

## **ADVICE NOTE 7: Coronavirus and APPGs**

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Email sent to all APPG chairs on 7 April 2022 from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards:

### **Clarification on the rescinding of Advice Note 7**

Following the rescinding of Advice Note 7 (see below), a number of APPGs have sought advice on the ability of outside speakers and guests to attend meetings virtually.

The following advice sets out the requirements for formal meetings (which were defined in the advice sent on 1 April to all chairs and copied below) from Monday 2 May 2022.

#### **AGMs and meetings to elect officers**

AGMs and meetings to elect officers must be held physically on the parliamentary estate and when both Houses are sitting. At least five Members of either House, including at least one MP, must be present.

All parliamentarians may vote at the meeting (but must be present at the meeting to do so); no-one else may vote.

Hybrid or virtual meetings are not allowed for AGMs and meetings to elect officers. Outside speakers, guests and members of an APPG may not attend AGMs and meetings to elect officers virtually.

The meetings must be advertised on the All Party Notice (normally at least one week in advance) published by the Whips' office.

#### **Other formal meetings**

There is no requirement for these meetings to be held physically on the parliamentary estate or when both Houses are sitting.

For the meeting to be quorate at least five Members of either House must be present physically at the meeting. However, other members of the APPG may attend virtually subject to the discretion of the APPG.

Outside speakers may deliver speeches and presentations virtually. It is up to APPGs to decide whether to issue invitations to other guests to attend virtually.

The meetings must be advertised on the All Party Notice (normally at least one week in advance).

If you need more information, the Registrar (James Davies) and the Assistant Registrar (Philippa Wainwright) are happy to help and advise. Please do feel free to contact them (via [groupsregister@parliament.uk](mailto:groupsregister@parliament.uk) or on 0207 219 3277 or 0401).

Kind regards



**Kathryn Stone OBE**

**Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards**

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Email sent to all APPG chairs on 1 April 2022 from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards:

**Rescinding of Advice Note 7 on Coronavirus and APPGs - Effective 2 May 2022**

1. I am writing to provide an update on the rules for APPG formal meetings with effect from Monday 2 May.
2. Under the provisions of [Advice Note 7: Coronavirus and APPGs](#), APPGs were until recently required to hold all meetings virtually, including formal ones. A formal meeting is defined in the House's rules as 'one at which one or more decisions is, or is to be, taken, or a vote is to be held; or which includes an outside speaker'.
3. Following the [updated Covid-19 guidance](#) issued by the Commissions of both Houses, the Committee on Standards wrote to the Speaker recommending that Advice Note 7 Coronavirus and APPGs be rescinded and that the Rules requiring formal meetings to be held physically be reinstated. The Speaker has approved the Committee's recommendation.
4. This means that from **Monday 2 May**, all formal meetings will need to be held physically, and any meeting that involves elections must be held at Parliament and when both Houses of Parliament are sitting. **Virtual formal meetings will no longer be allowed to take place after Monday 2 May.**
5. For ease, I have set out the relevant section (on APPG meetings) of the Guide to the Rules at the end of this note. Chairs receive a reminder about AGM requirements when their group's AGM is due.
6. If you need more information, the Registrar (James Davies) and the Assistant Registrar (Philippa Wainwright) are happy to help and advise. Please do feel free to contact them (via [groupsregister@parliament.uk](mailto:groupsregister@parliament.uk) or on 0207 219 3277 or 0401).

Kind regards



**Kathryn Stone OBE**

**Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards**

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## Guide to the rules on All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)

20. Groups must comply with the following rules about meetings:

- a. Each group must meet at least twice during its reporting year;<sup>2</sup>
- b. One of these meetings must be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) or a meeting which involves an inaugural election of officers;
- c. Formal meetings of the group<sup>3</sup> must be advertised (normally at least one week in advance) in the All-Party Notices<sup>4</sup>, together with details of a parliamentary contact for the group and a list of any external speakers;
- d. The quorum for a formal meeting of the group is five Members of either House;
- e. *Annual General Meetings* must take place on the parliamentary estate and when both Houses are sitting. They must be advertised (normally at least one week in advance) on the All-Party Notices, which must provide details of a parliamentary contact for the group and list any external speakers.<sup>5</sup> In addition, at least five Members of either House, including at least one MP, must be present at an AGM.

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| For advice contact: <a href="mailto:groupsregister@parliament.uk">groupsregister@parliament.uk</a> or call the Commissioner's office on 020 7219 3277 or 0207 219 0401 |