



House of Commons
Procedure Committee

Proxy voting and the presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall

First Report of Session 2022–23

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Procedure Committee

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Voting by proxy

Background

1. On 23 September 2020, the House of Commons agreed to make permanent arrangements for proxy voting for MPs who were absent from Westminster because of childbirth or care of an infant or newly adopted child or where there have been complications relating to childbirth. The decision followed our review of the pilot scheme developed and implemented late in the previous Parliament.¹ On the same day, the House agreed that proxy votes should be available for medical or public health reasons related to the pandemic. This extended temporary arrangements that had been in place since June 2020 to 3 November 2020. On 22 October 2020, the House further extended these temporary arrangements until 30 March 2021.

2. In our report, *Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements*, we noted that there had been interest expressed in whether the proxy voting scheme should be extended to cover Members with serious long-term illness.² We concluded that “Once the present temporary arrangements for proxy voting for public health reasons has ended, the Committee will examine whether, and how, eligibility for proxy voting might be extended to other categories of absent Member, should it be demonstrated that the support in the House for such measures merits such an inquiry.”³

3. The parental proxy scheme was made permanent in September 2020, and pandemic proxies ended in July 2021. We launched this inquiry on 23 September 2021 in order to consider whether eligibility for proxy voting should be broadened, and invited written evidence on the following points:

- Should the terms of Standing Order No. 39A (Voting by proxy) be broadened to cover reasons other than “childbirth or care of an infant or newly adopted child”?
- In what other circumstances (if any) should a Member be eligible for a proxy vote?
- What criteria and conditions should apply to the use or duration of a proxy vote for reasons other than the existing criteria?
- How should transparency and confidentiality relating to the reason for a proxy vote be balanced?
- What would the consequences be for Members, their constituents and the House of greater proxy voting?

1 The pilot scheme for voting by proxy for new parents started on 28 January 2019, following debates in the House and a report of our predecessor Committee on proxy voting and parental absence on 9 May 2018: [Proxy voting and parental absence](#), Fifth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 825

2 Procedure Committee, [Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements](#), Fourth Report of Session 2019–21, HC 10

3 [Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements](#), para 37

4. We received written and oral evidence from Amy Callaghan MP, Tracey Crouch MP, Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP, Sir Charles Walker MP, Dame Diana Johnson MP, Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, William Wragg MP and the former Leader of the House, Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP. The full list of witnesses can be found at the end of this report.

Extension of the proxy voting scheme

5. Our predecessor Committee's original inquiry into proxy voting and parental absence considered an extension to cover other circumstances such as serious long-term illness. However, our predecessors ultimately concluded that:

For a proxy voting system to operate transparently, the House must formally give Members leave to be absent from divisions. Publishing this information could place Members in a position where they may be pressured to disclose private personal or family information. We do not think that this is an acceptable position.⁴

6. During the review of the pilot proxy voting arrangements, the risk of how widening eligibility could require disclosing private, personal or family information were discussed again. In our predecessor Committee's subsequent report on the subject, it stated that, if there was sufficient support in the House, the Committee would investigate whether eligibility for proxy voting should be extended to include other categories. However, it also noted that "any proposal for a permanent proxy voting scheme to facilitate absences for illness and caring responsibilities will need very careful consideration."⁵

7. IPSA, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority, began providing funding for MPs requiring staffing cover while taking parental leave in 2019. In 2021, the eligibility of this funding was extended for reasons other than baby leave, such as serious long-term illness. In its written evidence to us, IPSA emphasised that it is currently working to improve the support offered to MPs requiring extended absence within the bounds of its legal and constitutional authority.⁶

8. Throughout our inquiry, the overwhelming balance of evidence that we heard was in favour of proxy voting being extended to include Members suffering from serious long-term illness or injury. We define this as a medical condition which the symptoms of or treatment for is judged by a medical professional to be incompatible with attendance in Westminster for the purposes of voting. At present, Members with serious long-term illnesses only have access to informal voting mechanisms such as pairing. Pairing is an arrangement between two MPs of opposing parties to not vote in a particular division. This enables an MP to be absent without affecting the result of the vote as they effectively cancel each other out. However, there have been several cases in the recent past of Members feeling compelled or being required to vote in person while seriously unwell, which risks bringing the House into disrepute. These events have led to increasing calls for proxy votes to be offered to Members suffering from serious long-term illness which would allow them to recuperate and recover from their own homes while still able to exercise their vote. In evidence, we heard that some Members felt under pressure to vote during their recovery. In her evidence to the Committee, Amy Callaghan MP told us that:

4 [Proxy voting and parental absence](#), para 40

5 [Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements](#), para 36

6 [BIC0013](#)

I spent a really significant period of time in hospital worrying about not being able to represent my constituents—instead of focusing entirely on my recovery—so the anxiety and stress that that would have alleviated for me would have been significant.⁷

9. We also heard from Dame Diana Johnson MP, who recalled her own experience of ill health affecting her ability to vote in the House. When asked whether she felt that access to a proxy vote would have been beneficial to her while undergoing medical treatment, she reflected:

I was talking to another MP who has undergone cancer treatment this year, and she has returned to being in the House of Commons full time despite her doctors saying to her, “It would be better if you didn’t work full time, to aid your recovery.” But because the proxy vote system that we had during covid is no longer available, she is back—against medical advice. We all want to do the best for our constituents, and sometimes we perhaps do not put our health at the forefront of our concerns. Going back to your question, yes, I would have liked the option. I would have liked the choice. That is how I feel about it.⁸

10. We have taken evidence from Members who have used both the pairing and proxy voting systems whilst unwell. When asked about her preference between pairing and proxy voting in her own experience as a Member of Parliament who has experienced serious long-term illness, Amy Callaghan MP noted that:

Pairing has the ability to break down. I think having something registered, which you can refer constituents to, is incredibly important, especially when they are taking the time to write to you; you need to have something to refer them to. That is the crux of the issue here.⁹

11. We noted concern regarding how a Member would be considered eligible for a proxy vote based on their ill health. In evidence, several Members advocated the use of a ‘fit note’, to demonstrate the need for a proxy vote. This was explained by Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP:

The formula of having a sick note provides certainty for that next step, and I think it is right to set a high bar. I think it is right that reform is not undertaken willy-nilly, in case it has unforeseen consequences, and that a high bar should be set.¹⁰

12. Tracey Crouch MP agreed:

My own view is that it would be up to medical experts. Kevan [Jones MP] mentioned earlier about being an employer and talking to your own team about looking after themselves—well, they’ve come with a sick note. I would

7 [Q4](#)
8 [Q37](#)
9 [Q5](#)
10 [Q120](#)

expect a consultant or your GP to be able to say, “I don’t think you should be going to work; I don’t think you should be in Parliament, because you are clinically vulnerable.” That, in my mind, would be what is required.¹¹

13. We were reminded of the importance of choice between formal and informal mechanisms available to Members experiencing ill health. Indeed, when discussing the work of our predecessor Committee with its Chair, Sir Charles Walker MP, it became clear that concern at the potential effect on the pairing system had stopped efforts to consider broadening the proxy voting scheme prior to its introduction:

[...] one of our fundamental concerns was with removing the veil of anonymity that is attached to pairing. Pairing allows people to step quietly away from the frontline for a period of weeks or months, without having to expose themselves to scrutiny on the reason why they are not taking part in proceedings.¹²

14. This view was echoed by other Members who favoured extending the proxy voting system. On 6 December 2021, Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP made clear that any extension need not affect the availability of pairing:

I think it should be extended, but I agree that we should be able to keep pairing at the same time. This is not instead of pairing. Pairing is something different.¹³

15. The concern that Members who were unwell and unable to vote were often subject to abuse through social media was often expressed to the Committee. Tracey Crouch MP explained during our 1 November evidence session:

When people go on to the TheyWorkForYou record and see that people have been absent from a vote, they do not necessarily understand all the nuances of that absence. One of the differences with proxy voting is that you’re still technically here for the vote, meaning you don’t get that level of abuse.¹⁴

16. Dame Diana Johnson MP went on to add her own experience of serious long-term illness while only being able to access pairing:

What happened at that time, however, was that on social media I started to get comments on why my name was not appearing on the list for certain votes. Because I had not publicly said why that was happening, it got quite nasty, actually. At that stage, I thought that if I had been able to have a proxy vote, to have my vote registered using someone else, another colleague, that would have helped me at that time. I would have been able to have that choice.¹⁵

17. Although most of the evidence gathered during our inquiry favoured an extension of the proxy voting system to include Members who are suffering from ill health, there have

11 [Q23](#)

12 [Q34](#)

13 [Q88](#)

14 [Q6](#)

15 [Q33](#)

been certain concerns raised over the implications of any possible extension. It important to understand why a proxy vote may work well for Members on parental leave, but not for those on leave due to ill health. When asked about this, giving evidence to us in his own right, rather than as a member of the Committee, William Wragg MP answered:

It is about knowing the difference between someone who is having baby leave and someone who might be ill and the nature of that illness—whether they wish to have that illness recorded, issues around mental capacity and wondering if some of the practices we already have in the Commons are in fact quite humane. As the Committee knows, I often speak up for Whips Offices of all variety, but one of the most humane things that we do as a Parliament is that accommodation through pairing.¹⁶

18. The most prominent concern expressed to the Committee has been that of the right to privacy for Members of Parliament. William Wragg MP gave his perspective:

I am very happy for people to disclose whatever they wish to disclose about themselves, as to whatever is going on in their lives and how that understandably impinges on different aspects of the role of Member of Parliament. That is perfectly legitimate and is for them to do—they should be supported in doing so, incidentally. But I do think that it could set a precedent by which it would bring pressure to bear on those who do not wish to, for whichever reason, have similar disclosure.¹⁷

19. Our predecessor Committee concluded that:

For a proxy voting system to operate transparently, the House must formally give Members leave to be absent from divisions. Publishing this information could place Members in a position where they may be pressured to disclose private personal or family information. We do not think that this is an acceptable position.¹⁸

20. We agree that it may be invidious, but no less so than being prevented from voting when this could be facilitated. If a Member's health prevents their full participation in the House, the disadvantage to their constituents might be lessened by their being able to cast a vote. However, every effort should be made to make sure their right to privacy is respected. From a transparency perspective, if the proxy voting scheme were extended, only the fact of (rather than detail of the need for) a proxy arrangement is essential. This is why we recommend that any extended scheme should be recorded in the same way as a parental proxy: through a Speaker's certificate recorded in the Votes and Proceedings stating that the Member had exercised their right under the Standing Order, giving the dates and name of the nominated proxy.

21. Even though we suggest that no detail should be published, we understand that some Members might choose to be open about an illness or absence; others would very understandably choose not to. Members who do not wish to use the proxy voting scheme for these reasons can also use the pre-existing informal pairing or, if appropriate,

16 [Q189](#)

17 [Q211](#)

18 [Proxy voting and parental absence](#)

‘nodding through’.¹⁹ We do not propose any changes to these mechanisms which are not procedural and rather exist as political agreements between Whips. Were the House to vote to extend the proxy voting scheme, it is essential that Members who favour a more private mechanism are able to access one.

22. The majority of evidence that we received during the course of our inquiry was in favour of an extension of the proxy voting system to include Members with serious long-term illness. However, several witnesses expressed the belief that a proxy vote would be inappropriate for short-term, non-serious medical conditions. When asked to define which kind of conditions should be eligible for a proxy vote, Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP replied:

I would think not for the flu, given the length of time. If it just a short episode of a week or two weeks, do you want to have all the administrative activity that goes alongside it? [...] if we are talking about proxy voting, which has a certain amount of machinery to underpin it, I think a short period would not warrant it.²⁰

Diana Johnson MP made similar statements, telling us that:

I have been here 16 years and I have had colds, the flu and various bits and pieces over the years and had a few days off, and I found that the pairing system worked for me.²¹

and also that:

Pairing could still have a role to play. If it is the odd day, a pair is a perfectly sensible and reasonable thing to do, but if it is three months, a proxy seems a more sensible approach.²²

23. We agree that any extension to the proxy voting scheme should not include provisions for short-term, non-serious medical conditions. In the case of non-serious illness which could cause short-term absence, Members should use existing informal mechanisms such as pairing or, if appropriate, ‘nodding through’.

24. The overwhelming balance of evidence we heard was in favour of an extension of proxy voting to include serious long-term illness or injury: it remains to be seen if this view is shared in the House.

25. *If the House decides to extend the proxy voting system to include serious long-term illness or injury, only the fact of a Member having exercised their right under Standing Order No. 39A should be published. Any extension to the proxy voting scheme would not affect the pairing and nodding through mechanisms, which would remain available to Members who wish to use them.*

19 If the tellers from both sides agree, an MP who is within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster but not well enough to vote in person, may be ‘noddod through’. This means their name is added to the list of those voting even though they have not gone through the lobby in person.

20 [Q106](#)

21 [Q43](#)

22 [Q38](#)

26. *We recommend that the Government schedules a debate before the House rises for the summer adjournment to allow the House to debate and express a view on the principle of whether the proxy voting scheme should be extended to include Members suffering from serious long-term illness or injury.*

Pilot scheme for ill health

27. If the House were to endorse the principle of an extension of the scheme, it would be for the Government to bring forward changes to Standing Orders. We believe that any extension should in the first instance take place as a pilot, the success of which we would conduct a review. The broad terms of a scheme issued under the Speaker's authority should in our view include the following aspects:

- Be available to Members who, as a result of a serious long-term personal illness or injury, wish to vote by proxy;
- Require evidence from a medical professional which would state that the Member was unable to attend divisions in the House physically;
- Be recorded in the same way as a parental proxy: through a Speaker's certificate recorded in the Votes and Proceedings stating that the Member had exercised their right under the Standing Order, giving the dates and name of the nominated proxy but not details of the medical condition;
- Allow proxy voting cover for a finite amount of time but give MPs the ability to renew if necessary.

28. If the proposed pilot scheme were successful and the House agreed to implement it on a permanent basis, an additional sub-paragraph should be added to Standing Order No. 39A.

29. *Any extension to the proxy voting scheme to accommodate serious long-term illness or injury should take place on the basis of a pilot scheme which we would subsequently review.*

Revisions to Standing Order No. 39A

Absence from the precincts of the House

30. During our inquiry, the former Leader of the House, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, asked us to consider the framing of 'absence' in Standing Order No. 39A:

(2) A Member is eligible for a proxy vote by reason of absence from the precincts of the House for childbirth or care of an infant or newly adopted child, subject to the conditions set out in the scheme published under paragraph (1) of this order.²³

31. This creates an implicit bar on participation while a proxy is active, preventing Members with a parental proxy from participating in proceedings without giving notice of suspending their proxy. When asked about the effect this has on Members who have recently become parents, Stella Creasy MP explained:

It has meant that on the days when I have sought to represent my constituents, I have had to give up my proxy in advance. It means that I cannot take part in urgent questions, because we do not know in advance that an urgent question is going to happen. It means that I have had to be on the estate for the whole day in order to be able to take part in votes... I would certainly encourage the Committee to learn from the pandemic and the possibility of having a proxy and having more open-ended proxies, especially when it comes to those of us who have such immediate caring commitments. That would ensure we can register a vote and still participate in debates and discussions.²⁴

32. When the parental proxy scheme was established, publicly sanctioned and explained absence from the estate was an important part of the reason for its introduction. It is however important to note the terms of the House's original resolution, which was framed purely in terms of convenience to Members and the functioning of parliamentary democracy, making no reference to absence:

Resolved, That this House believes that it would be to the benefit of the functioning of parliamentary democracy that honourable Members who have had a baby or adopted a child should for a period of time be entitled, but not required, to discharge their responsibilities to vote in this House by proxy.²⁵

33. Absence from the Estate serves a dual purpose: it explains why a Member is able to vote by proxy but also affords a degree of protection to Members taking care of very young children. It is, as in many cases, not as simple as or easily comparable to the position for employees either within or beyond Parliament. While removing the presumption of absence and its protective factor could lead to pressure being placed on Members caring for babies to come to Parliament for urgent or high-profile business, it would also enable Members to do so if they wished to. Keeping in touch days for people other than Members of Parliament would normally be arranged in advance and at a time convenient for both employer and employee. This is obviously not the case for important constituency matters, urgent questions or other matters for which it would not be possible to give notice of a wish to suspend a proxy arrangement.

34. We do not propose any change to the requirement of notice for starting, varying or ending a proxy arrangement. If the House were to remove 'absence from the precincts' from the wording of Standing Order No. 39A, there would no longer be a need to suspend a proxy arrangement for the purposes of a day's participation. This would enable Members with a proxy vote to come in and participate, so long as they did not attempt to vote in person. The experience of the pandemic showed that Members could be relied upon to not vote in person while holding a proxy. The card reader system should be able to flag

24 [Q43](#)

25 Votes and Proceedings, [1 February 2018](#)

any duplicates or be amended to prevent them from occurring. Giving oral evidence to us principally on the matter of the presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall, Alicia Kearns MP expressed her support for such a change.²⁶

35. However, the removal of ‘absence from the precincts’ may introduce pressure on some Members to participate during a period of ‘baby leave’ at short notice. There are also geographical issues. A Member based in London or close by may easily be able to come into the House to participate during a period of parental absence if they wish to do so. However, the same could not be said for a Member based far away from Westminster. This risks creating an advantage for some Members which would be unavailable to others. It should also be emphasised that Members can participate in House proceedings at any time if they suspend their proxy vote with notice. The only proceedings that would become accessible to Members in a way they were not before would be Urgent Questions or Statements, for which a suspension of a proxy vote with notice is impossible. The House should consider these points carefully when deciding whether removing ‘absence from the precincts’ is a change it wishes to make.

36. The House could provide greater flexibility to Members with a proxy vote if it removed ‘absence from the precincts’ from Standing Order No. 39A. This could, however, introduce pressure on Members to participate in proceedings at short notice and would be of most benefit to Members based relatively close to London who wished to participate in an Urgent Question or Statement, for which suspension of a proxy vote with notice is impossible. The House should consider these points carefully.

37. Although different questions, the House’s existing arrangements for proxy voting do relate to the rules concerning the presence of babies in proceedings. The presumption under which the House introduced proxy voting was that the babies of Members would either be cared for away from the parliamentary estate by someone other than the Member or that the Member should be given leave to be absent themselves and be able to vote without being on the estate.

38. The Women and Equalities Committee’s recent report *Equality in the heart of democracy: A gender sensitive House of Commons* noted that the current framing of the proxy voting scheme entrenches gendered stereotypes about childcare, providing greater entitlements for female Members (and adoptive parents) than for male Members.²⁷ The Women and Equalities Committee recommended that this anomaly—which is now out of step with statutory entitlements and effectively rules out the taking of shared parental leave—was resolved, and that provisions in respect of complications, miscarriage and baby loss are brought fully within the scheme. The Committee also called for eligibility to be extended to cover a 12-month period, in line with what is possible outside Parliament.

