funding.



## Education Committee Robert Halfon

- Halfon is the new Chair of this committee replacing Neil Carmichael who lost his seat in the 2017 General Election
- The Harlow MP was sacked from his role as Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills by Theresa May just one month ago.
- Halfon, a moderate Tory MP and former Remainer, has heavily criticised his party's general election campaign.
- He has suggested that the Tory tree logo should be replaced by a ladder, evoking self-improvement.



## Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee Rachel Reeves

- Reeves is the new Chair of this committee replacing Iain Wright
- Former economist Rachel Reeves is largely viewed as the party's rising star.
- Reeves was the only nominee to place the development of climate change policies amongst her priorities.
- Her sister Ellie is the Labour MP for Lewisham West and Penge and is married to John Cryer, Labour MP for Leyton and Wanstead.
- Reeves is married to Gordon Brown's former private secretary and speech writer.



## Science and Technology Committee Norman Lamb

- Lamb is the new Chair of this committee replacing Stephen Metcalfe
- Lib Dem Norman Lamb beat newly returned party colleague Jo Swinson to the position.
- Lamb was a candidate in the Lib Dem's 2015 leadership race, losing to Tim Farron.
- Lamb re-mortgaged his house to help fund his son's record label, which launched the career of grime artist Tinchy Stryder



## Transport Committee Lilian Greenwood

- Greenwood is the new Chair of this committee replacing Louise Ellman
- Lilian Greenwood resigned from her position as Shadow Secretary for Transport last June after having held the position for five years.
- She resigned from the front bench in response to Jeremy Corbyn's leadership.
- Greenwood worked for public sector trade union UNISON for 17 years.

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