



Good Law News

"I'm delighted to have been asked to take the lead in co-ordinating the next stage of the good law initiative. I've been drafting legislation for nearly 20 years and am keen to explore with our partners how we can make law better (and stop it getting worse).

Good law means putting accessibility at the heart of what we do, both in terms of law making and enhancing the experience of users. We're keen to work with others to keep generating ideas of how to do this, while at the same time starting to achieve some tangible improvements. So please take the time to fill in our [survey on Explanatory Notes](#), and also get in touch with your ideas on how to improve law and law-making."

**Hayley Rogers, Good Law project manager,
Office of the Parliamentary Counsel**



Welcome to the second issue of Good Law News

Civil Service Live, 2nd July 2013

Civil Service Live gave us a great opportunity to share the good law initiative with a wider cross-section of Civil Service colleagues. At the "instant legislation booth" (in the policy hub), parliamentary drafters were on hand to work with delegates to turn their policy idea into an "instant" draft clause. This worked really well as a way of exploring the policy detail needed to turn a proposal into law.

We also ran a well-supported workshop – "the Good Law approach – why legislation matters" - which kicked off with presentations from panellists including the Deputy Leader of the House of Commons (Rt Hon Tom Brake MP), Lord Phillips of Sudbury and John

Sheridan from the National Archives. Workshop participants then got the chance to play “Legislate?!”, our interactive board game which takes players on a journey through the legislative process, from development of a policy idea to implementation, with plenty of scope for exploring causes of complexity along the way. The competitive spirit in the room and comments from players suggested that the game worked very well.



Panel (from left to right):

Rt Hon Tom Brake MP, Deputy Leader of the House of Commons, Hayley Rogers, Lord Phillips of Sudbury, John Sheridan Head of Legislation services, TNA and Georgina Holmes – Skelton, House of Commons Public Bill Office, Parliament.



Workshop participants play “Legislate?!” during our workshop “the Good Law approach – why legislation matters”

“The OPC operated an “instant legislation booth”. We used our drafting software to instantly turn short policy suggestions into clauses. The intention was to offer an insight into the drafting process. I drafted a range of provisions on serious and not-so-serious issues, such as a clause making “dress down Fridays” compulsory. The individuals who “instructed” us enjoyed the process, probing us on our drafting choices and challenging certain decisions. One commented that they had not appreciated how challenging it can be to turn even the most simple of policies into legislation, and how much thought is required to fully explore the implications of a policy. Another felt that the exercise illustrated the need for all persons involved in making legislation to work together in order to make clear and effective law.”

Neil Martin,
Parliamentary Drafter, Office of the Parliamentary Counsel

“It was a pleasure to join the OPC team on the Good Law information stand to help give a full picture of how the legislative process works, from drafting to Royal Assent. It was great to talk to delegates and share our resources to shed light on how laws are passed by Parliament.”

Gemma Webb,
Parliamentary Outreach service



The Good Law stand within the Policy Hub at Civil Service Live

Good Law Resources

Publications

House of Lords debate on
“When Laws Become Too Complex”
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldhansrd/text/130619-0002.htm#st_184

The Political and Constitutional Reform Committee’s Report ‘Ensuring standards in the quality of legislation’
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpolcon/85/85.pdf and the Government’s response which was published on 25 July:
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmpolcon/611/61104.htm

Explanatory notes-
Explanatory note for Bill and Acts are often less useful than they could be – how can they be improved?
Take the Survey now
<http://surveyanalytics.com/a/TakeSurvey?id=3122004>

Events

TEDx Houses of Parliament talk on “representation and democracy” held on 14th June 2013 is available to watch at
www.gov.uk/good-law#tedx-houses-of-parliament-speech-by-richard-heaton

Parliamentary Outreach’s new lunchtime seminars for civil servants explain Parliament’s work and processes. To find out more email:
parliamentaryoutreach@parliament.uk.

Further information

Website www.gov.uk/good-law

Twitter #goodlaw

Good Law partnership

“I’d like to thank wholeheartedly the OPC for their in depth analysis of legislative quality as a concept and in its application to actual examples. The presentation of Good Law enticed Commonwealth drafters into a discussion on users’ understanding (or lack of understanding) of legislation, thus allowing them to further specify the profile of legislative audiences here and in their jurisdictions. This in turn informed the debate on choice of words, structure, and legislative form. It was a revelation, gratefully received by all. The downside of this is that we will be needing further guidance and sessions from your staff!”

**Dr Helen Xanthaki, Academic Director,
Sir William Dale Centre, Institute of
Advanced Legal Studies (University of
London)**

“The OPC is working with officials in the Legislation Offices of the Lords and Commons and with a range of other partners on developing proposals designed to enhance the way legislation is prepared to make it more effective on the web. Officials are looking at the whole cycle of legislation, from drafting to amending to publication and archiving. A primary focus, subject to the normal approvals procedures, is developing an XML-based legislative drafting tool so that bill data is available in a more reusable form online, but it is hoped that developments will assist in the drafting of statutory instruments too. As well as the two Legislation Offices and OPC, colleagues involved come from The National Archives, the Office of Scottish Parliamentary Counsel and the Scottish Parliament. Further details will be publicised as they become available.”

**Simon Burton, Clerk of Legislation
House of Lords**

Please email GoodLaw@cabinet-office.gsi.gov.uk

if you have any content, or suggestions for inclusion in future editions of Good Law News.
If you wish to unsubscribe please email us with "Unsubscribe" in the subject title.