39. We endorse the Women and Equalities Committee’s call for biological fathers to have equal opportunity to take advantage of the proxy voting scheme, and for provisions relating to complications, miscarriage and baby loss to be moved up within the text of the Standing Order.

40. We have reservations however about extending the maximum duration of a proxy vote from seven to twelve months. While this would potentially bring the

²⁶ [Q10](#)

²⁷ Women and Equalities Committee, *Equality in the heart of democracy: A gender sensitive House of Commons*, Fifth Report of Session 2021–22, HC 131, para 40

House's arrangements into line with statutory arrangements, we are concerned that it potentially limits constituents' representation in Parliament for a very long time. We also note the favourable terms on which Members may take parental leave, and the high level of support made available by IPSA for enhanced cover.

Presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall

Background and context

41. In 2000, the question of whether a Member would be allowed specifically to breastfeed (rather than simply be accompanied by) a child in a Standing Committee (now Public Bill Committee) was raised with the then Madam Speaker. A House of Commons Library Note published in 2003 discusses the issue and developments that followed, which were principally administrative measures to improve the facilities available to breastfeeding mothers on the Estate.²⁸

42. In November 2008, a Speaker's Conference on Parliamentary Representation was established.²⁹ As part of a wide-ranging report published in January 2010, the Conference's report called for clarity on the circumstances in which the child of a Member under the age of one may accompany their parent:

287. The customs and working practices of the House of Commons more generally can appear unwelcoming towards Members' families. While Meg Hillier noted that House staff had made administrative changes which enabled her staff to provide maternity cover for her, she reported that on an occasion when she had been forced to bring her young baby in to work both she and the child had been made to feel unwelcome by Commons staff. It is also forbidden for anyone other than a Member—including a baby—to enter the lobbies during a vote. These rulings make it very difficult for an MP who is also a new mother to carry out either role as she might wish to do so. As an MP she cannot transfer her vote to another person; and if as a mother she wishes to follow World Health Organisation guidelines and have a baby who is exclusively breastfed until six months old, this preference creates another duty upon her which only she can fulfil.

288. The House's record on addressing such difficulties, once they are highlighted, is reasonably good and therefore **we hope that the House service will review, and draw up new guidelines to clarify, the circumstances in which a child under the age of one may accompany his or her MP parent within restricted areas of the House of Commons.**³⁰

43. The position over a decade on is much clearer: Members may be accompanied by young children anywhere on the estate other than the Chamber and Westminster Hall except when on their way to the division lobbies. There is out of hours provision for children registered with the on-site House of Commons nursery, but this is not a general crèche facility.

28 [House of Commons Library Note, SN/PC/508](#)

29 On 11 February, the Scottish Parliament [launched a new review](#) of the representation and participation of women at Holyrood. The review will consider "the number and position of women parliamentarians, participation and intervention levels in Chamber business and the impact of parliamentary procedures and policies."

30 [Speaker's Conference \(on Parliamentary Representation\): Final Report](#), HC 239-I, paras 287–8

44. An academic survey of ‘parents in Parliament’ was conducted for the first time in 2013, and again in 2017 by Professor Rosie Campbell and Professor Sarah Childs. The survey identified a ‘motherhood gap’ in the differing experiences of male and female Members with children. In 2016, the [Good Parliament](#) report was published.³¹ A Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion was tasked with providing institutional leadership within the House of Commons, and recommendations were made to a wide range of parliamentary and other bodies. The report was based on four principles:

- A greater diversity of MPs should be present in the House of Commons, not least in terms of class, disability, ethnicity, sex/gender, and sexuality;
- An inclusive, effective and representative Parliament is about more than simply increasing the diversity of Members elected to the House; it also requires their equal and effective participation therein;
- The House of Commons has an important symbolic role to play in British society, over and above its substantive role: it should embody the principle of equality and fairness, acting as a ‘role-model’ institution; and
- The responsibility of delivering on The Good Parliament resides with the House of Commons as an institution. In other words, the House should acknowledge its collective responsibility to redress current limitations in representation and inclusion.

45. The report assessed the House against the concept of Gender Sensitive Parliaments, which has been recognised by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and UN Women. A Gender Sensitive Parliament Audit was conducted of the House of Commons by the IPU in 2018 and reviewed by the Women and Equalities Committee.

46. The Women and Equalities Committee has conducted an inquiry into a Gender Sensitive Parliament in order to assess progress with a view to making recommendations.³² On 14 July 2021, the Chairs of Liaison, Procedure and Standards gave evidence to the Committee.³³ The Committee’s report *Equality in the heart of democracy: A gender sensitive House of Commons* was published on Wednesday 2 March 2022.³⁴ The Committee called for a review of the progress made against the recommendations of the Good Parliament Report and the legacy of the Commons Reference Group on Representation and Inclusion, which last met in 2018. The Committee also recommended that the House authorities gather Members’ views on a wide range of subjects relevant to their experiences as parents and carers:

89. There has been significant progress towards making the House of Commons a more welcoming and accommodating place for female MPs and those who are or want to be parents. But the House has work to do to fully understand and meet the needs and interests of women, parents and other groups, such as disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. We recommend

31 [The Good Parliament](#), Professor Sarah Childs, July 2016

32 Women and Equalities Committee, [inquiry into a Gender Sensitive Parliament](#)

33 [Oral evidence, 14 July 2021](#)

34 Women and Equalities Committee, [Equality in the heart of democracy: A gender sensitive House of Commons](#), Fifth Report of Session 2021–22, HC 131

the House of Commons Member Services Team conduct a survey of MPs, to gather and understand their personal experiences and views about current working practices, facilities and provision, and the need for further reform in the interests of gender and wider diversity sensitivity. The survey should gather MPs' views on:

- the adequacy of childcare provision at different times of the day and evening;*
- the adequacy of facilities including toilets and spaces for baby-changing, breast-feeding and expressing milk;*
- access rules, including the rules on MPs' babies in the Chamber and in Westminster Hall;*
- the extent to which the facilities of the House of Commons meet the needs and interests of those who are disabled or have long-term health conditions; and*
- the House's working practices and their effects on participation in House of Commons proceedings by parents, carers, disabled people and those with long-term health conditions.*

The results should be disaggregated by sex and other protected characteristics, so far as is consistent with protecting the anonymity of respondents. We recommend this survey be completed within three months of publication of this Report. The results should be fed into the House of Commons Commission's gender sensitivity and diversity action plan, which we recommend at the end of this Report.

