

COMMISSION ON PARLIAMENTARY REFORM: RECOMMENDATION 24

Executive summary

1. The Presiding Officer has received a letter from the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee (**Annex A**) in relation to Recommendation 24 of the Commission on Parliamentary Reform.
2. In its letter, the Committee states that there should be specific provision to ensure that Members with childcare responsibilities, particularly nursing mothers, are able to participate in Chamber business. The Committee requests that (a) consideration should be given to Members being allowed to breastfeed in the Chamber should the need arise, and (b) there should be sufficient flexibility in the arrangements for caring for children in the Parliament's crèche, to enable Members to use it, if necessary, to facilitate their participation in parliamentary business.
3. As the Presiding Officer is responsible for decisions regarding MSPs' conduct in the Chamber, he has responded directly to the SPPA Committee indicating that, although the situation has yet to arise, he would always support any mother who wished to breastfeed in the Chamber.
4. This paper addresses the issue of the crèche and seeks the Corporate Body's endorsement of the proposals.

Contact: Brian Mitchell, Ext: 85130

Issues and options

Crèche

5. The crèche can take children for up to four hours and was set up to support members of the public to participate in parliamentary business and is part of the engagement strategy to ensure the Parliament is accessible to all. While primarily for visitors, Members and staff are also able to use the crèche for a small fee. As expected, the majority of the bookings are made by visitors, however, we are mindful that there may be occasions when a Member needs or wishes to bring their child in to the building, including during parliamentary business, and we can confirm that there is sufficient flexibility in our booking arrangements to meet those needs.
6. The crèche is open Monday to Friday from 08.00 to 18.00. On the few occasions when the Parliament sits beyond 18:00, we would, if there was demand, be able to extend the crèche opening hours until 20.00. Our crèche provider would however, need a week's notice to put in place the necessary staffing arrangements. We are required by the Care Inspectorate to have a

minimum of two staff on duty, one of whom must be management. The costs to the Parliament would be around £30 per hour.

Consideration

7. As noted above, considerable flexibility already exists within the crèche arrangements, including the ability to extend opening hours if there is both sufficient notice and demand. The Corporate Body will also be aware that, although there are occasions where business is extended at short notice, the approach of the Parliamentary Bureau is to avoid such circumstances wherever possible. The Presiding Officer has also indicated that, should Members find it necessary, they can bring their babies into the Chamber.

Resource implications

8. We expect the demand for the crèche to open after 18.00 to be low and therefore any additional costs will be minimal.

Governance issues

9. The existing governance arrangements remain in place and if the extended service for the late sittings is approved then a contract variation would be required.

Publication scheme

10. This paper can be published.

Decision

The Corporate Body is invited to note the flexible arrangements in place to support nursing mothers and to respond positively to the SPPA Committee on this basis.

Facilities Management

January 2019



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Room CG.07
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12 December 2018

Dear Presiding Officer

Commission on Parliamentary Reform recommendation 24

I am writing to you in relation to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee's consideration of Recommendation 24 of the Commission on Parliamentary Reform which states, "A systematic review of Standing Orders should be undertaken to ensure that it is diversity sensitive and inclusive to facilitate equal and effective participation by MSPs in all business."

The Committee discussed this recommendation and agreed that it was important that there should be specific provision to ensure that Members with childcare responsibilities, particularly nursing mothers, were able to participate in Chamber business. I would therefore be grateful if you would give consideration to Members being allowed to breastfeed in the Chamber should the need arise. In addition, the Committee considered it important that there should be sufficient flexibility in the arrangements for caring for children in the Parliament's crèche so that Members could use the crèche, if necessary, to facilitate their participation in parliamentary business.

Yours sincerely

Bill Kidd MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee