

Public Bill Committees: Selection and grouping

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Amendments (proposals for change) for discussion are selected and grouped for debate by the Chair of the relevant Public Bill Committee. Members of the Committee can vote on amendments during committee stage.

The Chair's selection and grouping is published ahead of the Committee sitting. Selection and grouping papers, along with corresponding amendment papers, can be found on the [Parliamentary Bills website](#), on the 'publications' page for the bill they relate to.

About the selection and grouping paper

The selection and grouping paper shows —

- which amendments have been selected by the Chair for debate; and
- how the Chair has decided to group items for debate on related topics, to reduce repetition between debates in Committee.

The amendment paper (read together with the bill) gives you the order in which decisions will be taken.

The Chair has various powers during Committee proceedings, including to change decisions on grouping, selection for debate, and selection for separate decision.

Clauses and schedules

The Committee has the opportunity to debate every clause and schedule in the bill. Debates on clauses can be grouped for debate with other clauses, schedules and amendments (for example, if they deal with the same issue).

A decision will be taken on whether each clause and schedule of the Bill should “stand part” of the Bill – that is, form a part of the Bill as considered at Committee.

The “stand part” question will come after any amendments to that clause or schedule have been dealt with.

Amendments and New Clauses

The grouping of amendments and new clauses can mean that a decision on a particular amendment might not immediately follow the debate into which it was grouped. For example, an amendment to Clause 4 might be grouped with an amendment to Clause 1, if they cover a similar topic.

New clauses and new schedules are generally only decided on once all existing clauses and schedules in the bill have been dealt with, even though they may have been debated earlier in the Committee’s proceedings.

Decisions on amendments and new clauses follow the order in which they appear in the amendment paper.

Lead amendments

The lead amendment is the first one listed in a group. A member of the Committee will move it and start the debate on the whole group. At the end of the debate, the member who moved the lead amendment will either withdraw the amendment or press it to a decision.

Sometimes, a group will be led by a decision on the clause stand part, rather than an amendment. In this case, the Chair has to put the question on the clause stand part at the end of the debate.

Order of consideration

As part of the programme resolution usually agreed to at the first meeting of the Committee, the 'order of consideration' sets out the order in which the clauses and schedules to the bill (and new clauses and new schedules) will be decided on. It is common, for example, for an order of consideration to specify that a schedule will be considered and decided on immediately after the clause that introduces it, or for new clauses and new schedules to be decided on before the final general clauses of the bill (e.g. covering commencement and extent).

The programme resolution is printed at the start of the amendment paper for the first meeting of the Committee.

Group structure

The example below shows how the process works, using a group with a number of characteristics. In the following paragraphs, each element of this group is explained:

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

In this example, Clauses 1 and 2 are considered together:

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

The lead amendment ('Gov 97' here) will be an amendment to the first clause listed (Clause 1 here):

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

A member of the Committee (in this case the Minister, because it is a Government amendment) will move the amendment and start the debate on the whole group.

At the end of the debate (which can cover everything in the group), the first decision will be on this lead amendment. Amendments are sometimes agreed to (on the voices) without a vote.

Other amendments ('14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp]') have been grouped for debate with the lead amendment, as they relate to the same or similar issue. They may or may not also be amendments to the clauses in the heading ('Clauses 1 and 2'):

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

A question will only be put on these amendments (the Committee will only be asked to decide on them) if it is requested by a member of the Committee. If it is requested, the question may be put when the Committee reaches the amendment in the amendment paper, if the Chair agrees.

Another amendment, ‘Gov 98’, has also been grouped for debate. Because it is a Government amendment, the Chair will call the Minister to move it when the Committee reaches it in the amendment paper:

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

During the debate on this group, the Committee will also have the chance to debate the clause itself. After the Committee has dealt with any amendments to Clause 1, the question will be put that the clause “stand part of the Bill”:

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ NC4 [Opp]

If the clause has been amended, the question will be “That Clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill”.

No amendments have been tabled to Clause 2, but there will still be an opportunity to discuss the clause, and the question that Clause 2 “stand part of the Bill” will be put after the question on Clause 1:

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + **Clause 2 stand part**
+ NC4 [Opp]

Finally, new clauses on related topics can be grouped for debate with these amendments and clauses (here, ‘NC4 [Opp]’):

Clauses 1 and 2

Group 1: Gov 97 + 14 [Lib Dem] + 20 [Opp] + Gov 98
+ Clause 1 stand part + Clause 2 stand part
+ **NC4 [Opp]**

The question will only be put on the new clause (if requested) after the Committee has decided on all existing clauses and schedules in the Bill.

For more information about selection and grouping and other aspects of Bill procedure, see the [Bills section of the MPs' Guide to Procedure](#) on the Parliament website.

People within Parliament can also find more information on ParliNet: search for 'Public Bill Office'.

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