

Administration Committee

Health and Wellbeing: Response from the House of Commons Commission

First Special Report of Session 2026–27

HC 632

Administration Committee

The Administration Committee considers the services provided for Members, their staff and visitors by the House of Commons Service and makes recommendations to the House of Commons Commission, the Speaker and Officials on how those services are delivered.

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Administration Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is General enquiries: 020 7219 4151 | Media enquiries: 020 7219 0969 / CommonsPressOffice@parliament.uk; the Committee's email address is committeea@parliament.uk.

First Special Report

The Administration Committee published its First Report of Session 2024–26, [Health and Wellbeing](#) (HC 937), on 18 May 2026. The response from the House of Commons Commission was received on 1 September 2026 and is appended below.

Appendix: House of Commons Commission Response

The House of Commons Commission (the Commission) welcomes the report of the House of Commons Administration Committee on Health and Wellbeing, and its constructive recommendations. We are grateful for the Committee’s recognition that significant progress has been made in enhancing health and wellbeing provision across Parliament, including early development of a new Health and Wellbeing Hub, expansion of preventative health initiatives and strengthened wellbeing support.

The Commission accepts all of the Committee’s recommendations and welcomes the political commitment behind them. The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS) will continue to work collaboratively across House services to improve awareness, accessibility and quality of support available to Members, their staff and House Administration staff.

Executive Summary

The Commission welcomes the Administration Committee’s Health and Wellbeing inquiry and recognises the valuable contribution it has made in assessing how Parliament supports the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of Members, Members’ staff and House Administration staff. The report acknowledges the strength of the existing Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS) offer, whilst identifying opportunities to improve awareness, accessibility and engagement with the services available.

In particular, we support the Committee's emphasis on prevention, early intervention, effective communication and the creation of a more visible and integrated approach to health and wellbeing. The development of the new Health and Wellbeing Hub represents a significant opportunity to bring services together in a central, accessible location, improving awareness, navigation and continuity of support for the parliamentary community.

The Commission is committed to enhancing the wellbeing offer available to Members through the introduction of an expanded health screening programme, incorporating both physical and mental wellbeing components, supported by personalised feedback and appropriate signposting. We also recognise the importance of strengthening communications and ensuring that people are aware of the support available before a health issue or wellbeing concern escalates.

The inquiry highlights the unique pressures associated with parliamentary life, including the impact on mental health, family life and personal resilience. The Commission agrees that further work is required to better understand these pressures and will continue to support efforts to improve awareness, access to support services and opportunities for early intervention. We welcome further engagement on how the House can best support Members and their families throughout the parliamentary cycle.

The Commission also welcomes the Committee's focus on physical wellbeing. We support a strategic review of the gym and wider fitness offer to ensure facilities remain fit for purpose, inclusive and capable of meeting the needs of a diverse parliamentary community. Alongside improvements to facilities and accessibility, we support initiatives that encourage participation in physical activity, sporting groups and wider wellbeing opportunities.

The Committee's recommendations regarding menopause support, women's health, healthy eating and health promotion align strongly with existing priorities across PHWS and the wider Administration. Work is already underway in several of these areas and the Administration is committed to building upon this foundation through continued investment, staff development, awareness campaigns and user engagement.

The Commission welcomes the Committee's report as a positive endorsement of the progress made to date whilst providing a clear framework for future improvements. We remain committed to creating a healthy, supportive and inclusive parliamentary environment and will continue to work collaboratively across House services to ensure that wellbeing remains a strategic priority for Parliament.

The House Administration has set out responses to individual recommendations in the next section of this paper.

Conclusions and recommendations and the House Administration's responses

Supporting health and wellbeing

1. *We recognise that the range of health and wellbeing services offered by the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service is excellent and we express our appreciation to the dedicated team of health professionals who provide those services. The ongoing challenge is promoting awareness of health and wellbeing support among the parliamentary community and signposting people to the appropriate service at their point of need. Although the creation of the Health and Wellbeing Hub on Parliament's intranet has improved the information about available services and upcoming events, there remains a lack of general awareness of the depth and breadth of services.*
(Conclusion, Paragraph 13)
2. *We welcome news of the project to create a consolidated and centrally-located Health and Wellbeing Centre within the Parliamentary Estate. The new Centre will address the need for a more visible and accessible joined up health and wellbeing service which has been raised as part of this inquiry. A robust and accessible health service is necessary given the considerable amount of time that MPs spend away from their home and their local GP. It is our ambition that a more consistent health offer is provided for MPs who live in two places and who inevitably use two health providers. Continuity of healthcare, as well as improved access, is critical to enhancing medical provision for those working on the Parliamentary Estate.* (Conclusion, Paragraph 14)
3. *We support the creation of the new Health and Wellbeing Centre in a centrally located hub which will be more visible and accessible to all those working on the Parliamentary Estate. We recommend that communications about the services provided in the new Centre should be optimised through various channels such as email, newsletters, digital screens, desk drops and notices on the intranet, as well as clear signposting to its location. We further recommend that well-advertised contact details are made available for contacting medical practitioners in the Health and Wellbeing Centre.* (Recommendation, Paragraph 15)

