

Scheme on proxy voting for use under para (4) of Resolution of 28 January 2019

A. Eligibility

1. Proxy voting shall be available to new mothers, new fathers and adoptive parents.
2. A Member shall demonstrate eligibility for the scheme by producing the following documents to the Speaker:
 - A certificate of pregnancy from a registered practitioner, midwife or health visitor, or
 - A 'matching certificate' from a registered adoption agency.
3. The production of such a certificate shall be a sufficient requirement to register for the scheme, and no further validation shall be required.
4. It shall not be compulsory to take up eligibility for the scheme.
5. The entitlement to a proxy vote, and to its use, is personal to the eligible Member.

B. Duration

6. The maximum duration of the dispensation to vote by proxy shall be as follows:
 - Six months for the biological mother of a baby, or for the primary or single adopter of a baby or child
 - Two weeks for the biological father of a baby, the partner of the person giving birth or the second adopter of a baby or child.
7. Any period of absence taken by a mother or primary adopter shall start at or before the due date or adoption date and should be taken as a continuous period of up to six months, including periods when the House is adjourned, prorogued or dissolved.
8. The absence claimed by the father, partner or second adopter shall be taken in one continuous period of two weeks.
9. A Member eligible for the scheme shall specify in writing to the Speaker the dates on which the absence shall begin and end, subject to the maximum durations set out in the scheme. During that period the Member shall be entitled to cast a vote by proxy.

10. If the specified start (or end) date of absence given is not a sitting day, the period of entitlement shall begin (or end) when the Speaker takes the Chair on the next sitting day.
11. Where it is certified that a Member is unable, because of pregnancy, to travel to Westminster by air, the maximum period may be extended by no more than four weeks, to include the period before the due date where travel to Westminster is not possible.

C. Designation of proxy

12. When specifying the dates of absence, the Member eligible for proxy voting shall name the Member who has agreed to carry her or his proxy vote, thereby vouching that an agreement has been entered into.
13. A Member shall be free to choose any other Member of the House who is eligible to vote in divisions to act as a proxy.

D. Publishing the arrangement

14. On receipt of the specified information the Speaker shall issue a certificate, and cause it to be entered in the Votes and Proceedings.

E. Varying the arrangement

15. A Member who wishes to change the Member who is their proxy, to end their period of proxy voting earlier than originally notified, or to cast a vote in person on a specific item of business, shall give written notice to the Speaker as early as possible, and at the very latest by the scheduled rise of the House on the sitting day before the change is to take effect.
16. The Speaker shall issue a new certificate if required under paragraph 15 above, which shall appear in the Votes and Proceedings on the day that it is issued.
17. Changes of proxy made for a specified period shall take effect when the Speaker takes the Chair on the first sitting day specified, and shall end when the House rises on the last sitting day specified.

F. Exercising the proxy vote

18. A Member eligible to vote by proxy must agree with the Member nominated as their proxy when the proxy vote will be cast and how it will be exercised.
19. A proxy vote may be cast according to the provisions of temporary Standing Order (Voting by proxy for parental absence).
20. A Member designated as a proxy will be expected to act in strict accordance with the instruction given by the absent Member.

21. A Member designated as a proxy may cast their own vote in one lobby and the proxy vote in the other, and may cast a proxy vote without casting their own vote at all.
22. A Member registered as voting by proxy who wishes to vote in person shall be entitled to do so, provided that the Speaker has been notified by the end of the previous sitting day that the proxy arrangement is to be suspended. (see para 15)
23. In divisions in legislative grand committees, a Member who is not a member of the committee shall be entitled to enter a division lobby to cast a proxy vote for a committee member.

G. Recording a proxy vote in a division in the House or Committee of the whole House

24. A Member casting a proxy vote in a division shall inform the Division Clerk at the appropriate desk, and the tellers at the doors of the lobby.
25. At the same time the Member casting the proxy vote shall make it clear whether that Member is casting his or her own vote in the same lobby.
26. When listing the result of divisions, both online and in its printed edition, the Official Report (Hansard) shall note votes cast by proxy, including the Member who cast the proxy vote.
27. The record of a proxy vote shall be treated as part of the digital record of the Commons.

