

Parliamentary Bureau – Temporary amendments to standing orders

Introduction

1. Rule 17.2.1(b) allows the Parliament to agree to suspend and vary Standing Orders, for the purpose of specific items of business, on a motion of Parliamentary Bureau.

Requirement for the temporary amendment of Standing Orders in relation to the Presiding Officer's Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber

2. The Presiding Officer has revised the Guidance on Conduct in the Chamber. This was issued to all Members on Thursday 12 June.
3. In addition, as indicated to the Bureau last week, the Presiding Officer has indicated that he only intends to allow members to participate in Chamber business remotely or vote from outwith the United Kingdom in exceptional circumstances, which will include where Members are required to travel abroad on official Government or parliamentary business. In these circumstances, prior permission of the Presiding Officer must be obtained in advance.

Discussion

4. The following draft motion has been prepared to make the necessary suspensions and variations to Rule 11.5.1 in relation to this change:

[Name] on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau: Suspension and Variation of Standing Orders

That the Parliament agrees—

(a) under Rule 17.2.1(b) to suspend and vary standing orders as follows for the purpose of Decision Time (or any other item of business which involves decisions being taken other than at Decision Time): for Rule 11.5.1 substitute:

“1. Subject to paragraph 1A, only members have a right to vote at a meeting of the Parliament. A member is not obliged to vote.

1A. A member who is participating in the meeting remotely (on a platform provided by the Parliamentary corporation) from outside the United Kingdom has the right to vote only if the member has, prior to the beginning of the meeting, obtained the permission of the Presiding Officer to do so.”

(b) that the suspension and variation set out in paragraph (a) shall have effect from [date] June 2026 until 31 January 2027 or such earlier date as the Parliament may decide, on a motion of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

Recommendation

5. Business Managers are invited to consider recommending the motion to suspend and vary Standing Orders as set out above. If the Bureau is agreed, it is proposed that a Bureau motion be lodged to be taken this week.
6. It is proposed that the duration of this rule be until 31 January 2027 and that the Bureau writes to the SPPA Committee to invite it to recommend permanent rule changes to the rules on parliamentary questions in due course.
7. If agreed, the change will be communicated to members to ensure awareness of the rule.

Parliamentary Business Team
June 2026