

# Hansard Society

## for Parliamentary Democracy

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## Job Information Pack

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Researcher: Delegated Legislation

Deadline: 10am, Monday 7 August 2023



## ABOUT YOU AND THE ROLE

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The Hansard Society is looking for a full-time Researcher to expand our work on the parliamentary scrutiny of delegated legislation.

The purpose of this role is to:

- support the day-to-day delivery of our legislative monitoring service, the [Statutory Instrument Tracker®](#);
- strengthen our research capability, particularly in relation to legislative standards and the delegation of power in primary legislation;
- help promote the recommendations of our [Delegated Legislation Review](#); and
- provide training on the legislative process (for example for parliamentarians, MPs' staff, legal and public affairs firms, and civil society organisations).

If you are interested in law and politics and think parliamentary scrutiny matters, then this is a great opportunity to contribute to our research into one of the most significant constitutional and legal challenges facing the country. The problems with the delegated legislation system have long been known but Brexit and Covid-19 illuminated them in stark terms. In the Autumn our [Delegated Legislation Review](#) will lay out a comprehensive plan to address them. To support our campaign for reform of the delegated legislation system we need robust evidence about how the system works and what difference our reform proposals would make in practice. This role is a great opportunity to look 'under the hood' of the government and parliamentary machines and learn, in detail, how policy announcements made one day are converted into legislative action the next. You will also be supporting our broader agenda of work to help foster knowledge and understanding of the Westminster Parliament and ways in which Parliament can be made more effective.

We are therefore looking for a highly motivated researcher with a good working knowledge of the delegated legislation system, and the wider policies and procedures of the UK Parliament, gleaned either through work or study. For example, you might have studied or worked in the legal sector but have a good grasp of parliamentary politics. Perhaps you have worked in Parliament for a parliamentarian or parliamentary body and would relish the opportunity to help improve the way we make and scrutinise law. Or you might have worked for a think tank or advocacy group, or in a university, and have engaged with the legislative and scrutiny process.

Above all, you will have an excellent eye for detail and an ability to record quantitative data accurately, precisely and consistently. You'll be capable of conveying complex ideas and information cogently and succinctly, and of articulating them for a diverse range of audiences. Building and maintaining networks with a wide range of people at all levels of seniority in and around Parliament and government means you'll also need good inter-personal skills. Flexible and capable of working on your own initiative, you'll need to have the stamina to work, often up against tight deadlines, in a rapidly evolving political and parliamentary environment and with minimal supervision.

## As our Delegated Legislation Researcher, here's a taste of what you'll do:

- **Legislative monitoring.** Monitoring the progress of Statutory Instruments at all stages of the parliamentary process, you will update our [Statutory Instrument Tracker®](#) and other parliamentary datasets daily.
- **Research and analysis.** You will carry out high-quality research into the system of delegated legislation to help build the evidence-base for legislative and parliamentary reform. You will update our [Compendium on Legislative Standards for Delegating Powers in Primary Legislation](#) and produce [briefings on the delegation of power](#) in a selected number of Bills to support parliamentarians with their scrutiny of legislation.
- **Communications and events.** Working with colleagues, you will draft blogs, select committee evidence, academic journal articles and media opinion/comment pieces to communicate insights drawn from our research to influence public and parliamentary debate. You will also contribute to the development of online content for our data dashboards, newsletters, and social media, and help colleagues organise a programme of events to support our research and its dissemination.
- **Procedural training.** From time to time, you will demonstrate the [Statutory Instrument Tracker®](#) for potential clients and provide training on the legislative process, particularly delegated legislation, for a range of audiences.

## Your skills and experience

You will be the right person for this job if:

- You have a good working knowledge of the delegated legislation process, gleaned through work and/or study.
- You have excellent research skills, including an aptitude for collecting, organising and analysing statistical data.
- You have excellent verbal and written communication skills (particularly an ability to draft under time pressure).
- You are proficient in using Microsoft Excel (especially analytical tools and features such as pivot tables, filtering, conditional formatting, charting functions).
- You have excellent organisational and project management skills, an eye for detail, and the ability to juggle priorities and work with minimal supervision.
- You have exceptional people skills and are a collaborative team-player.
- You are a creative thinker and problem-solver with a 'can do' attitude.
- You appreciate our mission, have good political awareness, and can commit to the non-partisan values and ethos of the Hansard Society.

## WHAT WE OFFER

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**Contract:** This is a full-time post for a fixed term of 18 months. It is subject to a three-month probationary review. It may be possible to renew the contract after 18 months, funding permitting.

We would welcome applications from people working in relevant fields who are eligible for secondment for professional development purposes.

