

Friday 13 March 2020

Dear colleagues,

As you know, the nation is facing an extremely challenging set of circumstances. The spread of Covid-19 has already begun to have widespread implications for the way the country is run and on individuals' lives. Parliament is no different.

We are resolved that Parliament should, insofar as possible, continue to fulfil its important constitutional duties of passing legislation, holding Government to account and, crucially, representing the views of the people of the United Kingdom and making their voice heard.

In order to preserve the operation of Parliament, it is our duty to take proportionate and reasonable measures to reduce the risk to those who work on the Parliamentary Estate and those who have to visit. We are clear that now is the time to be pragmatic; everyone in the country is being asked to strike a balance and it is right that we do the same.

It is in this spirit that we have decided to implement a number of restrictions relating to overseas travel and visitor access. These steps have been developed in conjunction with Public Health England and reflect the Government's current approach. The Clerks of both Houses and Parliamentary authorities are fully in support of these restrictions and we would like to thank you, the Members of both Houses, for your co-operation in advance.

These restrictions will enter into force on Monday 16 March and continue in force until further notice. As you would expect, we will continue to keep the situation under constant review.

## OVERSEAS TRAVEL

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) has now declared a coronavirus pandemic and the virus is now circulating in many countries. We advise against inward and outward parliamentary travel to certain countries and regions as specified by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
2. We strongly discourage parliamentary travel to other countries, and ask Members, committees, APPGs, and partner organisations to assess the risk of visits on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether any delegates fall within vulnerable groups.

Parliamentary travel covers a wide range of activities and includes:

Official delegations	Hosting of visiting Parliamentarians and officials from overseas jurisdictions and official travel by the Speakers and other office holders abroad.
Interparliamentary Groups	There are four Interparliamentary Groups (IPGs). Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA-UK); British Group Interparliamentary Union (BGIPU); British American Parliamentary Group (BAPG); British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA).

Parliamentary Assemblies (delegations to)	Delegations of Members of both Houses are appointed, by the Government, as delegates to three Parliamentary assemblies.
Select Committees	Official and informal travel by select committees.
APPG	Travel organised by members of APPGs.

## VISITORS TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTATE

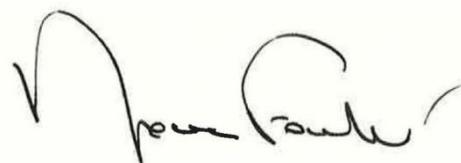
1. Members of the public are still able to watch debates in both Chambers from the public galleries and to attend select committee meetings.
2. Select committee witnesses will be unaffected. Witnesses will need to show the invitation sent to them by the Committee's staff.
3. Members of the public are still able to come into Central Lobby for a meeting with their MP or a member of the House of Lords if this is booked and agreed with the relevant member in advance.
4. Mass lobbies (which usually take place in Westminster Hall or in the larger committee rooms) will not be facilitated during the period.
5. All pass holders, including Members, are not to bring non-passholding guests on to the Parliamentary Estate who are visiting for non-Parliamentary business-related purposes or for social purposes.
6. In order to limit numbers, APPGs are not to invite non-passholding guests on to the Parliamentary Estate.
7. No new commercial tour bookings will be accepted. Existing bookings taking place from Monday onwards are to be cancelled but tickets will be refunded. Members of the public wishing to enter the Parliamentary Estate solely to view Westminster Hall will not be admitted.
8. No new banqueting bookings will be accepted. Existing bookings taking place from Monday onwards are to be cancelled but deposits will be refunded.

Should you have specific queries, please do feel free to speak with the Clerks of both Houses; their Offices will be able to provide advice or direct you to the appropriate person or department.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP  
Speaker  
House of Commons



The Rt Hon. The Lord Fowler  
Lord Speaker  
House of Lords