

Parliamentary Bureau - Time for Reflection

1. Time for Reflection is normally the first item of business in the Chamber each week. Nominations to Time for Reflection are usually made by MSPs directly to the Parliamentary Business Team. Invitations to lead Time for Reflection are issued by the Presiding Officer after consultation with the Parliamentary Bureau.
2. In developing programmes of contributors to Time for Reflection, a balance of faiths and religions, of gender, and of geographical location is sought. It is also recognised that a proportion of the population does not adhere to any particular faith, and any contributors in this category should have a humanitarian connection.
3. Guidance on Time for Reflection, which is issued to all potential contributors, was updated and agreed by the Bureau in Session 4. A copy of the guidance is attached at Annexe A.

Future programme

4. A contributor is currently being identified by the Presiding Officer for Time for Reflection on Tuesday 26 May and it is suggested that the programme is then continued on the normal weekly basis up to the summer recess. Given the short notice, and that Members are yet to be invited to make nominations to Time for Reflections in Session 7, it is recommended that the Presiding Officer should determine the programme of contributors for the period up to summer recess. A further paper will then be brought to the Bureau for the period after the summer recess. It is also proposed that the Bureau consider updating the Guidance at this point too.

Recommendation

5. This Bureau is invited to agree —
 - that the Presiding Officer should determine the programme of contributors for Time to Reflection up to summer recess; and
 - that the Parliamentary Business Team, on behalf of this Presiding Officer, write to all Members seeking nominations for future contributions for Time for Reflection.

Parliamentary Business Team
May 2026

Annexe A

Time for Reflection

Introduction to Time for Reflection

Time for Reflection is an opportunity for MSPs and members of the public to join together before a meeting of the Parliament commences. It is intended that it be a positive and inclusive experience for all. With this in mind, guidelines have been agreed by the Parliamentary Bureau to aid contributors in writing texts.

Contributors are asked to respect the limitations set on contributions to Time for Reflection —

- the length of contributions is set at a maximum of 400 words to protect parliamentary time available that day.
- the content should encompass the policies of the Scottish Parliament that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Contributors may be asked to revise text that may be deemed to be sensitive.

Guidance on Time for Reflection

1. Time for Reflection will normally be held in the Chamber of the Scottish Parliament as the first item of business each week (i.e. on Tuesdays at 2.00 pm) and recorded in the Official Report. Time for Reflection will last for a maximum of 4 minutes (up to 400 words at normal speaking speed). The Presiding Officer will invite contributors to deliver Time for Reflection.
2. The content of Time for Reflection should adhere to the following guidelines:
 - (a) it will be in public and should be led in the context of both Parliament and the Scottish people as a whole;
 - (b) it should consist of either a short narrative relating to personal experience or current affairs and/or prayers/readings from appropriate texts;
 - (c) it should normally reflect the practice of the faith or belief community to which the time for reflection contributor belongs (if any);
 - (d) it will not make political points;
 - (e) it will not denigrate another faith, belief or none;
 - (f) it will be consistent with the principle of equal opportunities for all and should not include remarks or comments which are discriminatory; and

- (g) the text should be submitted in advance to the Clerk and the content of the Time for Reflection should not deviate from the text provided.
3. Time for Reflection will be held in public, and Members and the public can be encouraged to enter the Chamber during the duration of Time for Reflection.
 4. The procedure will be as follows:
 - (i) the person leading Time for Reflection will follow the Presiding Officer in to the Chamber (once the gavel has brought the Chamber to attention) and take the seat to the left of the Presiding Officer. Members stand as the Presiding Officer comes into the Chamber and sit once he/she is seated;
 - (ii) the Presiding Officer will introduce Time for Reflection;
 - (iii) on completion, a Clerk will escort the Time for Reflection contributor out of the Chamber and the Presiding Officer will move on to the next item of business.

The Parliamentary Bureau