**Salary:** £38,000 per annum.

**Pension:** 7% contributory pension with a 2% minimum employee contribution.

**Annual leave:** 25 days plus the days between Christmas and New Year and bank/public holidays.

After successful completion of the three-month probationary period, staff are eligible for an interest-free season ticket loan (paid back via monthly salary deductions) and can purchase a bike through the Cycle-to-work Scheme (at reduced cost and repaid via salary deductions).

We support staff in developing their professional networks through bodies such as the Political Studies Association and the Study of Parliament Group.

The Society subscribes to an Employee Assistance Programme which offers advice and counselling via a confidential phone line and website, with advice provided on a wide range of subjects including personal financial and legal matters, and work-life balance.

**Location:** The post is based at our Westminster office (in Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London, SW1 P 4QP) with the option of some time working from home.

Occasional travel may be required to other parts of the UK for meetings and events, and the role may, from time to time, involve weekend/evening work.

Please note that you must be entitled to work in the UK.

# APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

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**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: 10am, Monday 7 August 2023**

The Society is using an anonymised online application process for the first stage of recruitment.

To apply, [follow this link](#).

## Online application

The application has four parts:

**1. About you:** Here we ask you to complete some personal details. This information will not be visible to those assessing your application.

**2. Practical questions:** There is just one question here. You are asked to confirm that you are entitled to work in the UK.

**3. Multiple choice test:** There are 15 questions, and you will have up to 30 minutes to complete the test. They cover comprehension, judgement, numeracy and verbal reasoning. Please make sure you have a calculator and notebook to hand! Once you start the test, a timer will count down in the corner of the screen. You cannot exit and re-start the test once you begin. So, make sure you set time aside to complete it in full.

**4. Short questions:** Here we ask you to complete 6 questions. Each question has a 250-word limit. The questions cover:

- your skills and experience for this role;
- your understanding of the delegated legislation system (x2);
- your understanding of parliamentary reform issues;
- your research skills;
- how you would prioritise different tasks.

This section is not timed. You can save your answers and leave the system if you want to, and then return and amend or complete your answers before submitting your application. Several of the questions require some basic online research so please plan ahead.

## Reviewing the applications

Each of your answers will be anonymised, randomised, and then reviewed by several different people. So, please do not refer in your answers to anything you have written in response to another question (for example, do not write things like “as explained earlier”). Once all the

applications have been reviewed anonymously, and the scores have been received from the different reviewers for each section, the resulting scores will be averaged. We will then compile a shortlist of candidates for interview. We are grateful to all candidates for taking the time to apply, and we think feedback is important. So, if you are not selected for interview, we will nonetheless contact you and let you know how you performed.

*We will only ask you to provide us with a CV and contact details for references if you score well on blind review and so reach the interview stage.*

## **Interviews**

First interviews will take place online via Zoom. It is anticipated that these will take place in the week commencing 14 August 2023.

If you are selected for a second interview this will likely be held the following week. These will be held in person. Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed.

## **Start date**

As soon as possible.

## **Enquiries**

If you wish to discuss this post informally with the Director, Ruth Fox, please email [recruitment@hansardsociety.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@hansardsociety.org.uk) and we will arrange a call at a mutually convenient time as soon as possible.

## **Your data**

The personal data we collect from your application will be processed in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

## **We are an equal opportunity employer**

We welcome and encourage applicants from all backgrounds. We do not discriminate based on age, disability, LGBT or relationship status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or social class. Currently, BME people are under-represented in our staff team, so we would particularly welcome applications from these communities.

# ABOUT THE HANSARD SOCIETY

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The Hansard Society is widely recognised as the Westminster Parliament's 'critical friend'. Through our research we develop ideas to improve the way Parliament works and through education, events and media engagement we strive to improve knowledge of and interest in the UK's parliamentary system.

The Society was founded by Stephen King-Hall MP in 1944 and our first members were Clement Attlee MP and Winston Churchill MP. Today, as in their day, we bring together parliamentarians and all those interested in parliamentary affairs in the UK and around the world.

A registered charity, the Society is a membership organisation which is governed by an independent Board of Trustees including representatives from across the political spectrum. The current chair is the Rt Hon the Baroness Taylor of Bolton. Other trustees include a former Minister in the Scottish and Northern Ireland Offices, the former Clerk of the Parliaments, the former Chair of the Commission on Devolution in Wales, and the former Head of Political Programmes for BBC News, as well as leading academics in the fields of political science and digital democracy.

Underpinning our commitment to non-partisanship, the Speakers of the two Houses – currently the Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Rt Hon the Lord McFall, the Lord Speaker – serve as honorary Co-Presidents of the Society.

