



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

The Presiding Officer
Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP

Clare Adamson MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and
Public Appointments Committee

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Dear Clare

At its meeting on 24 January, the Parliamentary Bureau agreed to write to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee to invite you to consider a revision to Standing Orders regarding arrangements to cover the role of Convener of a committee during an extended period of parental leave.

If the Convener is absent for an extended period, the options available would be for the Deputy Convener to act in place of the Convener or for the Convener to resign to allow for a new Convener to be appointed.

The rules therefore do not provide for a Convener to retain their position during the period of absence while allowing the Parliament's decision in relation to which party the Convener would be a member of to be respected.

I think you will agree that there would be benefit in considering steps to address this point.

A possible approach considered by the Bureau would be to revise the rules to make provision to allow for the Committee to appoint an "Acting Convener" on a temporary basis to cover the role during the Convener's absence.

Under this procedure, a Member from the same party as the Convener would be appointed to the Committee on a temporary basis to cover the period of absence. The Committee would then be invited to choose an acting Convener from the eligible Members which would include the Member appointed on a temporary basis. The acting Convener's tenure would come to an end when the Convener returned.

This approach would ensure that Conveners are not disadvantaged by taking a period of parental leave.



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Similarly, it would bring the Parliament's rules into line with practice in different spheres, including the approach taken recently by the Scottish Government whereby, when a Minister was on maternity leave, a temporary Minister was appointed in the Minister's place during her absence.

I would be very grateful if your Committee could give consideration to this request.

Yours sincerely

Rt Hon Ken Macintosh MSP
Presiding Officer