

Scottish Parliamentary Labour Group

Martin Whitfield MSP
Convener Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

7 June 2022

Dear Martin

SPPA Committee inquiry into Future Practices and Procedures

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the SPPA Committee to seek the views of the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Group (SPLP) on the future practices and procedures of the Parliament.

SPLP Members are of the opinion the default position should be that Members are present in person in the Chamber or in Committee whenever possible. However also considers the flexibility provided by remote participation should remain and that this can be used as a way to enable Members to participate in business while, for example, managing caring responsibilities and other commitments, as well as any health issues.

It should be at the discretion of individual Business Managers how this is managed within their own group.

The Hybrid option to give evidence in committee should be used when necessary, e.g. for people from outwith Scotland, otherwise committee witnesses should be expected to attend in person.

Our expectation would be that Ministers should attend in person to deliver a statement, answer questions, give evidence or lead a debate. In any instance this is not possible it would be the preference that another Minister would attend in their place.

The SPLP are in favour of a proxy voting system being introduced to allow members to exercise their vote, for example in relation to parental leave or in cases of ill-health.

The SPLP supports the continued use of the digital voting system and welcomes that this is being upgraded to reduce the voting time to make the system more efficient.

I trust this covers key areas being considered.

Yours sincerely Neil Bibby
SPLP Business Manager