



House of Commons
Procedure Committee

Sitting hours of the House: response to a survey of Members

Sixth Report of Session 2016–17

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

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Procedure Committee

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Publication

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at www.parliament.uk/proccom and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Martyn Atkins (Clerk), Leoni Kurt (Second Clerk), Jim Lawford (Committee Assistant), and Alasdair Rendall (Media Officer).

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Summary

In this report we set out the outcome of a survey of the views of Members on the sitting hours of the House conducted in June and July 2016.

The outcome of the survey indicates support among the majority of respondents for the current sitting hours of the House on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Although the survey demonstrates some support for several alternative schemes of sitting hours, the responses to the survey do not indicate any consensus as to what alternative sitting hours should be.

We had planned to sponsor a debate on motions on the House's sitting hours, to take place before the summer recess in 2017: any change ensuing from decisions of the House on such motions would have come into force in October 2017.

The decision of the House to vote for an early general election has curtailed this exercise. We nevertheless report the outcome of the survey to the House, and recommend that the Procedure Committee in the 2017 Parliament undertake a similar exercise.

1 Introduction

1. We report below on the outcome of a survey of Members' attitudes to the present sitting hours of the House which we conducted in June and July 2016. Our predecessors in the 2010 Parliament undertook a similar survey to inform their 2012 report on sitting hours and the Parliamentary calendar.¹

2. That Committee arranged for a debate on sitting hours to be held in July 2012, and for Members to determine the hours on which they wished the House to sit for the remainder of that Parliament by endorsing, or amending, a motion proposing no change to existing sitting hours.

3. The recent survey has provided the first opportunity for Members in the current Parliament to give their views on the House's sitting hours, including the 177 Members elected for the first time at the General Election of 2015 and in by-elections up to June 2016, and the 5 Members elected in 2015 who had served in parliaments before 2010.²

4. This exercise has been the first stage in conducting a conversation about sitting hours. We intended to propose that it should lead to a discussion among our colleagues which would have culminated in a debate in the House where support for the present sitting hours, and alternative proposals made by Members, could have been tested. This would have allowed Members of the present House to determine what its sitting hours should have been from October 2017 onwards.

5. In the light of the decision of the House of 19 April on an early general election, and the ensuing dissolution, we are unable to proceed further with this exercise in determining the House's sitting hours for the remainder of this Parliament. We are nevertheless making this report to the House elected in 2015. We recommend that the Procedure Committee in the 2017 Parliament undertake a similar exercise.

6. The present sitting hours of the House of Commons Chamber are:

- Monday from 2.30 pm to 10.30 pm;³
- Tuesday and Wednesday, from 11.30 am until 7.30 pm;⁴
- Thursday, from 9.30 am until 5.30pm;⁵
- Friday, from 9.30 am until 3.00 pm.⁶

7. This inquiry has considered the sitting times in the Chamber only. We recognise that a substantial amount of Parliamentary work takes place outside the Chamber's formal sitting hours, in select committee meetings, sittings in Westminster Hall and in grand

1 Procedure Committee, First Report of Session 2012–13, *Sitting Hours and the Parliamentary Calendar*, HC 330.

2 House of Commons Library, General Election 2015, [CBP 7186](#), July 2015, page 10; the Tooting by-election took place on 16 June 2016. There have been six by-elections since the survey closed.

3 Under Standing Order No. 9. The moment of interruption—the time beyond which no opposed business can generally be transacted—falls at 10.00 pm.

4 Under Standing Order No. 9. The moment of interruption falls at 7.00 pm.

5 Under Standing Order No. 9. The moment of interruption falls at 5.00 pm.

6 Under Standing Order No. 11. The moment of interruption falls at 2.30 pm. The House sits on 13 Fridays in each Session, on dates proposed by the Government and agreed to by the House.

committees, public bill committees, European committees and delegated legislation committees. We also note that the Chamber's regular sitting hours can be subject to variation, for example through

- motions moved by the Government to move the time of the daily moment of interruption;
- the operation of programme orders; and
- the displacement of orders of the day occasioned by the grant of debates under Standing Order No. 24.

8. These *ad hoc* variations in sitting hours are not addressed in this report. We had expected to consider means to amend the House's sitting hours to take account of unexpected occurrences—for instance, the effect on a day's scheduled business of large numbers of oral statements or urgent questions—in a future inquiry. ***We recommend that the successor Committee in the 2017 Parliament inquire into the provision of 'injury time' in cases where the scheduled business has been substantially curtailed.***

Conduct of the survey

9. The survey was sent out to Members by e-mail on 6 June 2016, and the Chairman wrote personally to each Member to draw the survey to their attention. Responses were collated via a webform: several Members also chose to respond by e-mail or in hard copy.⁷ We included a series of questions to ascertain the views of respondents on the effect of present sitting hours on their personal effectiveness as a Member, on their personal and/or family life, and on the effectiveness of the House itself.⁸

10. We received substantive responses from 217 Members.⁹ We would like to thank Members for the time they took in responding to the survey and in providing the evidence base for our deliberations.

7 The survey form questions are set out in Annex 1.

8 Data from the responses to these questions is set out in Annex 2.

9 Duplicate responses have been eliminated or merged. Of the 217 Members who submitted responses, 14 did so anonymously.

2 Outcome of the survey

11. Of our 217 responses: 203 were from identified Members and a further 14 from individuals who did not give a name. Just over 30% of Members of the House of Commons therefore responded. The response group is self-selecting, and not a representative sample. We cannot claim that the outcome is entirely representative of the views of all Members: it is possible that those who chose to respond to the survey did so because they wished to see some form of change, while those who chose not to respond were more satisfied with the status quo. The size of the sample, nevertheless, gives us a degree of confidence that the responses reflect the range of views of backbench Members.

12. We set out below the results of the survey in respect of each sitting day.

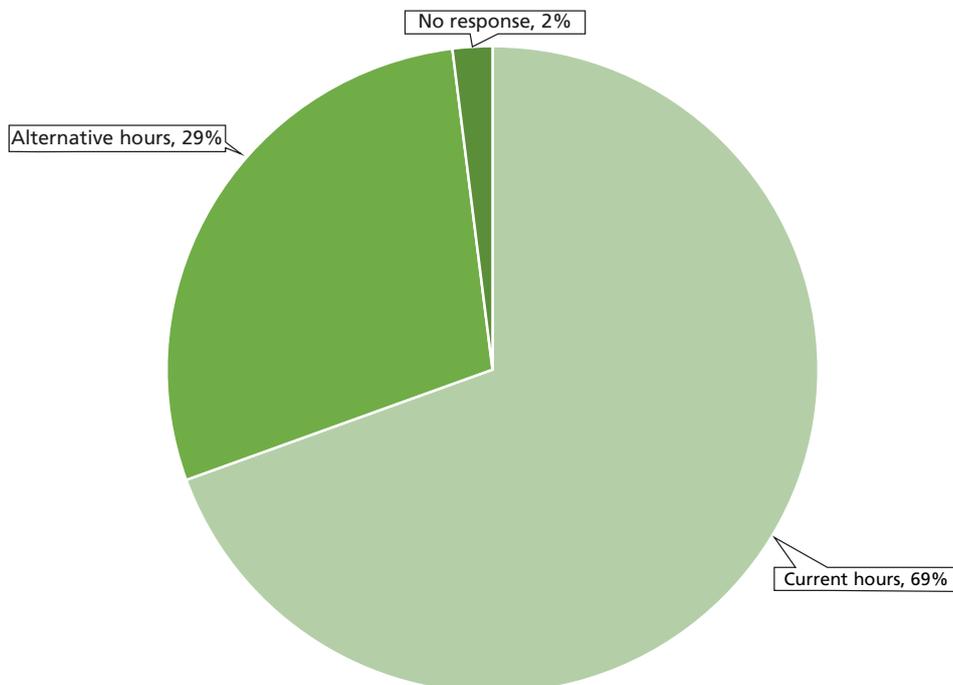
Survey results by day

13. The outcome of the survey indicated, in general, a preference for the status quo over all four days. Where Members disagreed with present sitting hours, they were invited to propose alternatives: we set out below some of the more popular alternatives given by respondents.¹⁰

Monday

14. The survey results for Monday sittings indicated a strong preference (69%) for maintaining the current sitting hours.

