



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

# Toolkit for UK Parliament Week events and activities

[ukparliamentweek.org](http://ukparliamentweek.org)  
#UKPW16



IDEAS FOR YOUR EVENT OR ACTIVITY



**Parliament Week**  
Engage. Explore. Empower.

## IDEAS FOR YOUR EVENT OR ACTIVITY

### Taking part in UK Parliament Week

Your organisation can take part in UK Parliament Week in almost any way you wish. From workshops to debates, film screenings and performances, your organisation can make a real difference to your audiences and to the UK Parliament.

To be included in the programme your event should help your audiences to:

- **Engage** with the work of the UK parliament, MPs and members of the House of Lords, through participative events and activities
- **Explore** the history of the UK Parliament and think about its role in democracy
- **Empower** them to get involved with the UK Parliament and make their voices heard about issues that matter to them

#### Please note that UK Parliament Week events should not:

- Be part of a political campaign or promote a particular party's viewpoints. Nor should it suggest that UK Parliament Week or the Houses of Parliament share a particular political viewpoint.
- Be profit-making. You can charge people to attend your event, but the money must go towards the cost of running the event. Read our full terms and conditions here: [www.ukparliamentweek.org/terms-and-conditions-2](http://www.ukparliamentweek.org/terms-and-conditions-2)

### What do you want to do, and why?

We recommend that you start planning your UK Parliament Week event or activity by thinking about what you want to achieve. There are plenty of reasons why you might want to take part in UK Parliament Week. These could include:

- Offering something new to your existing audiences
- Reaching new audiences
- Using UK Parliament Week as an opportunity to promote the work you're already doing
- Fulfilling an identified need for your existing audiences
- Wanting to try something new

It's important to think about what your organisation will get out of taking part. This will help you decide how much time you have to organise your event or activity and how much (if any) money you can spend on it. Keep in mind that the success of an activity is not necessarily determined by the money spent on it, but rather your planning and creativity.

UK Parliament Week does not fund any partner organisation's events, but if you would like some tips on raising money to support your event, take a look at the fundraising section in the Planning Your Event or Activity toolkit.

### Who do you want to reach?

Think about the target audience for your event because this will help you decide what the event will consist of and how you will promote it. Some partners use UK Parliament Week as an opportunity to reach out to new audiences.

### Example events and activities

Here are some example events to get you thinking about what your organisation can plan for UK Parliament Week:

#### Question Time

Question Time events are where an audience is invited to ask panellists questions – usually about current affairs. Question Time events are a great way for your audience to ask local politicians, influencers and others (with differing political viewpoints) about the issues that matter to them. Someone neutral needs to chair the event to keep things moving – keeping panellists to time and encouraging questions from the audience.

These events usually work for a wide range of audience groups, although you also need to be careful that your audience has the confidence to ask questions. You can ask your audience to submit questions in advance, which gives them time to think about what they want to ask and it gives your panellists the opportunity to think about their answers.

*Our evaluation from past UK Parliament Weeks has found that audiences enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions, so encourage your chair to keep answers from panellists relatively short.*

### **Debate**

Debates are a great way of engaging your whole audience with a topic or question. It's also great for confidence-building and helping your audience to think about issues and topics in new ways.

Parliament's Education Service has produced a great resource called **Get Debating** which can be used to get debates going. The resource is very flexible – you can use it for almost any audience as long as you have some time with them to prepare.

### **Talks and workshops**

Inviting people to hear a talk or attend a workshop can help your audience understand more about the work of your organisation and why it's taking part in UK Parliament Week.

You can either deliver a talk or workshop yourself, or you can ask an external speaker to do so. One option could be to invite someone from the Houses of Parliament's Outreach and Engagement Service to deliver a free session for your audience (although please bear in mind that their sessions are very popular and get booked up very quickly). For more information about Parliament's Community Outreach and Engagement Service, visit [www.parliament.uk/outreach](http://www.parliament.uk/outreach)

### **Art, music, performance and poetry**

Using arts, music, performance and poetry can be a great way of engaging audiences and getting them to think about democracy and the UK Parliament in new ways. In the past, UK Parliament Week partners have run poetry workshops, invited a poet to be 'Tweeter-in-Residence' for a day and have put on music and dance events.

However, it is well worth making sure that the link between your event or activity and democracy or the UK Parliament is very clear so your audience knows what to expect.

## **Information about the UK Parliament, its work and Members**

When planning your event, you might need to find out more about the UK Parliament and how it works. Parliament's website has lots of information and resources to help you.

### **Here are some places to start:**

- **About Parliament** [www.parliament.uk/about](http://www.parliament.uk/about)
- **Parliament's Education Service** [www.parliament.uk/education](http://www.parliament.uk/education)

You can also contact the House of Commons Enquiry Service or the House of Lords Enquiry Service who will be happy to answer your questions about the work and membership of each House.

### **House of Commons Enquiry Service**

[hcenquiries@parliament.uk](mailto:hcenquiries@parliament.uk)

**020 7219 4272**

### **House of Lords Enquiry Service**

[hinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hinfo@parliament.uk)

**020 7219 3107**