



Procedure Committee

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Foreign Secretary,
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Via email only

Thursday, 21 May 2026

Dear Yvette,

Request for a Minister to attend oral evidence session on WPQ performance

Thank you for your letter of 6 May. The Committee is glad to hear of the steps you have taken to improve the performance of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in responding to Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQs) since your appointment.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that there was a significant drop in performance in the periods mentioned in my letter of 7 April, and we note that the Ministerial team in the FCDO is broadly the same now as it was then. The Committee remains keen to understand why this significant drop in performance occurred, and to receive reassurance as to the actions taken to ensure that it will not reoccur in the future.

It may be of interest to note that the Department for Education – who received a similar letter of concern from me in April – has already volunteered to send a Minister to speak to us in June regarding the department's performance. We sincerely hope that the FDCO will follow suit.

Moreover, we are keen for the session to take place as soon as possible as having a timely understanding of the issues faced by the FCDO and the steps taken to address those issues will enable the Committee to produce its final report on Session 2024-26 promptly. This in turn will allow any potential recommendations to be implemented across Government swiftly, and hopefully have a positive impact on performance in this new session from the outset.

I look forward to hearing back from you positively, and would be grateful if your Officials could find an appropriate slot for a Ministerial appearance before the Summer Recess.

I am copying this letter to the Leader of the House, Sir Alan Campbell MP, and the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Dame Emily Thornberry MP. A copy of this letter, and any response received, will be published on the Committee's website in due course.

Yours ever,

Cat Smith MP
Chair of the Procedure Committee