Figure 1: Preferences for sitting hours on Mondays



Source: Procedure Committee survey data, Annex 2, table 6

¹⁰ A more complete breakdown of the prevalent alternative times suggested is given in Annex 2.

Alternative suggestions

15. A number of alternative times were suggested by respondents. Several were generally opposed to sitting late into the evening. Start times as early as 11.30 am were proposed, maintaining the 8 hour sitting day.

16. Many respondents recognised that a large proportion of Members travel from their constituencies on Monday mornings, and they took this into account when making alternative suggestions for timings. Other respondents were keen on sitting times that would match those for Tuesday and Wednesday.

17. While a number of respondents based their proposals on an assessment of the travel patterns of Members coming to Westminster from their constituencies, we have collected no data on prevailing travel patterns. Several respondents with long distances to travel indicated that they came to London the night before, but others said that they found it possible, under present arrangements, to leave their families in their constituencies on Monday mornings and to arrive at Westminster in time to participate in the day's business.

Tuesday

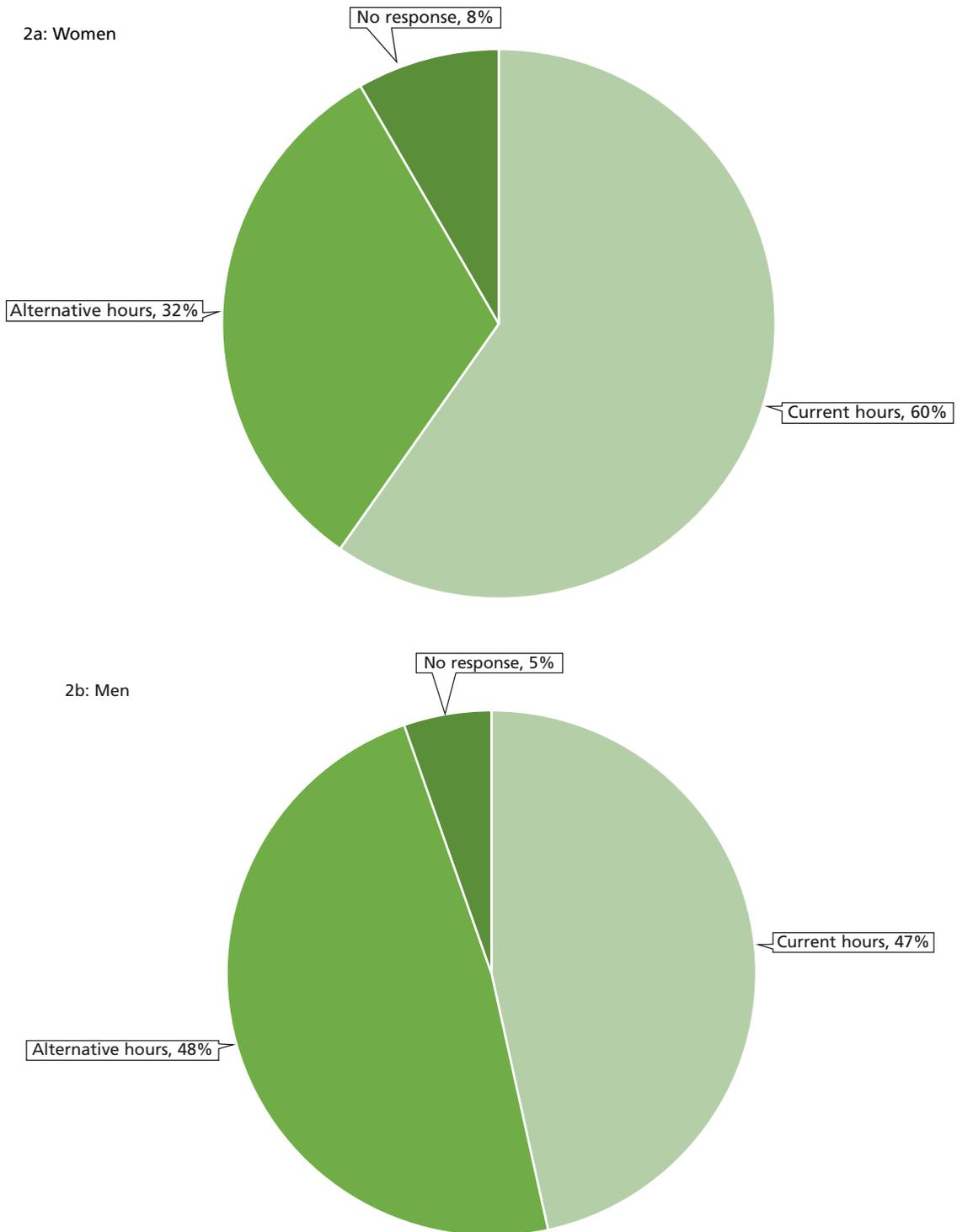
18. The outcome of the Members' survey for Tuesday also showed an overall preference for the status quo, although 42% of those who responded wished to see a change.

