Parliamentary Bureau – Parliamentary Calendar

Office of the Clerk and Christmas Recess

Christmas recess

1. The Parliament has previously agreed that—

   - the Christmas recess begins this year on Saturday 20 December 2025 and ends on Sunday 4 January 2026 (Motion ref. S6M-13045); and

   - the Office of the Clerk is closed on Wednesday 24 (pm), Thursday 25 and Friday 26 December 2025 and Thursday 1 and Friday 2 January 2026 (Motion S6M-14309).

2. Since 2000, the Bureau has additionally proposed that the Office of the Clerk be closed between Christmas and the New Year. The Bureau is therefore invited to agree to propose to the Parliament that the Office of the Clerk be closed this year on Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December 2025 as shown in Annexe A. Questions, motions and amendments cannot be lodged when the Office of the Clerk is closed and the impact of the proposal on some of the deadlines for lodging are discussed below.

3. In 2024, the Bureau also agreed to close the Office of the Clerk on the morning of 24 December 2024. Considering the days that the public holidays fall on, and due to recess commencing a little earlier than usual, the Bureau is invited to agree that the Office of the Clerk be closed on the morning of Wednesday 24 December 2025.

Impact on deadlines – Parliamentary questions

4. This has an impact on some of the deadlines which would normally apply on a Monday (the deadlines for submission of names for the ballots for Portfolio and General Questions and the associated deadline two days later for the lodging of questions). Proposed deadlines which take this and recess dates into account are set out below and shown at Annexe B.

Topical Questions – Tuesday 6 January 2026

5. The deadline for lodging a question would be 12 noon on Monday 5 January 2026 (this is the usual arrangement).

Portfolio Questions – Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 January 2026

6. For Portfolio Questions on 7 and 8 January 2026, names to be entered into the draw should be submitted no later than noon on Monday 15 December 2025, with questions being submitted no later than noon on Wednesday 17 December 2025. This follows the pattern in previous sessions.

General Questions – Thursday 8 January 2025

7. Deadlines for the submission of names and questions for General Questions are the same as those for Portfolio Questions (above).

First Minister's Questions - Thursday 8 January 2025

8. The deadline for lodging a question would be 12 noon on Monday 5 January (this is the usual arrangement).

Portfolio Questions – Wednesday 14 and Thursday 15 January 2026 and General Questions – Thursday 15 January 2026

9. For Portfolio Questions on 14 and 15 January 2026, names to be entered into the draw should be submitted no later than noon on Monday 5 January 2026, with questions being submitted no later than noon on Wednesday 7 January 2026 (these are the usual arrangements).

10. Deadlines for the submission of names and questions for General Questions are the same as those for Portfolio Questions (above).

Impact on deadlines – motions and amendments

Motions for debate – Tuesday 5 January 2026

11. If a debate on Tuesday 6 January requires a motion, the deadline for lodging the motion would be 10.00am on Monday 5 January and for lodging amendments to that motion would be 4.00pm on that Monday (these are the usual arrangements).

Motions for debate – Wednesday 7 January 2026

12. The deadline for lodging motions for debate on Wednesday 7 January would be 4.00pm on Monday 5 January and for lodging amendments to these motions would be 4.00pm on Tuesday 6 January 2026 (these are the usual arrangements).

Conclusion

13. The Bureau is invited to—

- agree to propose to the Parliament by motion that the Office of the Clerk be closed on Wednesday 24 (am), Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December 2025; and

- consider the proposed deadlines set out above.

Parliamentary Business Team
October 2025

Proposal to close the Office of the Clerk

December 2024/January 2025

Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	*24 (pm)	25	26
*29	*30	*31	1	2
5	6	7	8	9

	Recess
	Office of the Clerk is closed on these previously agreed days
*	Proposal to close the Office of the Clerk on these days

Parliamentary week and Chamber Desk deadlines w/c 15 and 29 December 2025, and 5 January 2026

Note that the table below is not an exhaustive list of every Chamber Desk deadline in each week. The table highlights those deadlines that are affected, or where it is useful to emphasise those that are not affected.

Monday 15 December • TQs for 16 December and FMQs for 18 December - no later than 12 noon • Names for the ballot for Portfolio Questions to be answered on 7/8 January – no later than 12 noon • Names for the ballot for General Questions to be answered on Thursday 8 January – no later than 12 noon	
Tuesday 16 December	**Chamber business to include** Topical Questions (if selected) Members' Business Decision Time
Wednesday 17 December • Questions for Portfolio Questions to be answered on 7/8 January – no later than 12 noon • Questions for General Questions to be answered on 8 January – no later than 12 noon	**Chamber business to include** Portfolio Questions Members' Business Decision Time
Thursday 18 December • Motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 4.30pm	**Chamber business to include** General Questions First Minister's Questions Decision Time
Friday 19 December • Motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 3.30pm	
Monday 22 December • Motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 3.00pm	**Recess: Office of the Clerk is closed from 4.00pm.**

Tuesday 23 December • Motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 3.00pm	**Recess: Office of the Clerk is closed from 4.00pm.**
Wednesday 24 December – recess – proposed closure of Office of the clerk	
Thursday 25 December – bank holiday – Office of the Clerk is closed	
Friday 26 December – bank holiday – Office of the Clerk is closed	
Monday 29, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December – recess - proposed closure of Office of the Clerk	
Thursday 1 January – bank holiday – Office of the Clerk is closed	
Friday 2 January – bank holiday – Office of the Clerk is closed	
Monday 6 January • Motions for Tuesday 6 January debate – no later than 10 am • Amendments to motions for Tuesday 6 January debate – no later than 4.00 pm • Motions for Wednesday 7 January debate – no later than 4.00 pm • Topical Questions for answer on 6 January – no later than 12 noon • First Minister's Questions to be answered on 8 January – no later than 12 noon • Names for the ballot for Portfolio Questions to be answered on 14/15 January – no later than 12 noon • Names for the ballot for General Questions to be answered on 15 January – no later than 12 noon. • Other motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 4.30 pm	
Tuesday 6 January • Amendments to motions for Wednesday 7 January debate – no later than 4.00pm • Motions for 8 January debate – no later than 4.00pm • Other motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 4.30 pm	**Chamber business to include** Topical Questions (if selected) Members' Business Decision Time

Wednesday 7 January • Questions for Portfolio Questions to be answered on 14/15 January – no later than 12.00 noon. • Questions for General Questions (to be answered on 15 January) – no later than 12.00 noon. • Amendments to motions for 8 January debate – no later than 4.00pm. • Other motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 4.30pm.	**Chamber business to include** Portfolio Questions Members' Business Decision Time
Thursday 8January • motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 4.30pm.	**Chamber business to include** General Questions First Minister's Questions Members' Business Decision Time
Friday 9 January • Motions/amendments and written questions – no later than 3.30pm	