Response

The development of the new Health and Wellbeing Hub provides a significant opportunity to improve awareness, accessibility and understanding of the services available. Design and feasibility studies for the Hub have now commenced and it remains a key priority for the PHWS.

A comprehensive communications and engagement plan for the Hub will be developed utilising multiple channels including specific wayfinding, digital screens, newsletters, targeted communications, induction materials and awareness campaigns. Clear contact details and referral pathways will be prominently displayed and regularly promoted. Open day and meet and greet sessions will be offered upon successful opening.

4. ***The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service must offer an enhanced health screening programme for Members in each Parliament, recognising the time constraints faced by members and the nature of their work. We recommend that the health screening programme includes validated screening tools for physical, mental health and wellbeing and that an individualised report is provided following the screening.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 16)

Response

The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service has already commenced work to redesign and enhance the current lifestyle screening programme. The revised offer will adopt an evidence-based and preventative approach, incorporating a wider range of validated screening tools where clinically appropriate. The programme will help to identify work-related health issues and modifiable risk factors, enabling Members to receive advice on improving their health and reducing identified risks.

Prior to assessment, Members will be asked to complete a lifestyle questionnaire and consent form, with relevant health and lifestyle background information. An assessment will be made using a range of health and wellbeing indicators and tailored clinical advice, informed by the results provided to the individual.

Participants will receive individualised feedback reports together with onward signposting and recommendations to engage with their own GP where indicated.

Mental health support

5. ***We are grateful to the PHWS for explaining the range of services to support mental health that are on offer to Members, Members' staff and staff of the House. Dr Weinberg suggested that "wellbeing is never over" and that while the addition of many new services was commendable and will support many more people experiencing workplace pressures, we must do more to raise awareness, be more proactive at earlier intervention, and promote other wellbeing support, such as the mindfulness courses on offer which can help people reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing.*** (Conclusion, Paragraph 26)
6. ***We must find new ways to strengthen personal and family links for MPs for the entire time they serve in Parliament. The strain parliamentary life has on family life cannot be underestimated.*** (Conclusion, Paragraph 27)
7. ***The Administration must consider the impact of parliamentary life on families and whether any support can be provided through existing services. We will return to this topic as part of our forthcoming inquiry on General Election planning so that families, especially MPs' partners, are better prepared for the changes that being a parliamentarian brings to family life. Further, structured engagement with MPs is required to identify practical measures that would better support family life, wellbeing, and long-term resilience while serving in Parliament.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 28)

Response

The Commission welcomes the Committee's recognition of the impact of parliamentary life on Members and their families, and that wellbeing should be an ongoing focus. Services such as the House of Commons nursery, holiday clubs, the family room and extension of the Individual Assistance programme to MPs families are all designed to support Members and families.

The more awareness candidates have of life as an MP, and the earlier elected Members are made aware of available services, the better they and their families can access support. The Head of Member Engagement and General Election Planning Group will consider this area further, guided by the Committee's ongoing inquiry into the General Election.

The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service will continue to improve awareness, signposting and promotion of mental health and wellbeing support, with a stronger emphasis on prevention and earlier intervention.

This will include targeted communications, promotion of initiatives and courses and use of the new Health and Wellbeing Hub to make support more visible and accessible across the parliamentary community.

The House has an established Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) network which has been further expanded with 130 individuals currently trained, aiming to increase mental health literacy across the organisation, crucial for improving help-seeking behaviours early on, and reducing stigma.

8. ***We welcome the Modernisation Committee's commitment to look at the effective use of time in its February 2025 memorandum. We recommend that changes to Wednesday sitting hours are considered as part of that work to enable Members representing constituencies furthest from Westminster to travel home to their families on Wednesday evenings.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 29)
9. ***We will commission a new confidential and anonymised survey during 2026 to gain a clearer understanding of work pressures facing Members to help raise awareness of potential signs of psychological distress and improve signposting to appropriate support. We will report the results of this survey to the House of Commons Commission and Committee on Standards.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 30)

Response

The Commission welcomes the Committee's work in this area. The Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service, in collaboration with the Members and Members Staff Services Team, can provide professional advice on survey design, interpretation of findings and appropriate wellbeing interventions, working with relevant internal data and insight teams and external experts where required.

