

# HYBRID PROCEEDINGS – A GUIDE FOR MEMBERS

## Introduction

This guide has been produced to assist Members who wish to participate in hybrid proceedings, whether remotely or in the Chamber.

The guide contains important information about the arrangements for hybrid meetings. It is expected that these will be reviewed to reflect experience of the operation of the systems.

It is intended that this guidance will be an evolving document. Any revised version of this guide will be sent to Members and the guide will also be available on the Parliament's website at—

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/chamber.aspx>.

## Initial set-up

Prior to participating remotely in any proceedings, Members must go through a short initial set-up session with Parliamentary officials.

Any Member who has not been set-up should contact the Parliamentary Business Team who will assist in making the necessary arrangements.

## Participation

A minimum of two thirds of the Members participating in an item of business should normally be physically present in the Chamber for a hybrid meeting.

Parliament officials will need to be provided with the names of Members who will be participating remotely by no later than 4.00pm on the day before each hybrid meeting is to be held.

Members will be sent a link to the meeting by no later than 10.00am on the day of the meeting. Members will be required to log-in to the videoconferencing link **no later than 45 minutes** before the start of the meeting.

The email providing the link will also provide telephone contact details for IT support staff who will be available to assist Members who experience any difficulties logging on.

The link provided to Members should not be forwarded to a third party.

As Members join the videoconferencing application, the meeting operators will test each Member's camera and microphone to ensure both are operating correctly. The operators may also offer Members suggestions on positioning of their devices to ensure the best possible audio and visual output.

Throughout the meeting, operators will manage the cameras and microphones of all Members. Members should not operate their own camera or microphone unless asked to do so by the operators.

Members participating in proceedings remotely are asked to provide a telephone number on which they can be contacted directly if they experience any technical problems during the conference.

In the event of any technical problems meaning that a Member cannot be called at the expected point, the Presiding Officer will move on to the next speaker. Any Member who has been missed will, subject to technical issues being resolved, be called to speak at a later point in the relevant item of business.

## **Management of Proceedings**

Members can participate remotely in all items of business.

Members will be called to speak by the Presiding Officer who will, whenever possible, alternate between calling Members who are participating remotely and Members who are present in the Chamber.

Members are asked to provide advance notice of any requests to speak, including any requests for supplementary questions at question times. These requests should be sent to the Presiding Officer and the Parliamentary Business Team.

Members participating remotely are asked to put 'r' in the chat function of the videoconferencing application to indicate a request to speak.

Members participating remotely will not be able to accept or make interventions during debate.

All Members will be able to make points of order. Members taking part in the Chamber will be able to do so in the usual manner. Members participating remotely should use the chat function in the videoconferencing application and their request to raise a point of order will be conveyed to the Presiding Officer by the Chamber Clerks.

In the event that technical difficulties mean that an item of business cannot be taken or completed, the Presiding Officer may use his discretion to reschedule that item of business for a later day or time.

## **Decisions and Voting**

A digital voting system is in use for Members. The system allows Members who are present at a meeting of the Parliament to be able to vote remotely.

Separate guidance on digital voting has been made available to Members and can be found on the Parliament's website at—

<https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/chamber.aspx>.

## Standards and Conduct

Hybrid proceedings are formal proceedings to which the requirements of both Standing Orders and the Code of Conduct apply.

Section 41 of the Scotland Act 1998 (which provides that proceedings of the Parliament are privileged for the purposes of the law of defamation) applies for Members participating in a hybrid meeting whether a Member is participating remotely or is physically present in the Chamber.

## Contacts

The table below sets out the contact details of the offices involved in the operation of hybrid meetings and indicates the types of queries that should be directed to each office.

Requests for supplementary questions, other requests to speak and messages to the Presiding Officer during meetings	<a href="mailto:presidingofficers@parliament.scot">presidingofficers@parliament.scot</a> and <a href="mailto:business.team@parliament.scot">business.team@parliament.scot</a>
Procedural advice	<a href="mailto:business.team@parliament.scot">business.team@parliament.scot</a>
BlueJeans support	<a href="mailto:broadcasting@parliament.scot">broadcasting@parliament.scot</a>
Hardware support and advice	<a href="mailto:bithelpdesk@parliament.scot">bithelpdesk@parliament.scot</a>
Speaking notes	<a href="mailto:official.report@parliament.scot">official.report@parliament.scot</a>