47. The matter of whether Members should be able to bring babies into the Chamber and Westminster Hall was referred to us by the Speaker on 24 November 2021:

Before we start today's business, I want to say something about the presence of babies and very young children in this Chamber and the parallel Chamber, Westminster Hall.

It is extremely important that parents of babies and young children are able to participate fully in the work of this House. That is why, to give one example, we have a nursery. The advice given yesterday to the hon. Member for Walthamstow on the authority of the Chairman of Ways and Means, of which I was not aware until last night, correctly reflects the current rules. However, rules have to be seen in context and they change with the times.

This House has to be able to function professionally and without disturbance. However, sometimes there may be occasions when the Chair can exercise discretion, assuming that the business is not being disturbed. I accept that there are differing views on this matter. Indeed, hon. Members who have babies have contacted me with a range of views.

There are also likely to be some consequential matters. Therefore, I have asked the Chair of the Procedure Committee, the right hon. Member for

Staffordshire Moorlands, if she and her Committee will look into this matter and bring forward recommendations, which will ultimately be for the House to take a view on.³⁵

48. We invited written evidence on the following issues:

- Whether the presence of babies during parliamentary proceedings in the House of Commons should be prohibited or permitted;
- Whether the rules should remain in guidance issued by the Speaker and his Deputies, or be expressed in the House’s Standing Orders;
- What guidance Members should be given on the circumstances in which they should (and should not) be accompanied by their child;
- What discretion should be available to Members chairing debates in the Chamber, Westminster Hall and legislative committees.

49. As part of our consideration, we reviewed practice in a wide range of Parliaments and legislative assemblies. We noted that, where specific reference to the children of Members did exist in Standing Orders, rules or guidance it was generally permissive in nature. In some cases the matter was unregulated. In some cases, the infant children of Members are specifically excluded from the definition of ‘members of the public’ in their Standing Orders, relieving the Serjeant at Arms from any duty analogous to the one placed on him by Standing Order No. 161(1) to “take into his custody any member of the public whom he may see, or whom may be reported to him to be, in any part of the House or gallery appropriated to the Members of this House”.

Guidance for Members

50. The Rules of behaviour and courtesies in the House of Commons are issued by the Speaker and his Deputies.³⁶ The latest version of the guidance was issued in September and:

is intended to help Members, particularly those new to the House, in understanding the behaviour expected in the Chamber of the House of Commons and in Westminster Hall. While open to change, these rules are important in maintaining the good order of proceedings and the civility of debate—so that all Members are able to participate and be heard with respect.

Paragraph 42 of the guidance states that:

You may take babies or toddlers with you into the division lobby, and—if necessary to get to the division lobby—take them through the Chamber. For safety reasons, you are asked to carry your child and not to bring pushchairs through the lobby. You should not take your seat in the Chamber when accompanied by your child, nor stand at either end of the Chamber, between divisions.

35 HC Deb 24 November 2021, col 331

36 The guidance does not cover select committees but is taken to extend to cover legislative committees considering Bills or statutory instruments.

51. We noted that while the practice of the House is that Members do not bring babies into the Chamber and Westminster Hall, it has become more usual to see very young children in and around the Chamber. In 2018 the guidance was changed to explicitly permit the carrying of infants through the division lobbies. This recognised evolving practice and that the nature of Members' professional and family lives sometimes meant competing responsibilities need to be discharged simultaneously.

52. The guidance also restated longstanding practice, which recognised that the Chamber, Westminster Hall and standing committees are not environments suitable for very young children. Practice in select committees differs: the nature of proceedings can be suspended far more easily if required, Members are not in principle required to be present throughout a sitting or at the beginning and end of a meeting and the powers of Chairs are very different to the powers held by the Speaker, Deputies and members of the Panel.

53. Since 2018, there have been several occasions on which Members have, with the discretion of the Chair and without disruption to proceedings, brought babies into the Chamber and Westminster Hall either to attend or participate. This has contributed to some confusion and a gap between the House's practice and the guidance which is intended to shape it.

54. We also detected a lack of awareness of the guidance at all, which suggests that more may need to be done to promote awareness of the conventions and courtesies of the House.³⁷ This should, as we noted in our last report on procedure during the pandemic remain the responsibility of the Speaker and his Deputies.³⁸

55. We received a limited response to our call for written evidence, the majority of which came from Members of Parliament. While some Members favoured retaining the status quo,³⁹ others advocated a more permissive approach.⁴⁰ Two Members favouring change called for amendments being made to Standing Orders to explicitly permit Members to bring their babies into the Chamber. Two academics responded to our call. Dr Sonia Palmieri from Australian National University noted the changing membership of Parliaments and wider changes in society created a drive for greater flexibility in order to create greater productivity and diversity.⁴¹

56. Our most detailed submissions came from Professor Sarah Childs, author of the Good Parliament report and now Professor of Politics and Gender at the University of Edinburgh and Stella Creasy MP, who provided greater detail of her experience interacting with the Government, IPSA and the House Authorities while caring for her children. Professor Childs advanced four distinct reasons why Members should be permitted to be accompanied by their babies during proceedings:

- (i) as one measure to reduce the gender and motherhood gaps at Westminster;
- (ii) to ensure that all parents MPs are able to effectively participate in parliament whilst caring for a young baby;

37 [Q7](#) [Alicia Kearns MP]

38 [Back to the future? Procedure after coronavirus restrictions](#), Eighth Report of Session 2019–21, para 20

39 Justin Tomlinson MP ([BIC0001](#)), Danny Kruger ([BIC0008](#)), Sarah Olney ([BIC0003](#)), Sir Bill Wiggin ([BIC0010](#))

40 Ms Rachael Maskell ([BIC0002](#)), Mr Ben Bradshaw ([BIC0006](#))

41 Dr Sonia Palmieri ([BIC0004](#))

(iii) to ‘role model’ inclusive workplace best practice, setting the standard at home and abroad;

(iv) as one measure amongst a suite of other measures designed to meet the emergent international democratic norm of gender sensitive parliaments (GSP), articulated by, inter alia, the Inter-parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UN Women, and OSCE.⁴²

57. Professor Childs also drew upon her previous experience of advising the House on inclusion and representation to give an accurate account of the House’s practice in recent years, where on several occasions babies have been permitted in the Chamber during debates with the obvious consent or acquiescence of the Chair, albeit at odds with the guidance issued in 2018. In Professor Childs’ view, the matter is properly regulated by the Speaker in the first instance, but could be accompanied by Standing Order changes at a later stage. In her view, the Speaker’s guidance should be brought in to line with recent practice, that is that babies not causing a ‘noticeable, negative’ disruption should be permitted to accompany their parents.

