

Conveners Group

24 June 2026

1st Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

The Conveners Group

Introduction

1. The Conveners Group (the CG) is the forum for conveners of all committees. It maintains a strategic overview of the operation and workload of committees and facilitates liaison between committees, the Parliamentary Bureau and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.
2. Previously, the CG met monthly, routinely in private, on Wednesdays over lunchtime. Meetings were chaired by the Deputy Presiding Officer. This session, with the intention of strengthening the Group's role and stature and that of the Parliament's committees, meetings will be chaired by the Presiding Officer.
3. CG functions are set out in standing orders. Overlaying these, the CG has a key role in raising the profile of committees and championing effective Parliamentary scrutiny. Recognising this, the new CG will wish to consider how best to develop its role.

Efficient use of resources and time

4. The new CG will wish to keep effective use of resources and standards of service under review. For example, there is provision for all committees to meet formally each week but, in practice, this may not always be necessary. Conveners are also encouraged to consider informal visits or fact-finding trips.
5. To assist committees and their members understand what support they can expect to receive, a paper on standards of service for committees is being developed. This will assist with managing demands and provide transparency on service levels. The document will be available for committee business planning days.

Identifying strategic priorities to enhance parliamentary scrutiny

6. Key documents for CG consideration are—
 - a. the [session 6 CG legacy report](#) which sets out the previous CG approach and how it progressed its strategic priorities.
 - b. the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee report on [Strengthening Committees' Effectiveness](#)

7. CG may wish to consider:

- closer working with the Parliamentary Bureau to identify opportunities for cross-committee working, including joint committee scrutiny, the use of reporters and interparliamentary working. This includes closer engagement on the management of committee workloads, in particular the management of referred work and the possibility of establishing time-limited committees for specific issues.
- to enhance cross-committee working, improved sharing of information between conveners to enable more coordination between committee work programmes to avoid duplication and identify potential areas for joint working.
- greater public participation in the Parliament, for example by continuing the People's Panel approach
- greater engagement with post-legislative scrutiny, particularly at the start of session when committee workloads are less heavy. This could also be a topic for a time-limited committee to consider.
- prioritising Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for members, particularly the development of the role of Convener (more detail below).
- consideration of set objectives which committees are now required to produce for each parliamentary year on individual pieces of scrutiny and reporting on these, setting out how effectively the committee considers it has conducted its scrutiny function and what the outcomes have been of that scrutiny.

8. Conveners are invited to bring forward their own ideas on ways in which to enhance the role of committees and ways in which Conveners Group can support that work and delivering enhanced CPD for members and conveners.

CPD for members and conveners

9. An enhanced [CPD programme for members](#) is now in place providing a structured approach for new member induction and a continuing flexible offering for returning members. Engagement so far has been high. Conveners are asked to encourage all members to continue to engage.
10. A new fiscal literacy programme for MSPs commences in September. This is intended for all, not just new MSPs or members of the Finance and Public Administration Committee. It starts with a **full day session on Monday 7 September (9.30 - 17.00)** and includes speakers from the Scottish Fiscal Commission, Audit Scotland and the Fraser of Allander Institute. **All conveners are strongly encouraged to attend this session.**
11. A specific programme of training and development will be made available **for Conveners**. Initial weeks' support is provided through clerk-led inductions. The next phase is now being developed. Feedback from conveners is sought on what training and support they would find most valuable. **Conveners are invited to**

bring forward early ideas. External coaching / training is available for conveners individually, or as a group. The CG may wish to use some future meeting time for development activity, including group coaching and consider how best to support peer to peer learning between conveners or with former conveners.

Conveners Group Scottish Government scrutiny with impact

12. The previous CG held bi-annual 90-minute meetings with the **First Minister**. Questions were themed. Latterly, a new format was trialled. The session was split with half the CG membership attending each. Overall, it was felt that the new format led to more meaningful scrutiny.
13. Last session, the CG also held annual meetings with the **Minister for Parliamentary Business**, usually following the autumn announcement of the Programme for Government. Again, questions were grouped thematically and covered legislation timetabling and the availability of key Scottish Government policy detail and direction.
14. The previous CG suggested that more could be done to support and enhance cross-committee budget scrutiny. It recommended that the successor CG hold meetings with the **Cabinet Secretary for Finance**. If agreed to, these could coincide with publication of the Budget Bill and autumn budget revisions.

Summary and for decision

15. There is significant opportunity for the new CG to operate collectively to enhance the Parliament's scrutiny function and support improved ways of working. Members are invited to reflect on today's discussion, with a view to returning to matters, including CG strategic priorities, after the recess. Meantime, the CG is invited to agree:
 - **the frequency (suggested monthly), day of the week (continue with Wednesdays over lunch) and format (whether in public or private) for usual CG meetings,**
 - **to consider holding a business planning session to discuss and agree CG strategic priorities for session 7,**
 - **early CPD requirements for conveners and whether to take up the offer of a group-based facilitated coaching session,**
 - **for this year, how the suggested sessions with Scottish Government ministers should be taken forward.**

It may be that the CG would wish to invite the First Minister and the Minister for Parliamentary Business to attend twice together in the Autumn following publication of the Programme for Government (with half CG membership attending one and half attending the other).

This would be followed by the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government attending a meeting in January to coincide with publication of the Scottish Government budget.

**Clerk to the Conveners Group
June 2026**