The Society is funded through a mix of income streams. We have recently secured new project grants from the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust (12 months), the Legal Education Foundation (24 months), and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (36 months). We also generate core, unrestricted income from our journal [Parliamentary Affairs](#), our membership, our [Statutory Instrument Tracker®](#) and our legislative and procedural training programmes. This income is re-invested in our research and education projects and helps protect our independence and secure our future by ensuring we are not dependent on any single funder.

## Future projects

This is a crucial time for our parliamentary democracy. There is growing concern about the constitutional balance of power between Parliament and the executive, standards in public life and worrying levels of public cynicism about politics and politicians.

As we approach the next general election, in addition to our work on delegated legislation we will shortly be embarking on two new strategic initiatives to improve the way Parliament works and to support the next generation of MPs in their role as legislators and scrutineers.

This Autumn we will be launching:

- a new programme of work bringing together our proposals for parliamentary reform to provide MPs in the next Parliament with a wide-ranging agenda for change. This programme of work will include a new Taskforce to review the customs, language and rules of the House of Commons.
- a new training and development programme at the start of the new Parliament to support newly-elected MPs in their role as legislators and scrutineers. This will include sessions on the role of MPs in relation to the constitution, how to read and understand both primary and delegated legislation, and scrutiny of the Budget and Estimates process. We will also be developing and piloting a training programme for future parliamentary candidates so that those seeking to become MPs have a basic understanding of the constitution, the legislative process and how the House of Commons works.

Next year we will also mark our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an exciting new programme of events and activities.

## Our work on delegated legislation

In 2014 the Society published [\*The Devil is in the Detail: Parliament and Delegated Legislation\*](#), the first study of the parliamentary scrutiny of delegated legislation at Westminster in over 80 years.

In 2018 we launched our [Statutory Instrument Tracker®](#) in response to the needs of business and civil society uncovered while researching *The Devil is in the Detail*. The SI Tracker® is a website-based application to help users track the progress of SIs through Parliament, including consultations and all stages of scrutiny in the House of Commons and House of Lords. This unique subscription-based monitoring service helps keep users up to speed with the latest developments quickly and efficiently via a customisable dashboard and tailored notifications.

Over the last five years our delegated legislation research has been supported by The Legal Education Foundation. We have particularly focused on the progress made by government and Parliament in laying and scrutinising Statutory Instruments to prepare the statute book for the UK's exit from the EU and to tackle the Coronavirus pandemic.

In the last year a series of briefings and events exploring the delegation of power in Bills – including the [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill](#) and the now-abandoned [Northern Ireland Protocol Bill](#) – have been particularly popular and are regularly cited in parliamentary debates and select committee reports. This Researcher post will help us to ramp up this work over the next two years as we enter what is likely to be the final session of this Parliament and the first session of the next Parliament after the general election.



We have also developed a [Compendium of Legislative Standards for Delegating Powers in Primary Legislation](#) which distils the standards for the delegation of powers drawing on the reports and recommendations of the House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee. A second edition will be published once the Compendium has been updated at the end of the current session of Parliament. The Compendium has been supplemented by the development of a [Toolkit for scrutinising delegated powers in Bills](#) which we use to help parliamentarians and their staff, as well as external organisations, understand and scrutinise delegated powers and how they affect the long-term balance of power between Parliament and Government.

In November 2021 we launched our [Delegated Legislation Review](#) to develop a comprehensive plan to address the problems with the system. The initiative is guided by a [cross-party advisory panel](#) and is again supported by The Legal Education Foundation. Our preliminary proposals were set out in a [Working Paper](#) published in February 2023. The consultation on the proposals has concluded and we are now finalising our recommendations for publication in the Autumn once Parliament returns after party conference season. After the final recommendations have been published, we will be working with allies in Parliament and beyond to press the case for change and to persuade the major parties to commit to reform the system in their election manifestos.

## Beyond research

In addition to producing evidence-based ideas for the reform of Parliament, we publish one of the leading international political science journals dedicated to the study of representative democracy. [Parliamentary Affairs](#) is independently edited for the Society by Professor Alistair Clark of Newcastle University and Dr Louise Thompson of Manchester University. In the next 12-18 months there will be a special issue of the Journal exploring the state of British politics in advance of the general election and a special [‘Britain Votes’](#) edition looking at the election results.

Our trusted role as Parliament’s ‘critical friend’ also enables us to convene a diverse range of debates, lectures, seminars, and workshops to discuss topical political and constitutional issues. In recent times we have, for example, hosted the first-ever [online hustings for the election of the new Lord Speaker](#), the first ever public [speech on House of Lords reform by the new Lord Speaker](#), and a discussion with journalist [Michael Crick about party candidate selection](#) for the general election.

Further information about the Society can be found at: [www.hansardsociety.org.uk](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk)