



Northern Ireland
Assembly

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

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Updated Guidance on All-Party Group meetings during the current public health crisis

This guidance note is being issued by the Committee on Standards and Privileges to update Chairpersons of All-Party Groups (APGs) on the position regarding meetings of APGs in Parliament Buildings during the current public health crisis.

I wrote to Assembly Members in April 2020 with guidance on APG meetings during the current public health crisis ([see here](#)). Furthermore, supplementary guidance was issued in July 2020 to Chairpersons of APGs to facilitate APGs meeting virtually/remotely within the appropriate framework of the guidance ([see here](#)).

The Committee is aware that many APGs have been meeting virtually on a regular basis throughout the current pandemic, which is a testament to how well they have adapted during this time. As this has proved an effective and efficient approach, which has also reduced demand for meeting rooms in Parliament Buildings, **the Committee encourages AGPs to continue to meet virtually where possible.**

That said, the Committee is mindful of the Assembly Commission's decision to resume events, tours, public dining and visitors to Parliament Buildings from 14 July 2021. Understandably, all resumption of activities will be subject to comprehensive risk assessments and undertaken in a manner that continues to protect staff, Members, other building users and those who might visit for the aforementioned reasons.

Therefore, the Committee advises that, **if an APG decides to meet in Parliament Buildings in the current circumstances, it will be expected to adhere to the most up-to-date guidance in that regard from the Assembly Commission and the related health protection regulations.** If you require advice on the applicable

guidance/regulations, please request this when booking a meeting room (contact email address: committee.office@niassembly.gov.uk).

For your convenience I am attaching general contact information for administering APG meetings.

If you require any further clarification on any aspect of this guidance please email the Committee on Standards & Privileges office at the following address:
committee.standardsprivileges@niassembly.gov.uk

Sinéad Ennis
Chairperson
Committee on Standards and Privileges

5 August 2021



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COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

Contact Information re: Administering All-Party Groups (April 2020)

Task	Contact
<p>To receive advice on any aspect of forming/administering an All-Party Group or the declaration of financial benefits associated with it.</p> <p>Submitting in writing any changes to the initial registration including any change of office bearers (see para 4.3 of the Rules).</p> <p>Submitting an 'All-Party Group Update Form – Financial or Other Benefits received' within 28 days of receipt of any financial or other material benefit received by the group (see paras 5.6 – 5.9 of the Rules).</p> <p>Submitting an 'All-Party Group – Annual Return Form' following the Annual General</p>	<p>Clerk of Standards Room 254 Parliament Buildings Belfast BT4 3XX</p> <p>Email: Committee.standardsprivileges@niassembly.gov.uk</p> <p>Tel: 028 9052 1372/02890520333</p>

<p>Meeting of the APG (see para 5.11 of the Rules).</p> <p>Submitting an 'All-Party Group – New Mandate Update Form' at the start of a new Mandate (see para 5.12 of the Rules).</p> <p>In the event of the Chairperson of the group changing – submitting a Registration Form incorporating the Declaration of Compliance with the Rules (See para 7.2 of the Rules).</p>	
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Task	Contact
<p>To have an APG set up on Microsoft Teams for the purpose of holding remote/virtual meetings</p>	<p>Assembly Information Systems Office (ISO) Helpdesk ITHelpdeskEmail@niassembly.gov.uk</p>
<p>Updating information on the Group's page on the Assembly website and submitting an 'All-Party Group - Request to Link to an External Website' form (See paras 6.1 and 6.5 of the Rules).</p> <p>Requesting electronic copies of APG Forms</p>	<p>committee.standardsprivileges@niassembly.gov.uk</p>
<p>Informing the Ushers Service of names of people who will be attending forthcoming meetings; together with any special access requirements for Parliament Buildings.</p>	<p>UsheroptionsDL@niassembly.gov.uk Copy to: Andrew.Larmour@niassembly.gov.uk</p>

<p>Health & Safety template briefing agreed by NI Assembly Health and Safety Office for external attendees of APG meetings.</p>	<p>Will be emailed when room booking is made and should be read out at start of each APG meeting.</p> <p>In case of queries: Richard.anderson@niassembly.gov.uk</p>
<p>Forwarding an All-Party Notice for distribution to all Members informing them of details of APG meetings (including the Annual General Meeting of the Group).</p>	<p>business.office@niassembly.gov.uk</p> <p>See note below</p>
<p>Booking a meeting room (21, 29, 30 or Senate) and hospitality (see paras 6.2 and 6.3 of the Rules). Requests must be made by email stating full details of meeting.</p>	<p>committee.office@niassembly.gov.uk</p>

APN note:

Please note that requests to the Assembly Business Office should come from the Chairperson of the APG (or be made on their behalf by their support staff based in Parliament Buildings). If such requests are communicated via an external source (i.e. the APG secretariat) the Chairperson must be copied into the communication.