



The Rt Hon Sir Alan Campbell MP
Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Cat Smith MP
Chair of the Procedure Committee
House of Commons
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Dear Cat,

Thank you for inviting me to appear before your Committee on 24th June to discuss Written Parliamentary Questions (WPQs). As I committed to, I am writing to provide an update on the cost of WPQs.

Firstly, the average cost of WPQs. The last time a government formally published the average cost of answering a WPQ was in 2012, when it was calculated at £164. Reflecting public sector wage and price changes over the intervening years, we estimate the current 2026 equivalent cost to be £230. However, the 2012 estimate is calculated on the basis of a cost exercise from 1991. Therefore, as I said to the Committee, the Government will be conducting a more thorough, comprehensive exercise to establish the full modern average cost of answering a WPQ. I will ensure the Committee is updated as soon as that work has been completed.

Secondly, on the annual cost of WPQs for the Government. Using the updated figure of £230, an estimated cost on the Government of answering WPQs in 2025 would come to £18.5 million. As of 7th July, the estimated cost on the Government of answering WPQs so far in 2026 would come to £9.8 million.

I should note that these costs do not cover Parliament's own costs as part of the overall WPQ process.

I hope you find this information helpful, and I look forward to seeing your Committee's report and recommendations in due course.

Yours,
Alan