



EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE PARLIAMENTS

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1. Introduction

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) have been long committed to redressing women's underrepresentation in electoral politics, publishing its report on *Gender Sensitising Commonwealth Parliaments* over twenty years ago in 2001.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union define the Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) as:

"A political institution that responds to the 'needs and interests' of both women and men in terms of its 'structures, operations, methods and work'. It is one that has removed the 'barriers women's full participation' and offers 'a positive example or model to society at large'."

Ensuring GSP principles are embedded in political institutions is vital for a healthy democracy. It highlights that women's inclusion and equality does not just stop at the ballot box. All groups must be able to fully participate within our elected institutions for our democracies to work effectively and to the good of all in our societies.

This interim report comes at a timely moment for the GSP agenda. More recently, the CPA and CWP updated its gender sensitive guidelines providing a 'checklist' for parliamentary change. Not only this, but COVID-19 has offered a moment of significant reform (albeit temporary in many cases) to parliamentary practices and procedures across the Commonwealth and many political institutions around the world are reflecting on the experience and the lessons learnt.

The [2020 CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines](#) set out four dimensions of Gender Sensitive Parliaments (Figure 1). This interim report focuses on the first two dimensions: 'Equality of participation within Parliament' and 'Parliamentary infrastructure'. It documents the current state of play regarding GSP practices in institutions across the British Islands and Mediterranean region (BIMR), particularly in light of institutional responses to COVID-19 and recommends 'best practice' reforms for the short and medium term.

Part 1 begins by mapping out institutional governance of the legislatures in the region and, with regards to equality of participation, considers women's representation in institutional leadership positions. Part 2 summarises the innovative changes legislatures in the BIM region have implemented in response to COVID-19, and the possible opportunities and constraints that continuing these reforms have for GSP reform. Part 3 provides a snapshot of current GSP practices in BIMR institutions in the region through a RAG analysis (Red, Amber Green), and draws on the 2020 CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Checklist to make short- and medium-term recommendations about best practice going forward.

Figure 1: The Four Dimensions of the Gender Sensitive Parliament



Source: amended from The Good Parliament Report. The Good Parliament Report was not designed to address the GSP of the House of Commons in terms of policy/legislation. The 4th dimension reflects IPU [Action Areas 2 and 3](#) and [Toolkit Questions 2 and 3](#).

Box 1. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Each BIMR institution to have a clear and coordinated process for regularly reviewing parliamentary infrastructure for gender sensitivity (procedural, process and physical)

Recommendation 2: Document and establish a monitoring system regarding all measures taken within the parliament during the COVID-19 pandemic; (if still in place) and document measures kept

Recommendation 3: Collate, analyse and make publicly available data on the diversity impact of all COVID-19 procedures and reforms, specifying differential use by members of the different ways of virtual working

Recommendation 4: Initiate a formal institutional inquiry into the continuation of COVID-19 measures with a specific focus on diversity impact

Recommendation 5: Investigate possible schemes for virtual participation in Chamber debates which allow for intervention based on international 'best practice'.

Recommendation 6: Monitor participation in debates by virtual and physical presence across the BIM region by key demographics and geographical location of members

Recommendation 7: Monitor the use of proxy and remote voting systems across the BIM region by key demographics and geographical location of members

Recommendation 8: Continue, or reinstate, the ability of witnesses to appear virtually in front of Committees at the discretion of the Chair or Convenor of the Committee

Recommendation 9: Continue, or reinstate, the ability of Members to participate virtually in Committees at the discretion of the Chair or Convenor of the Committee

Recommendation 10: CPA representatives in BIMR institutions to share final report with clerks and/or Speaker or Presiding Officer

Recommendation 11: Data is collected and publicly published on women in leadership positions in the institution

Recommendation 12: Inclusion of a GSP champion in decision-making bodies within the institution e.g. committees on procedures and standing orders, the Speakers/Presiding Officer office, clerks' office

Recommendation 13: Consider formalised rule for balanced gender representation on decision-making bodies within the institution

Recommendation 14: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on women's participation in the key areas of parliamentary life including (i) Committee membership, (ii) Participation in plenary debates and (iii) Participation in delegation travel

Recommendation 15: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on parliamentary staff (clerks, officials, other workers) in leadership positions

Recommendation 16: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on witnesses coming before Committees

Recommendation 17: Institute voluntary training on gender budgeting and mainstreaming within/alongside equality and diversity training for both staff and Members, if not already being offered

Recommendation 18: Monitor and publicly publish aggregate data on the take up of voluntary training

Recommendation 19: Consider the making of gender budgeting and mainstreaming training mandatory for all members and staff

Recommendation 20: British Islands and Mediterranean Region Institutions hold a joint workshop on proxy voting and parental leave within the next year

Recommendation 21: All BIMR Institutions who have not undertaken a Gender Audit in the last 3 years initiate an Audit using the CPA 2020 Guidelines and Checklist

Research Design

The report uses a range of research data. Analysis of parliamentary debates and reports, and semi-structured interviews with parliamentary staff and elected members from BIMR legislatures. In some areas, current data is lacking or limited, and hence several suggestions/recommendations call for the gathering of further evidence, to allow the CPA, CWP and the BIMR institutions to make more informed decisions in the future.

2. Institutional Governance: Key Actors and Institutions

Implementing GSP reforms to improve the democratic nature of our Parliaments involves negotiating the complex ways that legislatures work, formally and informally. Parliaments have multiple actors and institutions within them which play important roles in the process of reform and/or are involved in setting and interpreting the rules and norms of how a legislature operates. Institutionalism is fundamental to the GSP agenda, not only do we need to identify necessary reforms but in order for reform to be successful, we must also identify the actors and means through which they can be implemented.

Recommendation 1: Each BIMR institution to have a clear and coordinated process for regularly reviewing parliamentary infrastructure for gender sensitivity (procedural, process and physical)

Table 1 below gives an overview of the formal decision-making bodies and their gender composition for the BIMR institutions. The full information on each of the decision-making bodies can be found in Appendix 1. By mapping the key actors and institutions for each of the institutions in the British and Mediterranean Region below this report offers an overview of these complex processes. Women's presence in these leading bodies is also considered.

Table 1. Overview of Formal Decision-Making Institutions

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Speaker/Presiding Officer			Body on Overarching Administration and Service				Chief Clerk/Official		
	Body	Status	Gender	Body	Status	Gender	Body	Status	Gender
<i>Alderney</i>	<i>President</i>	Permanent (elected)	Male						
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>President of the House</i>	Permanent (elected)	Female				<i>Secretary General of the House</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Female
<i>Falkland Islands</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (elected)	Male						
<i>Gibraltar</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (appointed)	Male				<i>Clerk of Parliament</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male
<i>Guernsey</i>	<i>Bailiff</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male				<i>States Greffier</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male (deputy female)
<i>Isle of Man</i>	<i>Speaker or Presiding Officer/President</i>	Permanent (elected)	Male (House of Keys) Male (Legislative Council)	<i>Tynwald Management Committee</i>	Permanent (elected)	Male Chair (ex-officio) 2 male members (one ex-officio) 2 female members	<i>Clerk of Tynwald</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male (deputy female)
<i>Jersey</i>	<i>Bailiff</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male				<i>States Greffe</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male (deputy female)

Malta	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male						
NI Assembly	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male	<i>Assembly Commission</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	4 male members 1 female member	<i>Clerk/Chief Executive</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Female
Scotland	<i>Presiding Officer</i>	Permanent (elected)	Female (One male one female deputy PO)	<i>Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body</i>	Permanent (unelected)	1 male member 3 female members	<i>Clerk and Chief Executive</i>	Permanent (unelected)	Male
St Helena	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (indirectly elected)	Male (female deputy PO)						
Wales	<i>Presiding Officer</i>	Permanent (elected)	Female (1 male deputy PO)	<i>Senedd Commission</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	2 male members 3 female members	<i>Clerk and Chief Executive of Senedd</i>	Permanent (unelected)	Female
UK	<i>Speaker</i>	Permanent (elected)	Male (1 Male and 1 Female Deputy)	<i>House of Commons Commission¹</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male Chair (Speaker) 5 male members	<i>Clerk of the House of Commons</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male

¹ House of Commons Executive Board carries out the day-to-day administration in line with Commission strategy (see Appendix 1 for more detail)

Body for Institutional Business			Committee Dealing with Procedure			Other Relevant Bodies		
Body	Status	Gender	Body	Status	Gender	Body	Status	Gender
					4 female members			
<i>Alderney</i>			<i>Policy and Finance Committee</i>	Permanent (Elected)	4 male members (1 non-voting) 1 female member	<i>Good Governance Group</i>	Temporary (non-elected)	4 male member (1 non-voting) 1 female member
<i>Cyprus</i>	<i>President's and Parliamentary Leaders' Meeting</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	1 Female member (President of the House) 10 Male members	Ad Hoc House Committee on Rules of Procedure	Ad Hoc (elected)	1 Female member (President of the House) 3 Male members		
<i>Falkland Islands</i>								
<i>Gibraltar</i>			<i>Select Committee on Parliamentary Reform</i>	Permanent	1 female member, 6 male members	<i>Select Committee on Constitutional Reform</i>	Permanent	2 female members, 5 male members
<i>Guernsey</i>			<i>States Assembly and Constitution Committee</i>	Permanent (Elected)	Male President, 4 Male Members			

<i>Isle of Man</i>		<i>Standing Order Committees</i>	Permanent (Elected)	House of Keys: Male Chair (ex-officio), 3 male members, 2 female members	Legislative Council: Male Chair, 2 female members
<i>Jersey</i>		<i>Privileges and Procedure Committee</i>	Permanent	3 Male Members	Female Chair 3 Female Members
<i>Malta</i>	<i>House Business Committee</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Chair male 4 male members 1 female Member		
<i>NI Assembly</i>	<i>Business Committee</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Speaker (male)	<i>Committee on Procedures</i>	Permanent (elected) Female Chair 3 Male Members

			10 male members			6 Female Members			
			2 female members						
<i>Scotland</i>	<i>Parliamentary Bureau</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Female Convenor 3 Male Members 1 Female Member	<i>Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male Convenor 2 Male Members 2 Female Members			
<i>Wales</i>	<i>Business Committee</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	2 male members 3 female members	<i>Business Committee</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	2 Male Members 3 Female Members	<i>Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform</i>	Temporary (non-elected)	Male Chair 1 male member 4 female members
<i>UK</i>	<i>Leader of the House</i>	Permanent (non-elected)	Male	<i>Procedure Committee</i>	Permanent (elected)	Chair female 13 male members 3 female members			

3. COVID-19 Procedures and Diversity Impact

i. Overview

Like many workplaces in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, legislative institutions across the British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) were forced to quickly adapt to the new ways of working. The crisis constituted a moment of ‘enforced modernisation’ for many institutions whereby technological developments and/or modernising reforms previously thought not possible were shown to be possible and shown to work.

Overall, we can categorise COVID-19 responses in several ways. Firstly, the form of remote participation that was used this could be (i) *Virtual* – wholly online proceedings with no members physically present, with members able to join online and can be outside of any parliamentary estate; and, (ii) *Hybrid* – a mix of online and virtual where some members are physically present, and some members join from online and can be ‘off estate’. Most of the BIMR institutions had some form of wholly virtual or hybrid proceedings at various points in response to the pandemic. Common to begin with was wholly online proceedings and then move on to hybrid as both safety measures inside of buildings became more manageable and technological solutions and procedural issues were ironed out. Secondly, different procedures have been used for different types of legislative activity and institutional support and opposition for reforms vary dependent on the type of activity it is applied to.

Table 2 offers an overview of the types of COVID-19 procedures that have been in place in the different BIMR institutions and the ‘state of play’ as of January 2022².

Table 2. Types of Procedures put in place by BIMR Institutions in response to the Covid-19 pandemic³

Parliament	Legislative Activity	COVID-19 Provision	Retention as of Jan 2022
Scotland	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	Electronic (virtual remote possible)	Y
Wales	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Virtual and Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Virtual	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Virtual	Y

² The month of the majority of research interviews

³ St Helena remains COVID-19 free and so is not included in this analysis similarly Gibraltar did not implement any hybrid of virtual proceedings and so is excluded.

	Voting	Proxy/Weighted Voting and Remote electronic voting	Y
UK	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Hybrid (only at points for debates)	N
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	N
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	Variation over time between proxy, remote electronic remote voting and electronic card readers	N
Jersey	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Virtual and hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Virtual and hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Virtual and hybrid	Y
	Voting	Virtual	Y
Guernsey	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	Remote electronic	Y
Alderney	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	Virtual or in person (cannot be mix of both)	Y
Falklands	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Virtual ⁴	N
	Committees (Members)	Virtual	N
	Committees (Witnesses)	Virtual	N
	Voting	Virtual	N
Isle of Man	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Virtual and hybrid	Y ⁵
	Committees (Members)	Virtual and hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Virtual and hybrid	Y
	Voting	Virtual and hybrid	Y
Malta	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	None	N/A
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	None	N/A
Northern Ireland Assembly	Plenary sessions (e.g. debates and question times)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Members)	Hybrid	Y
	Committees (Witnesses)	Hybrid	Y
	Voting	Proxy	Y

⁴ Note some briefings with civil servants can still be joined virtually

⁵ Remote attendance is at discretion of Presiding Officer

The overarching recommendation for this report regarding the continuation of these reforms is to monitor and review any changes or continuation of changes to parliamentary practices, proceedings and conventions.

Across the region conversations are continuing about what can be learnt from the pandemic in terms of parliamentary practices. Central to this conversation going forward must be the question of what these reforms may mean for diversity in our elected institutions. Crises can present a moment of opportunity as the external shock prompts change and disrupts previous and traditional ways of working.

“Parliaments in times of crisis cannot ignore gender equality. On the contrary, the crisis can and should be an opportunity to fast-track decisions, processes and working methods that are conducive for parliament to remain, be or become a gender-sensitive institution.” (IPU [Gender and COVID-19: A guidance note for parliaments](#))

ii. *Hybridity and the Gender Sensitive Parliament*

The COVID-19 pandemic has directly impacted the two dimensions of GSP this report considers: (i) Equality of participation within parliament; and, (ii) Parliamentary infrastructure. As Parliaments have adapted their infrastructure to accommodate

Crises can present a moment of opportunity as the external shock prompts change and disrupts previous and traditional ways of working.

participation during the pandemic these new modes of doing politics directly impact equality of participation and, in many instances, laid bare inequalities in participation and infrastructure that previously had remained more hidden.

The pandemic highlighted many previous ways of working as unequal, as some elected Members were excluded from participating because of their caring responsibilities, health concerns and/or for reasons of geographic distance and/or travel restrictions. In BIMR parliaments arguments were made to change practices to ensure no member or constituency was disenfranchised when their members could not be physically present. Yet, these inequalities have always existed and have affected members in ‘normal’ times. The (limited) acceptance that members have legitimate health and social reasons to be physically absent implies the same can be said for ‘normal times’ too ([Smith and Childs 2021](#)). Returning to purely physical proceedings risks returning to old inequalities and restricting constituents’ right to representation.

In seeking to learn lessons from the experiences of the pandemic it does not mean that some of the COVID-19 proceedings were without some difficulties or that there are not some limitations and potentially costs in continuing hybrid or virtual working. Any such costs and risks must be taken seriously and monitored. In many institutions reforms were brought in very quickly and on an ad hoc basis – it would be surprising if everything was got right in these circumstances. This report considers it vital to monitor and review any changes or continuation of changes to parliamentary practices, proceedings and conventions.

Recommendation 2: Document and establish a monitoring system regarding all measures taken within the parliament during the COVID-19 pandemic (if still in place); and document measures kept

Recommendation 3: Collate, analyse and make publicly available data on the diversity impact of all COVID-19 procedures and reforms, specifying differential use by members of the different ways of virtual working

Several institutions in the BIM region have completed or are in the process of a formal inquiry into the impact of changes to parliamentary proceedings during the pandemic and the possible continuation of proceedings, such as the [Scottish Parliament's SPPA Committee](#) and the [Procedure Committee](#) in the UK House of Commons. These inquiries can be vital for gathering evidence and understanding the wider picture of these reforms and their impact.

- Recommendation 4: Initiate a formal institutional inquiry into the continuation of COVID-19 measures with a specific focus on diversity impact

The Importance of the Informal

Legislatures as institutions are shaped by not only by the formal rules but the informal spaces, norms and interactions in their day-to-day workings. These informal spaces are important to the process of socialisation and institutionalisation of members. As Phillip Norton, Professor of Politics and Member of the House of Lords (2018) has stated, "Institutionalisation and socialisation of members underpin the stability of a legislature." These informal spaces are often where political support is mobilised, members are lobbied, and information exchange happens.

Indeed, in the pandemic there have been cohorts of members, for example in the UK Parliament and in the Scottish Parliament, whose main socialisation experience has been of hybrid or virtual participation. Anecdotal evidence suggests some members may have missed vital socialisation here (Smith and Childs 2021), although, as one interview pointed out, this socialisation may not always be into beneficial norms or traditions. However, caution must be exerted as we go forward that there is not a creation of two tiers of members whereby those who are not physically present, who may disproportionately be from underrepresented groups, are deemed 'second tier' members.

"You don't have the feeling of camaraderie that happens the ability to actually make friends and acquaintances [across political divides]. So, the ability to stand and talk to somebody with a cup of coffee, chat to somebody ... that's said something that's intrigued you, etc"
(Interviewee)

Going forward choosing to participate virtually could be one of the many ways individual members choose to enact their roles. There are varying ways to be a member of legislatures across the BIMR, some focus on Plenary debates and oratory, some on legislative scrutiny

and some on Committee work. In future institutions, there may be those who always participate in person, and those whose need, or preference, is for virtual participation some, or all, of the time. As is now, the electorate will decide whether they are well-represented by their representative's way of working.

Post pandemic is a moment to seize the opportunities of virtual working, but we must be cautious to do so without recognising any potential pitfalls. Ongoing monitoring of reforms (Recommendation 1, 2 and 3) is vital to understand their impact across all the elements of legislative activities that members of BIMR institutions undertake.

Diversifying Participation by Under-Represented Groups

Enabling hybrid participation opens opportunities for transforming who sits in our legislative institutions. Members that can benefit from the facilitation of virtual participation include those with caring responsibilities, fluctuating or long-term illnesses, identify as having a disability or suffering bereavement. In the first instance this can transform the composition of the parties' 'supply pool' that is, those citizens who seek selection and election as candidates.

The transformational effect is not just about those members currently sitting in BIMR

...seeing more modern ways of working in our political institutions could transform who is able to see themselves as the 'good' representative and put themselves forward for running.

legislatures but also the future of who our representatives are. Knowing one can participate virtually when not able to be fully physically present and seeing more modern ways of working in our political institutions could transform who is able to see themselves as the 'good' representative and put themselves forward for running.

"For those who cannot come into Parliament regularly, or find that difficult, technology gives the option of working from home and offers a future in Parliament to people who are thinking of putting their name forward." [George Adam, Minister for Parliamentary Business, Scottish Parliament](#)

Whilst this has the potential to diversify participation in BIMR institutions by under-represented groups, including those with caring responsibilities, flexible or virtual working cannot be seen as an alternative to changing institutions into fully family friendly legislatures with further measures such as formal parental leave and on-site childcare. Virtual or hybrid working could, however, be a way to further facilitate the Gender Sensitive Parliament.

The possibility of virtual participation goes beyond accessing parliament, it is also about the ability to be effective as a representative once present across a parliament's core formal activities. For many sitting members of BIMR legislatures virtual participation demonstrated an effective way of enabling greater, if not full, participation.

In the Welsh Senedd, Assembly Member Heledd Fychan has [called publicly](#) for virtual Senedd meetings to balance her job and her childcare responsibilities. In a [survey](#) of Members of the Scottish Parliament, 78% supported members participating in a hybrid fashion due to family circumstances.

"There's certainly some people that are very keen to see all 60 members back and things to return to normal, but I would argue normal wasn't working for the majority of people and normal wasn't working in terms of getting greater representation and diversity in the chamber." [Heledd Fychan, Member, Welsh Senedd](#)

"In terms of equality and equal access to the democratic process, if we do operate an in-person Parliament only while we are still in a pandemic, and there are still those issues that we are facing in terms of health effects, we do risk disenfranchising those Members who are higher risk than others. This will disproportionately affect older Members, those with disabilities, including hidden disabilities that none of us might be aware of. Also those with caring responsibilities. I ask Members to think about our collective responsibility for each other's well-being when they make the decision today please." [Deputy L M C Doublet, Member, Jersey States Assembly](#)

Box 3.1 Scotland

In the Scottish Parliament, a review of the pandemic procedures by the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee recommended that a provision for hybridity be made permanent for the Scottish Parliament. Subsequently in May 2021 Standing Orders were amended to allow for both physically or wholly virtual or hybrid meetings of the parliament.

In a debate on the parliamentary procedures and practices, the Convenor of the SPPA Committee, Martin Whitfield, suggested that the parliament was in its "teenage years" and as it moved to maturity now was a point to look at its rules, conventions, procedures, and practices. Whitfield appealed directly to the Scottish Parliament principles of "equality, access, participation and rights" and to questions of how hybridity may impact family life, work patterns, travel practices and constituency work. Contributions to the debate reflected these themes, with members supporting changes based on the benefits to family life, diversity, and travel.

"We need to keep the hybrid system[.] It has been hugely important for those of us in the chamber who have a disability, and it could be important for those who might have a long-term health condition[.] We congratulated ourselves on electing a more diverse Parliament this time round. If we are to continue to keep attracting new people, we need to keep that hybrid way of working."
Gillian MacKay (Green)

Members did, however, raise concerns around the muted nature of hybrid debates and the importance of ensuring members get a full experience and socialisation into Parliament

"We must seize the opportunities of hybrid working but also address the pitfalls. Relationships are also the lifeblood of this Parliament, even when we disagree with each other. Those relationships are often fostered not online or by virtual contact but face to face, before committee, after committee, in the canteen or at parliamentary receptions. Those relationships have still to be forged by many of the people in this place, because they have simply not had the chance to do that. That really has to happen, and it is important to put that on the record, too."
Bob Doris (SNP)

The SPPA Committee also recommended that Committees be allowed to permanently meet virtually either on a hybrid or remote basis. The Convenors Group (a body of all Convenors of Parliamentary Committees) specifically noted that hybridity had worked well with benefits including increased opportunities for witnesses across Scotland and supporting the Parliament's family friends values.

Standing Orders have since been amended to allow for virtual or hybrid meeting of Committees although it is suggested that these rules are reviewed in the new parliamentary session given some concerns over difficulties in managing remote or hybrid meeting with large numbers of members and dynamics of evidence taking virtually versus in person.

Geographic Diversity

For the larger states in the BIM region one benefit of hybridity has been felt for members who live furthest away from the legislatures. For people in more rural or far-away constituencies hybridity was described by one interviewee as "a god send". Another interviewee spoke of the possibility of opening rural farming communities more to the idea to become representatives, those who previously could not make the commitment to travel so far may now benefit from the opportunity to engage with or sit in their legislature.

Even before the pandemic and virtual participation becoming widespread, Professor Diana Sitrbu spoke to the Welsh parliament on diversity in the Senedd and pointed out "people don't necessarily know very well what Assembly Members are doing and what their working week looks like and what type of work they do and what type of requirements they have in their work. They do know that, for instance, travelling from north Wales to south Wales is a big, big deterrent, because it will take a lot of their time." ([evidence session January 2020](#)).

"The benefits of hybrid working can be seen in our carbon footprint, as many of us have stayed at home, including those who live in other parts of the country." [George Adam, Minister for Parliamentary Business, Scottish Parliament](#)

Box 3.2 Jersey

During the pandemic the Jersey States Assembly operated firstly on a fully remote platform before moving to hybridity when changes to the public health situation allowed. As a smaller state in the BIM Region the benefits around geography are less prevalent for thinking about ongoing benefits of hybridity, although in a debate on reinstating hybridity

in September 2021 one Deputy pointed out the benefits for members when travelling for their international representative duties, for instance to Westminster.

In September 2021, the Assembly backed a last-minute notion by a Member to allow for hybrid meeting again for those members who wished to work from home for health concerns. The debate focused on implementing hybridity in light of the pandemic but some Members raised questions about the precedent it may set for future Assemblies. A strong theme in the discussion was ensuring that no members are disenfranchised if they were unable to be physically present:

"If one of the reasons we are doing it today is due to the franchise, because we do not want any of our Members being disenfranchised, for them being able to not use their vote or presumably not speak in the Assembly, that argument presumably has to be valid per se, does it not?" (Deputy M. Tadier)

Key areas of concern were ensuring that reasons for remote working were valid, that Members could not work virtually without defined valid reasons.

"I do not want to see this as an excuse for anybody to be able to not attend the Assembly because it is more convenient to sit, and I will say it openly, for Ministers to sit in Broad Street with their officers next to them giving them advice." (Deputy R. J. Ward)

iii. *Legislative Procedures: In Detail*

Plenary Sessions

Recommendation 5: Investigate possible schemes for virtual participation in Chamber debates which allow for intervention based on international 'best practice'.

Recommendation 6: Monitor participation in debates by virtual and physical presence across the BIM region by key demographics and geographical location of members

Nearly all the BIMR parliaments that were impacted by COVID-19 opted for some form of virtual participation in plenary sessions such as debates or questions to the executive. The majority of Chambers ended up working, and some still are working, on a hybrid basis where members can choose to be either physically or virtually present in proceedings.

Virtual participation in debates has been one of the more controversial aspects of pandemic procedures for many institutions. Plenary sessions are often the most visible and performative aspect of legislative work. A common point of contention over hybrid or virtual participation in debates is concern over spontaneity, the ability of members to intervene and create a 'natural' flow of debate. In the BIM region there have been different ways to facilitate (or not) members' interventions in debates, the approach to which may vary dependent on the size of the legislature, leadership or technology. In some institutions, such as the Scottish

Parliament and the UK Parliament, intervention has not been facilitated whilst other institutions have found solutions for instance the Isle of Man members can use the 'chat' function online when they wish to intervene.

The visibility of these set pieces also works to highlight those previously hidden inequalities. For example, there was controversy in the UK Parliament when Tracey Crouch an MP shielding during the pandemic with breast cancer was specifically excluded from contributing to a debate on cancer (see Box 3.3).

"I think that it would be a mistake is we were to approach the debate assuming that everything was perfect prior to the pandemic and that it was merely a question of adapting to the circumstances" [Daniel Johnson, Member, Scottish Parliament](#)

The construction of the 'great debater' as the only type of good legislator risks reinstating these exclusions and inequalities seen prior to the pandemic. There are multiple ways of approaching the job of being an elected legislator from those who are more Committee focused, those who are great scrutineers of the executive and those who focus on plenary debates. These concerns however should not be easily dismissed and the effect on debates should be monitored and considered. However, one should question if excluding some members is an acceptable price to pay for higher quality debate. Understanding more fully the effect of virtual participation on allowing for the full participation of members in debates as in line with that first dimension of the GSP is vital.

Whilst keeping any virtual participation should be done on a firm evidentiary basis we should not be tempted to 'throw the baby out with the bath water'. In a debate in the Scottish Parliament on keeping hybridity members urged the minister not to do away with the technology because of the debate you want to have, improve the technology to create it. Best practices can be learnt from to introduce spontaneity in debates. For instance, in the Brazilian Parliament Members can indicate via the virtual system that they wish to speak.

"It is absolutely right that, rather than do away with the technology because we want to have better debates, we should seek to improve the technology. That is how we should go about it." [Neil Gray, Member, Scottish Parliament](#)

Box 3.3 UK

In November 2020 the UK Parliament had introduced hybridity in some, but not all, of its parliamentary practices. In Chamber debates proceedings remained only physical. As a result of this one Member, Tracey Crouch MP, was forced to give a public, impassioned plea to the Leader of the House, the Rt Hon Jacob-Rees Mogg to allow her inclusion virtually in an upcoming debate. Crouch was excluded from participating *in* a debate on breast cancer whilst shielding at home *with* breast cancer.

Crouch said, "While I respect [the Leader of the House's] commitment to traditional parliamentary procedures, I'm sure if he was on the backbenches and not the fine

specimen of health and fitness he clearly is, he would be arguing forcefully for members to be able to contribute more often in proceedings by modern technology."

Changes were later made to allow for virtual participation in Chamber debates. The controversy highlights an institutional resistance to hybridity which was prevalent in the UK pandemic Parliament. An examination of parliamentary debates on hybridity by Challender and Deane (2021) finds a consistent narrative of the 'good parliamentarian' as the physically present one. This rhetoric was strong in government resistance to the hybrid parliament, as it was made clear that measures were temporary and were removed once deemed safe.

"The Government firmly believes constituents are best served when MPs represent them in person in Westminster, to the fullest extent possible and hopes this response provides reassurance that we are committed to work together with the House authorities to achieve this as soon as it is safe to do so." **Government Response to Procedure Committee Report 4th May 2021**

Voting

Recommendation 7: Monitor the use of proxy and remote voting systems across the BIM region by key demographics and geographical location of members

A variety of mechanisms have been in operation in the BIMR institutions to allow for members to vote when not physically present during the pandemic. Some have opted for virtual ways of voting, such as via 'chat' functions on conference call software (e.g. Isle of Man) or an internal online system (e.g. the Scottish Parliament and, at one point the UK Parliament), others have used proxy voting (e.g. Northern Ireland Assembly and, at some points, the UK Parliament).

"I am sure that many members have experienced the abject terror that is associated with remote voting when there is the usual after 5 pm moment when everybody is arriving home and demanding dinner and you are shushing them and kicking them all—including the dog—out of the room that you are in as you try in vain to hear what the Presiding Officer is talking about and which vote we are on, especially if it is a stage 3. If it means that a member can be at home to breastfeed a new baby or get dinner ready for their elderly mother, I think that those stressful moments are worth it." [Elena Whitman, Member, Scottish Parliament](#)

The use of proxy voting is interesting as a mechanism that has previously been used for gender sensitive reforms such as to allow for MPs' baby leave in parliaments (see [UK Parliament experience](#)). As with other pandemic proceedings, the enforced change of COVID-19 is sparking debates in BIMR institutions about continuing reforms to address other issues of diversity. For instance, the Committee on Procedures in the Northern Ireland Assembly is currently undertaking an inquiry into "retaining proxy voting in circumstances where Members cannot be physically present" ([Committee on Procedures](#)). In a letter to the

Committee, the Speaker of the Assembly specifically noted that, “the most obvious instances where proxy voting would seem useful are in relation to maternity and paternity leave and cases of serious illness” ([Speaker Letter to Committee on Procedures 29 May 2020](#)). Similar conversations are being had in other situations for instance in the UK Parliament by the Procedure Committee in light of the making permanent of proxy voting for baby leave and the experience of various ways of voting during the pandemic.

“It is important to ensure that there is a sound rationale and public interest justifying any proxy voting arrangements. Public safety during a pandemic is one such reason. Providing that a constituency should not be unrepresented because of a Member’s parental leave or long-term illness is another.” ([Written evidence by Speaker to Northern Ireland Assembly Committee on Procedures inquiry into proxy voting](#))

Committees

Recommendation 8: Continue, or reinstate, the ability of witnesses to appear virtually in front of Committees at the discretion of the Chair or Convenor of the Committee

Recommendation 9: Continue, or reinstate, the ability of Members to participate virtually in Committees at the discretion of the Chair or Convenor of the Committee

For many institutions some form of virtual participation for witnesses to committees has been available in the past, however the pandemic made it a necessity and norm and members have also been able to join in Committee proceedings virtually. The consequences of these changes have effects not only for elected members but also directly impacts the diversity of voices that are heard in democratic institutions in forms of expert and non-expert committee witnesses ([Geddes 2018](#)).

More extensive virtual participation has been framed as an opportunity to change who gives evidence to Committees. It can widen participation beyond the ‘usual suspects’ who are often demographically and geographically similar. For instance, statistics on witnesses to the the UK Parliament’s Select Committees show a very ‘London Centric’ set of male and white witnesses ([Geddes 2020](#), [House of Commons Liaison Committee 2019](#)). Virtual practices can allow for ‘hard to reach’, ‘easy to ignore’ groups, and those with ‘lived experience’ of issues to be able to voice their interests. For instance, in the pandemic the Welsh Parliament Public Accounts Committee held an evidence session in a virtual conference style, allowing for nearly 500 attendees. It is similarly advantageous for international witnesses. It is also possible that witnesses may feel less intimidated online than in the more formal setting of a legislature.

“The same can be said for those who give evidence to committees. We are hearing from new voices—from those for whom the trip to Edinburgh was too arduous and too expensive and took too much time out of their days. Their evidence is invaluable and totally reflective of the wider population we serve. Indeed, the international voices that we now hear are hugely important, too.” [Elena Whitman, Member, Scottish Parliament](#)

In some instances, nevertheless, a witness's physical presence is preferable or indeed necessary. For witnesses giving evidence on matters of urgency or national importance (for example a Minister on a controversial policy), face-to-face, sustained pressure can be vital to get comprehensive answers. The attendance of witnesses virtually or in person should be at the discretion of a committee allowing them to enforce physical presence when they feel it is essential to successful scrutiny.

4. Gender Sensitive Reform: A Snapshot

RAG Analysis

Table 3 presents a ‘RAG analysis’ for the current state of GSP principles in the BIMR institutions. The analysis looks at the different elements for the two dimensions of the GSP (i) Equality of Participation within Parliament and (ii) Parliamentary Infrastructure and offers an evaluation of the current state of this dimension as green (good), amber (fair) or red (poor). It is based of similar analyses in [Childs’ Good Parliament Report](#) and the [2020 CPA Gender Sensitising Parliaments Guidelines](#).

Table 3. RAG Analysis of Gender Sensitive Dimensions for BIMR Institutions

		Parliament												
		Alderney	Cyprus	Falklands	Gibraltar	Guernsey	Isle of Man	Jersey	Malta	NI Assembly	Scotland	St Helena	Wales	UK
Dimension 1: Equality of Participation	Diversity of MPs	Red	Red	Amber	Red	Red	Green	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Green	Green	Amber
	Women’s Legislative Leadership Positions	Red	Amber	Red	Red	Red	Amber	Red	Red	Amber	Green	Amber	Green	Amber
	Data collection	Red	White	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	White	Red	White	Red	Red
Dimension 2: Infrastructure	Calendar and Sitting Hours	Amber	White	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	White	Red	White	Red	Red
	Equalities & diversity body(ies) institutional and policy	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	White	Amber	Amber
	Childcare and child- friendly provisions	Red	White	Amber	Red	Amber	Red	Amber	Amber	Red	Amber	White	Red	Amber

	Maternity and parental leave	Red	White	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	White	Yellow	Yellow
	Gender Audit	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow

RAG Results and Recommendations

The RAG analysis paints a mixed picture for the BIMR institutions in its snapshot of gender sensitive parliamentary reform in the region. There are some significant milestones with five institutions now having conducted, or in the process of conducting gender audits, and women’s representation in leadership positions has seen some positive developments in many institutions.

However, there are some key areas of concern which need to be addressed in the short to medium term. Recommendations are based off the [2020 CPA Gender Sensitive Parliaments Checklist](#). The aim of this report is to provide a map for institutions to continue to improve and work to meet their goal of becoming a gender sensitive institution.

Recommendation 10: CPA representatives in BIMR institutions to share final report with clerks and/or Speaker or Presiding Officer

Institutional Leadership

Recommendation 11: Data is collected and publicly published on women in leadership positions in the institution

Recommendation 12: Inclusion of a GSP champion in decision-making bodies within the institution e.g. committees on procedures and standing orders, the Speakers/Presiding Officer office, clerks’ office

Recommendation 13: Consider formalised rule for balanced gender representation on decision-making bodies within the institution

It remains the case that only three of the region’s institutions have a female speaker and men remain overrepresented across the decision-making bodies in the legislatures.

Across the region women are most often underrepresented in positions of institutional leadership. The key actors and bodies which are making decisions about how legislatures operate in too many parliaments lack a diversity in who is making these decisions. It remains the case that only three of the region’s institutions have a female speaker and men remain overrepresented across the decision-making bodies in the legislatures. This could

have a direct impact on the types of decisions being made, it is well established that a diversity of decision makers leads to more equal and diverse outcomes⁶.

To begin, the extent of this problem should be thoroughly explored in each institution, highlighting where issues may lie in underrepresentation (Recommendation 9). Publicly publishing data on women's representation in leadership

Publicly publishing data on women's representation in leadership encourages transparency and can work to forefront this issue for institutions.

encourages transparency and can work to forefront this issue for institutions. Yet, formal institutional commitments are recommended to ensure continued representation and change. In the medium-term formal mechanisms to address the under-representation of women in institutional leadership should be considered such as rules on the composition of these governing bodies and/or the inclusion of a GSP champion within the decision-making bodies. The champion could be an elected member or a member of parliamentary staff.

Data Collection

Recommendation 14: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on women's participation in the key areas of parliamentary life including (i) Committee membership, (ii) Participation in plenary debates and (iii) Participation in delegation travel

Recommendation 15: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on parliamentary staff (clerks, officials, other workers) in leadership positions

Recommendation 16: Collect and publicly publish sex disaggregated data on witnesses coming before Committees

"Transparency drives change" [Welsh Parliament Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform](#)

Comparable and publicly available data is a way to drive change within institutions, for example with transparent pay in the public sector ([Gamage et al 2020, ETUI](#)). Monitoring and recording data on the diversity of elected institutions, not only in their descriptive make up of candidates and members at points of elections, but on the full participation of *all* members in *all* legislative activities such as debates, committees, evidence sessions and delegation travel is vital to achieving equality within legislative institutions (Recommendation 12). Not only does it allow for the monitoring of the successes of reforms but can also pinpoint areas where they may be room for improvement. Without reliable and public data, it can be hard to 'see the case' for reform. Moreover, ensuring transparency in the operation of elected institutions can help to motivate institutional leadership towards reforms. Currently, very few

⁶ For summary on academic evidence see [Paxton, Hughes and Barnes \(2021\)](#)

of the BIMR institutions actively collect and publish data beyond the overall numbers of women in Parliament.

Achieving a GSP means seeing institutions as more than just their members, legislatures are also places of work and members are supported by a plethora of staff and officials ([The Good Parliament Report](#)). Diversity within these officials should also be monitored (Recommendation 13). Moreover, as the central democratic institutions of their respective State, legislatures are where members of the public come to have their voices heard and make representations to their elected officials. The common site for these representations is Committee evidence sessions. A GSP ensures there is diversity in who is speaking to and within institutions beyond the elected members (Recommendation 14).

It is recognised that there may be varying resources across the BIMR institutions to allow for the collection and publication of these different forms of data. It is recommended that institutions thoroughly investigate what resources can be allocated to data collection and, at a minimum, institute some basic form of data collection and publication on committee membership and debate participation (Recommendation 12).

Training

Recommendation 17: Institute voluntary training on gender budgeting and mainstreaming within/alongside equality and diversity training for both staff and Members, if not already being offered

Recommendation 18: Monitor and publicly publish aggregate data on the take up of voluntary training

Recommendation 19: Consider the making of gender budgeting and mainstreaming training mandatory for all members and staff

... to ensure a truly effective and inclusive institution, gender sensitive practices need to be embedded in the day-to-day workings and actions of the Parliament.

Whilst data collection enables the monitoring of participation and can drive further reform, to ensure a truly effective and inclusive institution, gender sensitive practices need to be embedded in the day-to-day workings and actions of the Parliament, its

officials, staff and members ([IPU](#)). One way to build to this is offering training to members and staff on the gendering of different aspects of legislative activity. Combining this with the transparent collection and publication of data, institutions can make significant steps towards the first dimension of the GSP framework, 'equality of participation within Parliament'.

Gender budgeting (GB) is an example of such training. GB is the analysis of any public expenditure from a gendered perspective, asking questions such as how the spending is distributed between men and women, what are the short- and medium-term consequences for the gender distribution of resources. Some form of GB has been implemented previously

in countries such as Iceland, Malaysia and Vietnam. [Evidence](#) suggests that its implementation positively impacts gender equality on education, health and income indicators, although this can vary dependent on methods of implementation ([OECD report](#)).

Whilst several of the BIMR institutions had voluntary training on some elements of equality and diversity, whether delivered internally or by external stakeholders, the training was described by interviewees as limited, and little was offered around gender mainstreaming and budgeting in the majority of institutions. Any training should be offered to both men and women, and parliamentary staff as well as elected members. In the first instance it may be voluntary but take up of the programmes should be carefully and publicly monitored to ensure no disparity in who is receiving the training. In the medium term, making the training mandatory to formalise and embed these gender sensitive practices should be considered best practice.

Childcare

Recommendation 20: British Islands and Mediterranean Region Institutions hold a joint workshop on proxy voting and parental leave within the next year

Whilst virtual participation, as discussed above, offers opportunities to facilitate the GSP in regard to flexible working for the parent member, it is also noted in Part 2 of this report that this should not be seen as a replacement for fully implementing family friendly practices within Parliaments. It is a serious concern that in the last few years in two BIMR institutions, [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#), women members have publicly stepped down from elected roles citing the impossibility of balancing childcare and political life.

It is a serious concern that in the last few years in two BIMR institutions, Scotland and Wales, women members have publicly stepped down from elected roles citing the impossibility of balancing childcare and political life.