58. Our oral evidence sessions gave us two contrasting positions on the question of whether Members should be permitted to bring their babies into the Chamber. We heard from Alicia Kearns MP on 7 March, and from Stella Creasy MP on 9 March.

59. Alicia Kearns set out some of the challenges faced by Members who are the parents or carers of young children, such as the unpredictable nature of sittings and expectation of presence on the Estate for much of the week. Ms Kearns also set out the relatively high level of choice that Members who are new parents have to balance the fulfilment of their democratic functions alongside family responsibilities. She contrasted the role of a Member in the Chamber with that of a barrister in court, arguing that the presence of a baby being cared for would undermine confidence that full attention was being paid to proceedings.⁴³ At several points, Ms Kearns set out her experience of the flexible and supportive approach taken by the Speaker and his Deputies to her as a new parent.⁴⁴

60. Stella Creasy set her oral evidence in the wider context of the support for Members who are parents available from IPSA and the House authorities.⁴⁵ We subsequently received written evidence from IPSA, and note that the House of Commons Commission is due to respond to the recommendations made by the Women and Equalities Committee in its report on a Gender-sensitive House of Commons. Ms Creasy called for the development of a coherent maternity policy for Members of Parliament.⁴⁶ She also made clear her preference for a scheme which would enable full absence,⁴⁷ arguing that the present arrangements for support do not go far enough in enabling the continuous representation of constituents by a Member on parental leave.⁴⁸ We subsequently received written evidence from IPSA which set out the support currently available, and its commitment to implementing any changes within legal and constitutional constraints.⁴⁹

42 Professor Sarah Childs ([BIC0005](#)), p1

43 [Q4](#)

44 [Q2](#); [Q13](#); [Q21](#)

45 [Qq22–23](#)

46 [Qq31–32](#)

47 [Q35](#)

48 [Q36](#)

49 Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) ([BIC0013](#))

61. Despite different views on the principal question of whether babies should be permitted in the Chamber, our oral evidence witnesses offered similar views on several key points. The first was the extent to which the guidance to Members was widely understood by Members. Alicia Kearns told us that she had not herself consulted the guidance before making arrangements to balance caring for her baby with speaking in the Chamber.⁵⁰ Stella Creasy told us that she had not been aware that children were not permitted in the Chamber.⁵¹

62. The second issue was that greater flexibility would be welcome, and that Members using the proxy voting scheme were very active in the constituency. Alicia Kearns told us:

Let us not suggest that MPs on the proxy vote are just sat at home ignoring what is going on in this place. I was having arguments with my Whips about certain issues—I am sure that not everyone is as combative as I am, but I had some views—and you are not absenting yourself from this place. You are still working, you are still advocating, you are still campaigning, you are still pushing, but you are able to do so without having to be here at 1.30 in the morning to walk through a Lobby.⁵²

63. Stella Creasy gave her view two days later:

[...] we seem to have junked the opportunity that came from the pandemic to learn about doing things in a more flexible way, to make it possible for people to combine caring commitments, or indeed to make things possible for our colleagues who are long-term ill. Many of us know colleagues who have come back to work when really they should be taking time off because they are ill, and that is because there isn't a pairing system or proxy system that means that their voices and their votes can be heard.⁵³

64. Stella Creasy's written evidence provided detail of the difficulties she had faced seeking to maintain continuity of service for her constituents in the months following the birth of her son during the pandemic.⁵⁴ Her staff were asking questions at or often even attending calls and events with Ministers relating to Afghanistan and vaccinations amongst other things, which prevented the constituents of Walthamstow from being represented as they would have been under normal circumstances. This appears to have undermined an element of the support made available to a Member on parental leave and should not be repeated.

65. *The Government should ensure that a nominated member of staff of any Member exercising a proxy vote has access to any meetings, calls or briefings made generally available to Members of Parliament.*

66. **The long-standing practice of the House, underpinned by Speakers' rulings and guidance to Members, is that babies should not be present in the Chamber and Westminster Hall. The extent to which Chairs have discretion to exercise is at present**

50 [Q6](#)

51 [Q47](#)

52 [Q7](#)

53 [Q35](#)

54 Stella Creasy ([BIC0012](#))

unclear. Regulating the matter by Standing Order (or the literal and consistent application of S.O. No. 161(1)) would reduce or eliminate the discretion available to Chairs to regulate proceedings: we do not believe this would benefit the House.

67. *In our view:*

- (a) Members should not bring babies into the Chamber, Westminster Hall or general committees to observe, initiate, speak or intervene in proceedings;*
- (b) This should remain in guidance issued by the Speaker;*
- (c) Chairs will retain a degree of de facto discretion which should be exercised sparingly—the firm expectation should remain that Members do not participate in proceedings while caring for a baby; and*
- (d) The Liaison Committee should consider how far practice in select committees should mirror other settings and, if necessary, agree guidance which would cover both Members and witnesses.*

68. Many of the matters raised by our witnesses fall outside our remit or the scope of this inquiry. We have written to the House of Commons Commission, the Administration Committee and IPSA to draw their attention to the matters raised by both of our witnesses, many of which are capable of swift resolution.

69. Both of these subjects are part of a much wider picture of how Members manage the interaction between their personal and professional circumstances. The Women and Equalities Committee has called for the House of Commons Commission to take stock of the recommendations made in this area in recent years: we support this call and will advise the House on any consequences for the procedure or practice of the House.

