11. The key functions of Parliament

This chapter identifies Parliament's primary functions of making law and scrutinising government action. Parliament's scrutiny of government has been defined as 'the process of examining expenditure, administration, and policy in detail, on the public record, requiring the government of the day to explain itself to parliamentarians as representatives of the citizen and the taxpayer, and to justify its actions'. In the absence of a codified constitution and entrenched limits on executive power, the requirement for the government to answer to Parliament for its actions acts as a check and control. The chapter also considers the legislative process, particularly legislative scrutiny. Secondary legislation made by the government can often be subject to much less scrutiny and debate than primary legislation, and sometimes none at all. These scrutiny gaps increase the risk of arbitrary law-making and 'governing from the shadows', again raising rule of law concerns.
11. The key functions of Parliament

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