In recent years a key development for some BIMR institutions has been the introduction of proxy voting for representatives on parental leave (see the [UK Parliament experience](#)). Given the wider use of proxy voting during the pandemic by more institutions and for a wider remit of absences it is a timely moment for the region's institutions to share experiences and best practice. The workshop should enable this knowledge exchange and consider the potential for varying voting mechanisms for allowing a range of absences to be allowed for, e.g. for reasons of caring, illness, bereavement or disability.

Gender Audit

Recommendation 21: All BIMR Institutions who have not undertaken a Gender Audit in the last 3 years initiate an Audit using the CPA 2020 Guidelines and Checklist

“The responsibility to re-gender parliaments can no longer be left as an additional burden for women parliamentarians, nor to willing women and men parliamentarians; it is for the parliament as an institution, both political and administrative.” [CPA Gender Sensitive Parliament Guidelines 2020](#)

Gender Audits empower institutions to work towards becoming an inclusive and effective institution across all areas of parliamentary life.

There has been some very positive progress across the Region on undertaking Gender Audits, with the Scottish Parliament being the latest institution to begin a Gender Audit in February 2022. Based on a well-tested comparative framework, Gender Audits

empower institutions to work towards becoming an inclusive and effective institution across all areas of parliamentary life. Audits provide a benchmark against which future efforts and developments can be evaluated. In identifying priority areas that need to be strengthened they enable parliaments to become gender sensitive in all areas of their legislative work. Using the [2020 CPA Gender Sensitive Parliament Checklist](#) enables Commonwealth Parliaments to fulfil their institutional commitment to becoming gender sensitive.

Appendix 1. Detailed Institutional Leadership of BIMR Institutions

UK

Speaker

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male Speaker (1 Male Deputy Speaker, 1 Female Deputy Speaker)

- Impartial, elected member of the Parliament who presides over its proceedings.
- Responsible for Standing Orders and final authority on their interpretation
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings in the Debating Chamber and Prime Minister's Question Time, acting as a representative for the UK Parliament both domestically and abroad
- Chairs several administrative institutions including the House of Commons Commission
- There is a sex quota written into the Standing Orders. 5 E (iii) 'at least one man and at least one woman shall be elected across the four posts of Speaker and Deputy Speakers ...The constraints will be applied at the count, so there is no obligation on Members to vote for candidates from both sides of the House, or for both a man and a woman. The ballot paper indicates which side of the House the candidates come from, and their gender.'

House of Commons Commission

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male Chair (Speaker), 4 male members, 2 female members, (additional 2 male and 2 female lay members)

- Responsible for the administration and services of the House of Commons
- Responsible for the maintenance of the Palace of Westminster and the rest of Parliamentary Estate
- Provides non-executive governance of the House, the day-to-day management is delegated to the House of Commons Executive Board

Commons Executive Board

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: 3 male members and 8 female members

- Sub-committee of the House of Commons Commission and is accountable to it
- Assists the Commission in the strategic objectives for the administration of the House of Commons and is accountable to the Commission in its delivery of this strategy in the day-to-day operations of the House
- Provides leadership for the House of Commons Service

Procedure Committee

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Chair female, 13 male members, 3 female members

- House of Commons Select Committee which considers the practice and procedure of the House of Commons.
- Reports to the House about the operation of Standing Orders and any other aspect of procedures and practices

Leader of the House

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- The Leader of the House of Commons is a government minister who is responsible for the delivery of the government's legislative programme in the House of Commons
- Responsibilities of the post include managing the business of the House in cooperation with the Chief Whip, making a weekly business statement to the House and facilitating motions and debates.

Clerk of the House of Commons

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- The principal constitutional adviser to the House who advises on all procedures and business
- Frequently is called in front of Select and Joint Committees examining constitutional and Parliamentary matters

Scotland

Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers (PO)

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Female (one male and one female deputy PO)

- Impartial, elected member of the parliament who presides over its proceedings.
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings in the Debating Chamber and First Minister's Question Time, chairing Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and Parliamentary Bureau meetings and acting as a representative for the Scottish Parliament both domestically and abroad

Parliamentary Bureau

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender composition (Jan 2022): Female Convenor, 3 Male Members, 1 Female Member

- Responsible for proposing parliamentary business programme. Programme agreed by Parliament after considering the Bureau motions.
- Chaired by the Presiding Officer and members from all parties or groupings with 5 or more MSPs

Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Status: Permanent (unelected)

Gender Composition: PO (female), 3 female members, 1 male member

- Responsible for resources, staffing and property in the Scottish Parliament
- Makes decisions on budgets, staffing, accommodation, and security
- Chaired by Presiding Officer and has 4 further elected members. Each member takes a lead interest in a specific issue:
 - Business support and Officeholders
 - Finance and organisation governance
 - Digital services, resilience and sustainability
 - Engagement and communications

Clerk/Chief Executive

Status: Permanent (unelected)

Gender Composition: Male

- Head of the staff organisation
- Duties include providing advice to the Presiding Officer, signing account of the Parliament, chairing Leadership Group meetings and attending Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and Bureau meetings in an advisory capacity

Audit Advisory Board

Status: Permanent (unelected)

Gender Composition: Chair (Male) 2 female members, 1 male member

- Gives advice to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB) and the Clerk/Chief Executive on how the organisation is managed.

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male Convenor, 2 male and 2 female members, 3 female substitute members

- Mandatory Committee of the Parliament
- The Committee focuses on the rules, procedure and conduct of the Scottish Parliament and its members
- Rules on lobbying and elections and referendums also fall within the Committee's remit

Wales

Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officers (PO)

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Female

- Impartial, elected member of the parliament who presides over its proceedings.
- Responsible for Standing Orders and final authority on their interpretation
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings in the Debating Chamber and First Minister's Question Time, acting as a representative for the Welsh Parliament both domestically and abroad

Senedd Commission

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: 3 women, 2 men

- Body corporate to provide Senedd with the property, staff and services it needs
- Members nominated by political groups, chaired by Presiding Officer
- Responsibilities include producing annual financial report and appointing Clerk of the Senedd

Clerk and Chief Executive of Senedd

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Currently held by a woman

- Responsible for ensuring the Senedd and its members have the property, staff and services

Business Committee

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: 3 women, 2 men

- Responsible for organisation of Senedd Business and facilities the effective organisation of Senedd proceedings
- Makes recommendations on the general practice and procedure of the Senedd regarding the conduct of its business, including any proposals for the re-making or revisions of Standing Orders

Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform

Status: Temporary (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male Chair, 4 female members 1 male member

- Established October 2021 to consider conclusion of the previous Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform in the fifth Senedd
- Due to report May 2022

Jersey

Bailiff and Deputy Bailiff

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Balance: Male

- Member of judiciary who resides over the proceedings of the institution
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings of the States

States Greffe and Deputy Greffe

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Balance: Male (deputy female)

- Provides support to States Assembly, acts as a Clerk to the Assembly
- Responsibilities include providing advice and support to States Members and departments relating to the business and procedures of the States.