Conclusions and recommendations

Voting by proxy

1. The overwhelming balance of evidence we heard was in favour of an extension of proxy voting to include serious long-term illness or injury: it remains to be seen if this view is shared in the House. (Paragraph 24)
2. *If the House decides to extend the proxy voting system to include serious long-term illness, only the fact of a Member having exercised their right under Standing Order No. 39A should be published. Any extension to the proxy voting scheme would not affect the pairing and nodding through mechanisms, which would remain available to Members who wish to use them.* (Paragraph 25)
3. *We recommend that the Government schedules a debate before the House rises for the summer adjournment to allow the House to debate and express a view on the principle of whether the proxy voting scheme should be extended to include Members suffering from serious long-term illness.* (Paragraph 26)
4. *Any extension to the proxy voting scheme to accommodate serious long-term illness or injury should take place on the basis of a pilot scheme which we would subsequently review.* (Paragraph 29)
5. The House could provide greater flexibility to Members with a proxy vote if it removed “absence from the precincts” from Standing Order No. 39A. This could, however, introduce pressure on Members to participate in proceedings at short notice and would be of most benefit to Members based relatively close to London who wished to participate in an Urgent Question or Statement, for which suspension of a proxy vote with notice is impossible. The House should consider these points carefully. (Paragraph 36)
6. *We endorse the Women and Equalities Committee’s call for biological fathers to have equal opportunity to take advantage of the proxy voting scheme, and for provisions relating to complications, miscarriage and baby loss to be moved up within the text of the Standing Order.* (Paragraph 39)
7. We have reservations however about extending the maximum duration of a proxy vote from seven to twelve months. While this would potentially bring the House’s arrangements into line with statutory arrangements, we are concerned that it potentially limits constituents’ representation in Parliament for a very long time. We also note the very favourable terms on which Members may take parental leave, and the high level of support made available by IPSA for enhanced cover of casework. (Paragraph 40)

Babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall

8. *The Government should ensure that a nominated member of staff of any Member exercising a proxy vote has access to any meetings, calls or briefings made generally available to Members of Parliament.* (Paragraph 65)

9. The long-standing practice of the House, underpinned by Speaker's rulings and guidance to Members, is that babies should not be present in the Chamber and Westminster Hall. The extent to which Chairs have discretion to exercise is at present unclear. Regulating the matter by Standing Order (or the literal and consistent application of S.O. No. 161(1)) would reduce or eliminate the discretion available to Chairs to regulate proceedings: we do not believe this would benefit the House. (Paragraph 66)
10. *In our view:*
 - (a) *Members should not bring babies into the Chamber, Westminster Hall or general committees to observe, initiate, speak or intervene in proceedings;*
 - (b) *This should remain in guidance issued by the Speaker;*
 - (c) *Chairs will retain a degree of de facto discretion which should be exercised sparingly—the firm expectation should remain that Members do not participate in proceedings while caring for a baby; and*
 - (d) *The Liaison Committee should consider how far practice in select committees should mirror other settings and, if necessary, agree guidance which would cover both Members and witnesses. (Paragraph 67)*
11. Many of the matters raised by our witnesses fall outside our remit or the scope of this inquiry. We have written to the House of Commons Commission, the Administration Committee and IPSA to draw their attention to the matters raised by both of our witnesses, many of which are capable of swift resolution. (Paragraph 68)

Annex 1: Current proxy voting scheme

Text to be amended **marked in yellow**

A. Eligibility

- (1) Proxy voting shall be available to new mothers, new fathers and adoptive parents.
- (2) A Member shall demonstrate eligibility for the scheme by self-certifying that they meet the eligibility requirements.
- (3) A Member is also eligible for a proxy vote in circumstances where there have been complications relating to childbirth. The Speaker will determine the arrangements that apply in this situation, including the duration of the proxy vote, in consultation with the Member concerned.
- (4) The entitlement to a proxy vote, and to its use, is personal to the eligible Member.
- (5) It shall not be compulsory to take up eligibility for the scheme.

B. Duration

- (6) The maximum duration of the dispensation to vote by proxy shall be as follows:
 - Seven months for the biological **mother** of a baby, or for the primary or single adopter of a baby or child, of which a maximum of one month shall be taken before the due date or adoption date and a maximum of six months after the due date or adoption date.
 - **Two weeks for the biological father of a baby, the partner of the person giving birth or the second adopter of a baby or child.**
- (7) Any period of absence taken by a **mother** or primary adopter shall start at or before the due date or adoption date and shall be taken as a continuous period of up to seven months (a maximum of one month before the due date or adoption date and a maximum of six months after the due date or adoption date), including periods when the House is adjourned, prorogued or dissolved.
- (8) **The absence claimed by the father, partner or second adopter shall be taken in one continuous period of two weeks and shall be taken within six months of the birth or adoption date.**
- (9) A Member eligible for the scheme shall specify in writing to the Speaker the dates on which the proxy vote shall begin and end, subject to the maximum durations set out in the scheme. During that period the Member shall be entitled to cast a vote by proxy.
- (10) If the specified start (or end) date of absence given is not a sitting day, the period of entitlement shall begin (or end) when the Speaker takes the Chair on the next sitting day.

- (11) A Member may apply for a proxy vote on any day before the specified start day. Applications may be taken until the rise of the House on any sitting day and 3pm on any non-sitting day. The period of entitlement shall begin when the Speaker takes the Chair on the next sitting day.

C. Designation of proxy

- (12) When applying for a proxy vote, the Member eligible for proxy voting shall name the Member who has agreed to carry her or his proxy vote, thereby vouching that an agreement has been entered into.
- (13) A Member shall be free to choose any Member of the House who is eligible to vote in divisions to act as a proxy.
- (14) A Member may nominate no more than one proxy at a time.

D. Publishing the arrangement

- (15) On receipt of the specified information the Speaker shall issue a certificate, and cause it to be entered in the Votes and Proceedings.

E. Varying the arrangement

- (16) A Member who wishes to change the Member who is their proxy or to end their period of proxy voting, shall give written notice to the Speaker as early as possible, and at the very latest by either (a) the rise of the House on the sitting day before the change is to take effect, or (b) 3pm on a non-sitting day before that day.
- (17) The Speaker shall issue a new certificate if required under paragraph 18 above, which shall appear in the Votes and Proceedings either on the day that it is issued or on the first sitting day after issue if the day of issue is a non-sitting day.

F. Exercising the proxy vote

- (18) No Member may vote in person, or act as a Teller, if they have a proxy vote in operation.
- (19) A Member eligible to vote by proxy must agree with the Member nominated as their proxy when the proxy vote will be cast and how it will be exercised.
- (20) A proxy vote may be cast according to the provisions of the Standing Order (Voting by proxy).
- (21) A Member designated as a proxy will be expected to act in strict accordance with the instruction given by the absent Member.
- (22) A Member designated as a proxy may cast their own vote one way and the proxy vote the other, and may cast a proxy vote without casting their own vote at all. A Member designated as a proxy may not act as a Teller.

