

**Written evidence submitted by the Strategic Director,
Chamber Business Team, House of Commons (CVR 115)**

In the course of the evidence session on Monday 12 October I undertook to provide some further information to the Committee.

1. Members switching between physical and proxy votes (Q 395)

The following table indicates the number of proxies in operation in the two sitting weeks immediately prior to the date of the evidence session (28 September–8 October).

Sitting day	Proxies in operation	Proxies held by whips of the three largest parties	
Monday 28 September	143	121	Stuart Andrew – 44 Chris Elmore – 49 Patrick Grady – 28
Tuesday 29 September	149	125	Stuart Andrew – 45 Chris Elmore – 51 Patrick Grady – 29
Wednesday 30 September	150	127	Stuart Andrew – 45 Chris Elmore – 52 Patrick Grady – 30
Thursday 1 October	149	126	Stuart Andrew – 45 Chris Elmore – 51 Patrick Grady – 30
Monday 5 October	159	132	Stuart Andrew – 47 Chris Elmore – 52 Patrick Grady – 33
Tuesday 6 October	156	127	Stuart Andrew – 46 Chris Elmore – 49 Patrick Grady – 32
Wednesday 7 October	157	122	Stuart Andrew – 48 Chris Elmore – 48 Patrick Grady – 30
Thursday 8 October	154	123	Stuart Andrew – 44 Chris Elmore – 48 Patrick Grady – 31

In this period, one Member changed proxy six times and two changed proxy four times.

2. Spontaneity in House of Lords virtual proceedings on Bills (Q 414)

I understand that Members of the House of Lords who are signed up in advance as remote or as physical participants in debate on a Bill can spontaneously request to come in to ask questions after the Minister has spoken.

Members who wish to contribute in this way indicate a wish to do so by emailing the shared inbox used by the Table Clerks or the Grand Committee clerks as appropriate.

The clerk uses the Microsoft Teams Chat which has been set up for the day to notify the Chair/deputy, the Whips and the broadcasting hub of the request received.

The request to speak can be quite sudden, sometimes to pick up on words just spoken by the Minister.

I understand that the system is thought to work well in general, though since the service operates on the basis of emailed requests rather than instant messaging, requests to speak can sometimes be delayed in reaching the relevant inbox.

To be eligible to request to speak in this way, Members are required to register in advance as participants for the bill stage in question. They do not have to register to speak on the specific group in question, and can request to speak again even if they have already spoken to the group of amendments under consideration.

The system is based on the principle that all Members registered to speak have equal access to the facility, as each has to contact the clerk by email to request a spontaneous intervention.

The current guidance issued by the House of Lords Procedure Committee is here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2832/documents/27624/default/>

Matthew Hamlyn

16 October 2020