

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
Thursday 8 October 2026
5th Meeting, 2026 (Session 7)

Cross-Party Group Application: CPG on Ireland

Introduction

1. In accordance with the provisions on Cross-Party Groups (CPGs) set out in section 6 of the [Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament](#), any proposal to establish a CPG must be submitted to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee for approval.
2. On 8 October, the Committee will consider a proposal to establish a new CPG on Ireland. The registration form from this proposed CPG is at **Annexe A**.
3. Paragraph 18 of Section 6 of the Code says that “...one of the proposed Group’s MSP office bearers (usually the Convener) will be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee to explain the justification for the proposed Group.” Accordingly, proposed Convener Patricia Gibson MSP has been invited to the meeting.

Purpose of the proposed CPG

4. Paragraph 19 Section 6 of the Code states that—

“The Committee will pay particular attention to a proposed Group’s purpose. If the Committee considers that a proposed Group is not in the public interest but is intended, for example, to further particular commercial interests, the Group will not be accorded recognition. The Committee will also consider whether the purpose of a proposed Group overlaps the remit of an existing Group. The proposed Group will be asked to provide justification as to why its aim could not effectively be achieved within the existing Group.”
5. The stated purpose of the proposed CPG is—
 - To build and develop links in the areas of immigration, culture, trade, investment, tourism, education and literature;
 - This group recognises the huge impact of Irish immigration and Irish culture on Scotland and seeks to build on the strong relationship between Scotland and Ireland based on shared interest and friendship, as well as economic co-operation

Membership

6. Paragraph 8 of Section 6 of the Code requires group membership to include at least five MSPs, with at least one MSP from each of the parties or groups represented on the Parliamentary Bureau. On 24 June, the Committee agreed to a general modification to this paragraph to allow CPGs with at least one MSP member from five (rather than all) of the parties

represented on the Parliamentary Bureau to register. The proposed Group meets this requirement. The MSP membership is—

- a) Patricia Gibson MSP, Scottish National Party
- b) Willie Rennie MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrats
- c) Iris Duane MSP, Scottish Green Party
- d) Max Bannerman MSP, Reform UK
- e) Joe Fagan MSP, Scottish Labour Party
- f) Finlay Carson MSP, Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party
- g) Steven Bonnar MSP, Scottish National Party
- h) Fulton McGregor MSP, Scottish National Party
- i) Clare Adamson MSP, Scottish National Party
- j) Colm Merrick MSP, Scottish National Party

7. Paragraph 9 of Section 6 of the Code entitles CPGs to have members from outwith the Parliament. The proposed Group has listed one non-MSP member in the individual category (who is also a member of one of the listed organisations) and two organisations.

Office Bearers

8. Paragraph 10 of Section 6 of the Code requires one MSP to be Convener of the Group and at least one other to be an office bearer. The proposed Group meets this requirement: Patricia Gibson MSP is the proposed Convener and Steven Bonnar MSP the Deputy Convener.

Financial Benefits and Subscriptions

9. The registration form indicates that no financial benefit is anticipated. It also indicates that members will not be charged a subscription.

Decision

10. The Committee will take evidence from the Convener of the proposed CPG on Ireland to help determine whether it meets the requirements for recognition as set out in Section 6 of the Code. At its next agenda item, the Committee will decide whether it should be awarded recognition.

**Clerks to the Committee
October 2026**

Annexe A

Application for recognition

Name of Cross-Party Group
Cross-Party Group on Ireland
<u>Purpose of The Group and Proposed Discussion Topics</u>
1. Please state the purpose of the Group. To build and develop links in the areas of immigration, culture, trade, investment, tourism, education and literature 2. Please also provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the Group and why the purpose is in the public interest. This group recognises the huge impact of Irish immigration and Irish culture on Scotland and seeks to build on the strong relationship between Scotland and Ireland based on shared interest and friendship, as well as economic co-operation 3. Please also provide details of any overlaps with the purpose of existing Cross-Party Groups and an explanation of why, regardless of any such overlap, the Group should be established. Not aware of any overlaps with any other group. 4. Please also provide an indication of the topics which the Group anticipates discussing in the forthcoming 12 months. • The impact of Irish immigration, culture, on Scotland. • The importance of our trading relationship. • Investment, tourism, education and literature.
MSP Members of the Group

Please provide names and party designation of all MSP members of the Group. In doing so please note:

MSP

Patricia Gibson MSP
 Willie Rennie MSP
 Iris Duane MSP
 Max Bannerman MSP
 Joe Fagan MSP
 Finlay Carson MSP
 Steven Bonnar MSP
 Fulton McGregor MSP
 Clare Adamson MSP
 Colm Merrick MSP

Party

SNP
 Liberal Democrats
 Scottish Green Party
 Reform UK
 Labour
 Conservatives
 SNP
 SNP
 SNP
 SNP

Non-MSP Members of the Group

For organisational members please provide only the name of the organisation, it is not necessary to provide the name(s) of individuals who may represent the organisation at meetings of the Group.

Individuals

Brigid Whoriskey
 Rob Byrne

Director of Envision Business Solutions
 Parliamentary staffer

Organisations

Envision Business Solutions
 Consulate General of Ireland

Group Office Bearers

Please provide names for all office bearers. The minimum requirement is that two of the office bearers are MSPs and one of these is Convener – beyond this it is a matter for the Group to decide upon the office bearers it wishes to have. It is permissible to have more than one individual elected to each office, for example, co-conveners or multiple deputy conveners.

Convener

Patricia Gibson MSP

Deputy Convener	Steven Bonnar MSP
Secretary	Brigid Whoriskey
Named Contact	(PERHAPS A STAFF MEMBER?)
Financial Benefits or Other Benefits Please provide details of any financial or material benefit(s) the Group anticipates receiving from a single source in a calendar year which has a value, either singly or cumulatively, of more than £500. This includes donations, gifts, hospitality or visits and material assistance such as secretariat support.	
N/A	
Subscription Charged by the Group Please provide details of the amount to be charged and the purpose for which the subscription is intended to be used.	
N/A	
Statement on Compliance with the Code of Conduct. Must be read and signed by the Convener.	
Please read the following: • The Convener of a Group is primarily responsible for ensuring that the Group complies with the Code of Conduct; • The Convener is solely responsible for providing Standards Clerks with: ○ The names of new MSP members of the CPG and changes to office-bearers; ○ Named contact details; ○ The registration form; ○ All minutes of meetings within 30 days of the meeting being held; <u>(Substantially verbatim minutes will not be accepted and will be returned)</u> ○ The AGM return (to be submitted within 30 days of the AGM to be held within 11 – 13 months of the initial meeting). • Groups are required to have five MSPs from five of the parties represented on the Parliamentary Bureau;	

- CPGs must hold at least two formal meetings per year (not on the same day), where two MSPs members of the Group are present;
- CPGs must provide Standards Clerks with 10 calendar days' notice of all meetings;
- If a CPG meeting is cancelled or rearranged, notification must be provided to the Standards clerks by no later than the day after the meeting was originally scheduled to take place;
- If a Group fails to comply fully with the Code for more than one year in a row, the Committee will withdraw recognition from that Group.

I declare that I have read the above and that the Cross-Party Group on Ireland is constituted and will comply with the terms of Section 6 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Scottish Parliament.

Signed (Convener)

Patricia Gibson

Date

16/09/2026