- (23) A Member registered as voting by proxy who wishes to vote in person shall be entitled to do so only if that the Speaker has been notified by the rise of the House on the previous sitting day or by 3pm on a non-sitting day that the proxy arrangement is to be suspended. (see para 16)

Annex 2: Proposed changes to Standing Order No. 39A

Text to be added **in green**

Text to be removed **in pink**

39A. Voting by proxy

- (1) A Member eligible under paragraph (2) may arrange for their vote to be cast by one other Member acting as a proxy (a proxy vote) under a scheme drawn up by the Speaker in accordance with this order and published by him.
- (2) A Member is eligible for a proxy vote for the following reasons, subject to the conditions set out in the scheme published under paragraph (1) of this order—
 - (a) by reason of absence from the precincts of the House for childbirth or care of an infant or newly adopted child;**
 - (b) by reason of absence from the precincts of the House in circumstances where there have been complications relating to childbirth, miscarriage or baby loss;**
 - (c) by reason of a serious long-term health condition which in the opinion of a medical professional prevents a Member from attending the House physically.**
- (3) A proxy vote may be cast—
 - (a) in any division, including a deferred division, in the House, in Committee of the whole House, save as provided in paragraph (4) below; and
 - (b) in a ballot cast in an election under Standing Order No. 1B (Election of Speaker by secret ballot), Standing Order No. 2A (Election of the Deputy Speakers), Standing Order No. 122B (Election of select committee chairs) and Standing Order No. 122D (Election of Chair of Backbench Business Committee).
- (4) No proxy vote shall be reckoned in the numbers participating in a division for the purposes of—
 - (a) Standing Order No. 41(1) (Quorum), and
 - (b) Standing Order No. 37 (Majority for closure or for proposal of question).
- (5) (a) A proxy vote may be cast only if the Speaker has certified that the Member for whom the vote is to be cast is eligible under the terms of this order.
 - (b) The Speaker shall cause that certificate, including the name of the Member nominated as a proxy, to be entered in the Votes and Proceedings no later than the sitting day on which it takes effect.
- (6) A vote cast by a proxy shall be clearly indicated as such in the division lists published under the authority of the House.

- (7) A Member is also eligible for a proxy vote by reason of absence from the precincts of the House in circumstances where there have been complications relating to childbirth; and the Speaker may make appropriate provision for the exercise of a proxy vote in such circumstances in the scheme drawn up under paragraph (1) above.**

Annex 3: Letter from former Leader of the House of Commons, relating to Standing Order No. 39A

29 November 2021

Dear Karen

As you will be aware, as it stands, Members with a proxy vote cannot participate in proceedings in the Chamber without giving up their proxy because of the reference to “absence from the precincts of the House” in Standing Order 39A.

During a recent meeting with me, Stella Creasy expressed concerns that this was excluding her from participating in proceedings while on parental leave.

Given that the primary purpose of proxy voting is to support Members, there may be merit in making the scheme more flexible so that a Member, who is eligible for a parental proxy, can participate in questions, statements or debates, if they wished to do so, without having to stay on the precincts to participate in votes, which are often at the end of a sitting day.

I do understand that such a proposal might have unintended consequences, such as generating pressure and expectation on other Members on parental leave. I would, therefore, be grateful if the matter could be considered in greater detail by your Committee as part of your current inquiry.

I would be happy to discuss this matter with you further.

With every good wish,

Yours ever,

Jacob

Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP

Formal minutes

Wednesday 15 June 2022

Members present

Karen Bradley, in the Chair

Aaron Bell

Christopher Chope

Chris Elmore

James Gray

Nigel Mills

James Sunderland

Owen Thompson

William Wragg

Voting by proxy and the presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall

Draft Report (*Proxy voting and the presence of babies in the Chamber and Westminster Hall*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 69 read and agreed to.

Annexes 1, 2 and 3 agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Proxy Voting

Monday 1 November 2021

Tracey Crouch MP; Amy Callaghan MP [Q1-32](#)

Wednesday 1 December 2021

Sir Charles Walker MP; Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP [Q33-85](#)

Monday 6 December 2021

Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP; Sir Bernard Jenkin MP [Q86-141](#)

Monday 10 January 2022

Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, Leader of the House of Commons [Q142-186](#)

Monday 28 February 2022

Mr William Wragg MP [Q187-226](#)

Babies in the Chamber

Monday 7 March 2022

Alicia Kearns MP [Q1-21](#)

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Stella Creasy MP [Q22-51](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

VBP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be sequential.

Proxy Voting

- 1 Jenkin, Sir Bernard ([VBP0001](#))

Babies in the Chamber

- 2 Baillie, Siobhan ([BIC0014](#))
- 3 Bradshaw, Mr Ben ([BIC0006](#))
- 4 Childs, Professor Sarah (Professor of Politics and Gender , Royal Holloway, University of London) ([BIC0005](#))
- 5 Cooper, Daisy ([BIC0009](#))
- 6 Creasy, Stella ([BIC0012](#))
- 7 Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) ([BIC0013](#))
- 8 Kruger, Danny ([BIC0008](#))
- 9 MP, Justin Tomlinson (MP, House of Commons) ([BIC0001](#))
- 10 Maskell, Ms Rachael (MP for York Central, Member of Parliament) ([BIC0002](#))
- 11 Olney, Sarah (Member of Parliament, House of Commons) ([BIC0003](#))
- 12 Palmieri, Dr Sonia (Gender Policy Fellow, Australian National University) ([BIC0004](#))
- 13 West, Catherine ([BIC0011](#))
- 14 Wiggin, Sir Bill ([BIC0010](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Written parliamentary questions: Departmental performance in Session 2019–21	HC 532

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: proposals for remote participation - First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 300
2nd Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: remote voting in divisions	HC 335
3rd Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: the Government's proposal to discontinue remote participation	HC 392
4th Report	Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements	HC 10
5th Report	Written Parliamentary questions: Departmental performance in the 2017 Parliament	HC 790
6th Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: virtual participation in debate	HC 905
7th Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: call lists and time limits on speeches in debates	HC 1031
8th Report	Back to the future? Procedure after coronavirus restrictions	HC 1282
1st Special Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: the Government's proposal for proxy voting for shielding Members	HC 429
2nd Special Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: Government Responses to the Committee's First, Second and Third Reports	HC 565
3rd Special Report	Proxy voting: review of pilot arrangements: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 836
4th Special Report	Procedure under coronavirus restrictions: Government Responses to the Committee's Sixth and Seventh Reports	HC 1165
5th Special Report	Back to the future? Procedure after coronavirus restrictions: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report	HC 1389