Privileges and Procedure Committee

Status: Permanent

Gender Balance: Woman Chair and Vice-Chair, 2 Female Members, 3 Male Members

- Committee can propose a change to Standing Orders to be debated by the Assembly, remit includes reviewing the procedures, composition and practices of the Assembly

Diversity Forum

Status: Temporary

Gender Balance: Female Chair, 4 Male members, 6 Female members

- Reconstituted as a PPC Sub-Committee in 2019.
- Works towards States Assembly aim to fully represent the diverse population of Jersey
- Aims to increase public engagement in democratic processes, particularly in relation to under-represented groups.

Guernsey

Presiding Officer and Deputy Presiding Officer

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Balance: Male (Female Deputy PO)

- Member who resides over the proceedings of the institution
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings of the States

States Greffier and Deputy Greffier

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Balance: Male (Female Deputy)

- Provides support to States Assembly, acts as a Clerk to the Assembly

- Responsibilities include providing advice and support to States Members and departments relating to the business and procedures of the States.

States Assembly and Constitution Committee (SACC)

Status: Permanent (Elected)

Gender Balance: Male President, 4 Male Members

- Advises on the Constitution, procedures and practices of the States of Deliberation
- Advises on the practice functions of the States of Deliberation
- Deals with matters concerning the propriety and conduct of States members
- Can bring forward a 'policy letter' and to the States for debate on a change to proceedings

Alderney

President

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Balance: Male

- Chairs the Billet D'état and ensures correct constitutional procedures are followed.
- Has a representational role as an ambassador, representing the island on diplomatic matters and meet visiting dignitaries.

Policy and Finance Committee

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Balance: Male Chair, 9 male members, 1 female member

- Main policy Committee in the States
- Remit includes constitution and sets up working groups to consider some matters of reform
- Set up 'Good Governance' working group to look into constitutional reform

Good Governance Group

Status: Temporary (non-elected)

Gender Balance: 3 male members, 1 female member, 1 male non-voting member

- Set up by Policy and Finance Committee to look into constitutional reform including moving to a separate executive and legislature

Falkland Islands

Speaker

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Currently male

- The primary function of the Speaker is to preside over Legislative Assembly meetings
- Acts as a representative for the Assembly both domestically and internationally

Privy Council

Status: Permanent (un-elected)

Gender Composition:

- Approves any constitutional changes e.g. changes to ways the Assembly sat during COVID-19 passed through privy council

Isle of Man

Speaker

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- Presides over the proceedings of the House of Keys
- Responsible for decision-asking on most matters relating to plenary decisions
- Unlike in many other parliaments, the Presiding Officers do not play a role in selecting motions, amendments or questions; there are no 'business committees' to provide this function either. There are few restrictions on tabling items; only business that has not been tabled in accordance with Standing Orders requires approval from the Presiding Officers to be included on the Order Paper.

Presiding Officer/President

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- Presides over the proceedings of the Legislative Council
- Responsible for decision about most matters relating to plenary decisions in Legislative Council
- Unlike in many other parliaments, the Presiding Officers do not play a role in selecting motions, amendments or questions; there are no 'business committees' to provide this function either. There are few restrictions on tabling items; only business that has not been tabled in accordance with Standing Orders requires approval from the Presiding Officers to be included on the Order Paper.
- Presiding Officers can call additional sittings where required
- The Presiding Officers make decisions about granting leave of absence from attending sittings, including for extended periods (e.g. maternity leave).

Clerk of Tynwald and Deputy Clerk

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Male (female Deputy clerk)

- Provides procedural advise to presiding officers of both chambers

Tynwald Management Committee

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male Chair (ex- officio), 2 male members (one ex- officio), 2 female members

- Responsible for overseeing the management of the Clerk of Tynwald's Office. The President and the Speaker are ex-officio members, and the other members are elected by and from Tynwald.
- The Clerk of Tynwald is accountable to the Tynwald Management Committee.

Standing Order Committees

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: House of Keys: Male Chair (ex-officio), 3 male members, 2 female members

Legislative Council: Male Chair, 2 female members

- There are Standing Orders Committees for each of the Chambers. They may make recommendations for changes to Standing Orders, which must be approved by the relevant Chamber.

Malta

Speaker

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- The Speaker presides over sittings of the House of Representatives
- The Speaker may give rulings in the event that issues arise on the application of these Standing Orders and see that members follow the correct procedures.

House Business Committee

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Chair male, 4 male members and 1 female

- The Committee distributes Bills and other business to standing committees and allocates their sittings
- Decides on specific matters on House proceedings and reform that come up from time to time and tends to be the body that suggests changes to Standing Orders, although individual members can also bring suggested changes to the House

Northern Ireland Assembly

Speaker

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Male

- Impartial, elected member of the parliament who presides over its proceedings.
- Responsibilities include chairing meetings in the Debating Chamber and Question Times, acting as a representative for the Northern Ireland Assembly both domestically and abroad

Business Committee

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Speaker (male), 10 male and 2 female members

- The Committee considers what business is to be scheduled when the Assembly meets in plenary sessions and makes arrangements for how that business should be conducted in the Assembly Chamber
- Membership consists of the Speaker (as Chair) and party whips

Assembly Commission

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Speaker (Chair, male), 4 male members and 1 female member

- The Commission's remit is to provide the Assembly with property, staff and services required for the Assembly to carry out its work
- It may delegate functions to Speaker or a member of staff at the Assembly and may determine its own procedures

Clerk/Chief Executive

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Female

- The Clerk is responsible for the provision of procedural advice to the Speaker and Members of the Assembly
- Responsible to the Assembly Commission for the management of the administrative support services to the Assembly.
- The Clerk/Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer for the Assembly's budget.

Committee on Procedures

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Female chair and 6 women and 3 men members

- The Standing Committee considers and reviews on an ongoing basis the Standing Orders and procedures of the Assembly

Cyprus

President of the House

Status: Permanent (elected)

Gender Composition: Female

- The President presides over plenary sessions of the House and keeps order during these sittings.
- The President ensures compliance with the rules of procedure for the House and speaks from the chair when the subject of the debate is the Rules of Procedure
- Responsibilities include being Head of the Office of the House and shall order payments as in the budget of the House provided, and representing the House domestically and abroad

President's and Parliamentary Leaders' Meeting

Status: Permanent (non-elected)

Gender Composition: Speaker (female), parliamentary leaders

- An informal institution which has now become permanent and formalised, 'the leaders' meeting' plays a steering and coordinating role in relation to the House work in plenary, in committees or in other areas of work.
- Proposals and suggestions of the Leaders conference are usually respected by House Members

Gibraltar

Speaker

Status: Permanent (appointed)

Gender Composition: Male

- Resides over parliamentary sittings and interprets standing orders
- Acts as a representative domestically and internationally for the Parliament

Clerk

Status: Permanent (appointed)

Gender Composition: Male

- Charged with the administration of meetings, including keeping minutes of proceedings and custody of record, votes bills and other documents

Select Committee on Parliamentary Reform

Status: Permanent (Chair elected, members appointed)

Gender Composition: 1 women members, 6 men members

- Select Committee charged with considering parliamentary reform
- Provides recommendations to government

Select Committee on Constitutional Reform

Status: Permanent (Chair elected, members appointed)

Gender Composition: 2 women members, 5 men members

- Select Committee charged with considering constitutional reform
- Provides recommendations to government

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