Supporting physical health

10. ***While the Parliamentary Estate is fortunate to have an onsite gym and it is commonplace for a big employer to offer some form of supported access to gym facilities, we are of the view that more could be done to increase capacity and quality at an accessible price, whilst ensuring the impact on the taxpayer is proportionate.*** (Conclusion, Paragraph 40)
11. ***We endorse the positive messaging we heard in the evidence sessions on the knowledgeable, helpful staff in the gym. Their commitment to improving health and fitness is valued by the gym members. Throughout this inquiry the staff have been helpful and informative and are receptive to putting in place initiatives that will improve the gym experience for its users. The onsite gym is a hugely beneficial***

facility for the parliamentary community: the security of the space is important for Members, and time constraints around the working hours of Parliament make it difficult for Members and other passholders to fit in physical exercise during the working week. The provision of a good employee benefit for all estate users is a strong argument for good quality onsite fitness facilities. But the standard of the gym does not currently deliver the right fitness facilities for many of its users.
(Conclusion, Paragraph 41)

12. *The current condition of the gym is nowhere near the level we would expect for the money its members pay, and for a modern organisation, which values the ability of passholders to be able to engage in physical exercise to support their health and wellbeing. Regular roof leaks, poor quality changing facilities and dated décor result in an unappealing space.* (Conclusion, Paragraph 42)

13. *We recommend an urgent evaluation of the current location to decide whether it is viable and can be significantly improved to meet the diverse needs of the parliamentary community. An improved facility in its current facility must be good enough for at least another 10 years. In the short-term, the gym must be refurbished to a higher standard. In the medium-term, an alternative location for the gym should be considered as part of wider plans for the secure Estate. This evaluation piece must be completed by October 2026 and report back to the House Administration with a long-term vision for facilities to better support health and fitness. This evaluation should include an ambitious timescale for delivering an improved offer.*
(Recommendation, Paragraph 43)

14. *Continued use of the current location for any substantial period of time will require immediate improvements to ensure the current gym is safe, compliant, and fit for purpose. We therefore expect a phased programme of short-term enhancements, including:*

- a. *Refurbishment of the changing rooms to a significantly improved standard by March 2027, including increased locker capacity and provision for hanging formal attire;***
- b. *A comprehensive review of gym equipment, informed by feedback from users and the wider Parliamentary community, ensuring the needs of all groups, including women, are reflected. A modernised, inclusive equipment offer should be in place by March 2027.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 44)

Response

The Customer Experience and Service Delivery Team (CE&SD) and other relevant stakeholders will undertake an evaluation of future fitness provision, including consideration of location, accessibility, condition, service offer and value for money. Immediate feasibility work will also consider short-term improvements including changing facilities and equipment upgrades.

An evaluation will also be undertaken of the current gym location, condition and long-term viability, including options for short-term refurbishment and potential alternative locations within wider secure Estate planning.

The evaluation will report to the House Administration with a proposed long-term vision and indicative delivery timescales. This will be presented to the Committee in due course. Any subsequent works will be subject to affordability, feasibility, value for money and security requirements, alongside wider Estate prioritisation.

- 15. *We recommend the gym reviews its pricing model to increase accessibility and use, while minimising compensation payments. More flexible pricing should be offered so that MPs and staff who only spend part of their week in Westminster will be provided with better incentives to join. The gym must consider:***

- a. *More competitively priced “pay as you go” sessions;***
- b. *Increased availability and improved promotion of free trial sessions;***
- c. *The ability of non-Members to book classes in advance;***
- d. *Consideration of alternative membership types, including classes-only options;***
- e. *Opportunities to adjust pricing will only be viable once facilities have been upgraded.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 46)

Response

A review of pricing structures will be undertaken with the gym provider. Consideration will be given to greater flexibility, including pay-as-you-go arrangements, trial memberships and alternative access models.

In addition to existing membership options, including day passes, 10-session passes and monthly direct debit memberships, Westminster Gym will introduce a one-week pass and a monthly cash option. The monthly cash option will sit alongside, rather than replace, the current direct debit

membership, providing a flexible, non-contract alternative. This will give customers more choice in how they use the facility and better support staff on short-term contracts. In the longer term we will rescope the specification of the gym produce for any future operator.

- 16. *When the contract for operating the gym is due for renewal, the Contract Manager should explore partnership opportunities with a nationwide gym provider to enable reciprocal access. This would support MPs who spend part of their week in their constituency and enable staff to access partner gyms at weekends.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 48)

Response

Prior to the new contract, the Contract Manager will work with the incumbent supplier to engage with GLL, the national leisure trust to explore future partnerships between GLL and the Jubilee Hall Trust giving Members access to both Westminster Gym and any Better/GLL leisure centre across the UK.

We believe this partnership will not only give MPs access to physical activity spaces in their home constituency but will also support local leisure trusts in getting more people, more active, more often. Leisure trusts are essential to improving community health, with proceeds from their centres going directly into community activity – including marginalised groups, older adults, unemployed people, disability groups, and youth programmes.

Beyond the existing contract the House Administration will work to update the specification so that it is explicit that nationwide gym access is a requirement of any tender.

- 17. *The gym should survey its membership on opening hours and assess the feasibility of extending weekday access through controlled, unstaffed entry supported by appropriate security measures.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 49)

Response

Gym users have indicated a preference for later opening hours from Monday to Wednesday. The gym will therefore trial a 30-minute extension to its closing time, moving to 9.30pm, for six months. Feedback from the trial will inform future decisions on opening hours.

- 18. *The gym should expand and diversify its class timetable, including the introduction of shorter sessions to support participation in the working day, particularly at lunchtimes.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 50)

Response

Westminster Gym will work with the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service to explore targeted wellbeing initiatives for the parliamentary community, drawing on the team's understanding of workforce needs. Building on previous collaboration with PHWS, including support for Mental Health Awareness Week through complementary fitness classes and gym access, this partnership will help maximise the reach and impact of future wellbeing campaigns.

As Westminster Gym has limited direct access to the wider parliamentary community, closer collaboration with the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service will support wider promotion, increase participation from potential new members, enable more classes for non-members and ensure staff are aware of the support available.

- 19. *The gym should take steps to improve confidence and accessibility of the use of strength-training equipment, particularly for women. This may include structured inductions, targeted support, and staff-led guidance.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 51)

Response

The Customer Experience and Service Delivery team will work with the gym provider to develop a structured programme of women's health and wellbeing initiatives, including dedicated fitness programmes and educational workshops. To ensure these initiatives are successful, it will be important to establish a clear plan on how to communicate this service so that new and existing members are aware of the opportunities available and understand how they can access and benefit from them.

- 20. *When surveying its membership, the gym should consider feedback on the variety and timing of classes by gender. It should explore ways to encourage greater participation by women, including targeting programmes, running female-only classes and inviting external trainers in to run classes on specific themes.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 54)

Response

Westminster Gym supports exploring options to improve accessibility and participation. User consultation and engagement will inform future decisions on operating hours, partnerships, class provision and targeted programmes, with particular focus on addressing the gender gap in participation. Bridging this gap will help create a more inclusive fitness offer, increase confidence among women and other under-represented groups, improve access to strength training and wider wellbeing activities,

and support better physical and mental health outcomes across the parliamentary community. This will include exploring more inclusive workouts, targeted support and accessible class formats that encourage broader participation.

- 21. *We support the continuation of monthly sporting events initiated through APPGs and encourage these to be widened to include parliamentary staff.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 57)
- 22. *It is apparent that there is no central place to find communications about parliamentary sporting clubs and events. We recommend the creation of a “club hub” on the Parliamentary intranet, providing up-to-date details of club meetings, joining instructions, and event information, which is kept up to date by an appropriate administrative owner.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 58)
- 23. *We encourage the establishment of additional clubs similar to the women’s parliamentary football team and the “club hub” should include clear guidance on how to set up a new club.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 59)

Response

The Administration recognises the valuable contribution that sporting and social groups make towards physical, mental and social wellbeing. When people feel socially connected, they are more resilient, more collaborative, and better able to handle the realities of demanding workloads or change. The Administration will work with relevant stakeholders to explore a central online resource promoting clubs, activities and participation opportunities, with the appropriate administrative owner to be agreed.

The Administration supports the principle of encouraging a wider range of parliamentary clubs and activities that promote physical, mental and social wellbeing. As part of work to explore a central resource, the Administration will consider how best to provide clear guidance for establishing new clubs, including information on governance, responsibilities, communications and ongoing administration. This will help make participation more accessible, support the development of inclusive new groups and ensure clubs are sustainable and appropriately managed.

Women’s health

- 24. *We recognise that the House of Commons, through having signed the Menopause Pledge and putting a range of initiatives in place that support women who are experiencing menopause, is showing commitment to improving the workplace for women. However, to***

continue to be effective, women must be made aware of the support that is available and feel equipped to seek reasonable adjustments. Managers must be open to granting such adjustments, proactive in offering support and such conversations should become normal.

(Conclusion, Paragraph 66)

- 25. *We recommend that the House administration explores how to increase menopause awareness, empowering women to seek adjustments where necessary and ensure that managers are equipped to handle sensitive conversations and signpost women in their team to available support.***

(Recommendation, Paragraph 67)

Response

The Commission welcomes the Committee's focus on menopause and its recognition of the House's commitment on this issue. The signing of the Menopause Pledge and the range of initiatives put in place to support women experiencing menopause have been important milestones.

The Administration will continue to build menopause awareness, promote available support and adjustments, and equip managers to handle sensitive conversations confidently and appropriately. This will be supported through communications, manager guidance, training resources and clear signposting to the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service, workplace adjustments, workplace equality networks and other relevant services."

- 26. *We support the willingness to upskill the PHWS clinical nursing team to undertake specific training in women's health and to build on the work already underway around developing peer support networks such as the menopause café.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 68)

Response

The Administration supports continued professional development for the Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service clinical team in women's health, with relevant evidence-based training expected to be completed by March 2027. This will build on existing work to develop peer support networks, including the inaugural menopause café launched in January 2026, which provided a safe, informal space for open conversation, listening and support. The next menopause café is planned to take place in July 2026.

- 27. *We recommend that the House of Commons gym provides more support for women experiencing menopause symptoms by offering specific exercise programmes and classes that will help women manage their weight, boost their metabolism and improve their mental health.***

(Recommendation, Paragraph 69)

Response

Westminster Gym will explore the option of structured four- to six-week programmes to support women to train effectively at different life stages, including during menopause. These programmes would combine tailored training plans, practical guidance and regular workshops or check-ins to provide ongoing support.

Westminster Gym also recognises the value of helping women understand how hormonal changes throughout the menstrual cycle may affect exercise performance and recovery. Evidence-based guidance on adapting training to different phases of the cycle would support participants to train more effectively and optimise their fitness.

Food and catering

28. ***The Committee recognises that the catering outlets on the Parliamentary Estate generally provide good-quality, reasonably priced and varied food options. However, healthy food options are limited outside core meal times, and there is a noticeable lack of fresh grab-and-go items in the afternoon. We welcome the Customer Experience and Service Delivery team's commitment to understanding the different types of customers who use the service, and the varying needs and expectations that shape their experience. Further research with a broad range of user groups will be important to build a more detailed picture of these expectations and inform future decisions.*** (Conclusion, Paragraph 74)
29. ***We recommend that the Customer Experience and Service Delivery Team explores the feasibility of introducing a self-serve salad bar and made to-order sandwich offer, identifying an outlet on the Estate that could appropriately accommodate this service. In line with the Commission's ambition to reduce the overall cost of catering, any new provision should be self-funding or supported from trade-offs made elsewhere within the catering portfolio.*** (Recommendation, Paragraph 75)
30. ***There is scope for quick wins. The catering team should review and refresh the product offer in each outlet on the Estate, ensuring it reflects current customer expectations and the particular demands placed on Members throughout the working day. This includes ensuring that appropriate products are available at the right times of day, especially during periods of busy parliamentary activity when Members require fast, reliable options. The review should focus on opportunities to simplify choices, speed up service and improve the overall experience. Concepts such as the bistro and "fast plates" discussed with the Director could be trialled on a small scale, enabling the team to***

test demand, gather real-time feedback and understand what delivers the greatest benefit before considering wider rollout. (Recommendation, Paragraph 76)

Response

The Customer Experience and Service Delivery team (CE&SD) will engage expert support to undertake a targeted review of the product offer across catering outlets on the Estate to ensure it reflects current customer expectations and the particular demands placed on Members throughout the working day. This will include assessing whether products are available at the right times, especially during periods of high parliamentary activity when fast, reliable options are essential.

CE&SD will explore the feasibility of introducing a selfserve salad bar, a madetoorder sandwich offer, a refreshed bistro model and “fast plates”, including identifying suitable locations on the Estate. Small-scale trials will enable the team to test demand, gather realtime feedback and understand which interventions deliver the greatest benefit before considering any wider rollout. Any proposal will need to support healthier choices and convenience for customers while remaining financially sustainable – either fully selffunding or offset through tradeoffs elsewhere within the catering portfolio.

To support this work, Customer Experience and Service Delivery will engage with food product development experts to undertake customer research and shape an offer that best meets customer needs.

Any changes proposed will be grounded in operational feasibility, customer insight and financial sustainability to ensure improvements can be delivered quickly while supporting the broader catering strategy.