19. This majority was the slimmest of any sitting day canvassed. There is still significant support for the present Tuesday hours, which many consider to be conducive to a better family life and work-life balance. Within the large minority dissatisfied with present Tuesday hours, there is no overall consensus on what the alternative hours should be.

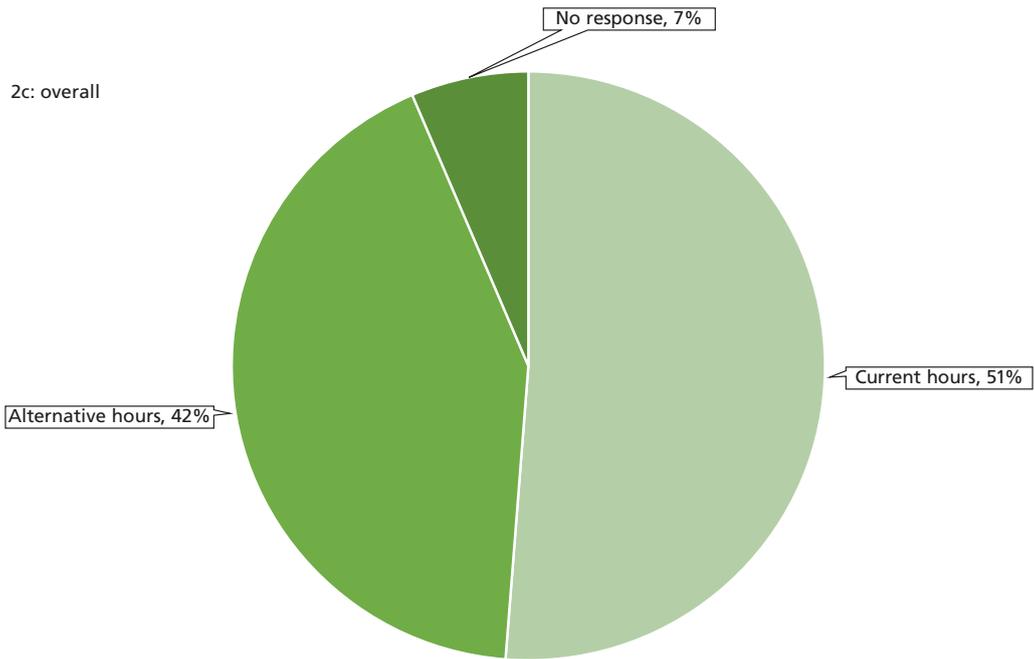
20. This no doubt reflects the different personal circumstances of Members. Many live within commuting distance of Westminster and will wish to return home every evening at a reasonable hour. A significant number of Members, however, have no realistic prospect of commuting home and may therefore be under less pressure and inclination to leave the House immediately after 7 pm.

21. Some Members would like to see even earlier sitting hours on a Tuesday: in some cases this reflected a desire to standardise the House's sitting hours with generally accepted business hours throughout the week, such as 9.30 am to 5.30 pm or 10 am to 6 pm. But there is also support for a later time of rising on a Tuesday, with two alternatives expressly mentioned: either a return to the pre-2012 sitting hours of 2.30 pm to 10.30 pm, or a sitting at 11.30 am which is prolonged for up to a further three hours—to 10.30 pm—to allow further business to be taken in the evening. Some would prefer the additional time to be used for consideration of private Members' bills, which could be considered on Tuesday, and possibly Wednesday, evenings rather than on Fridays.

Figure 2: preferences for sitting hours on Tuesdays¹¹



11 The data is broken down to show, in this instance, a significant difference in views between the women and men who responded.

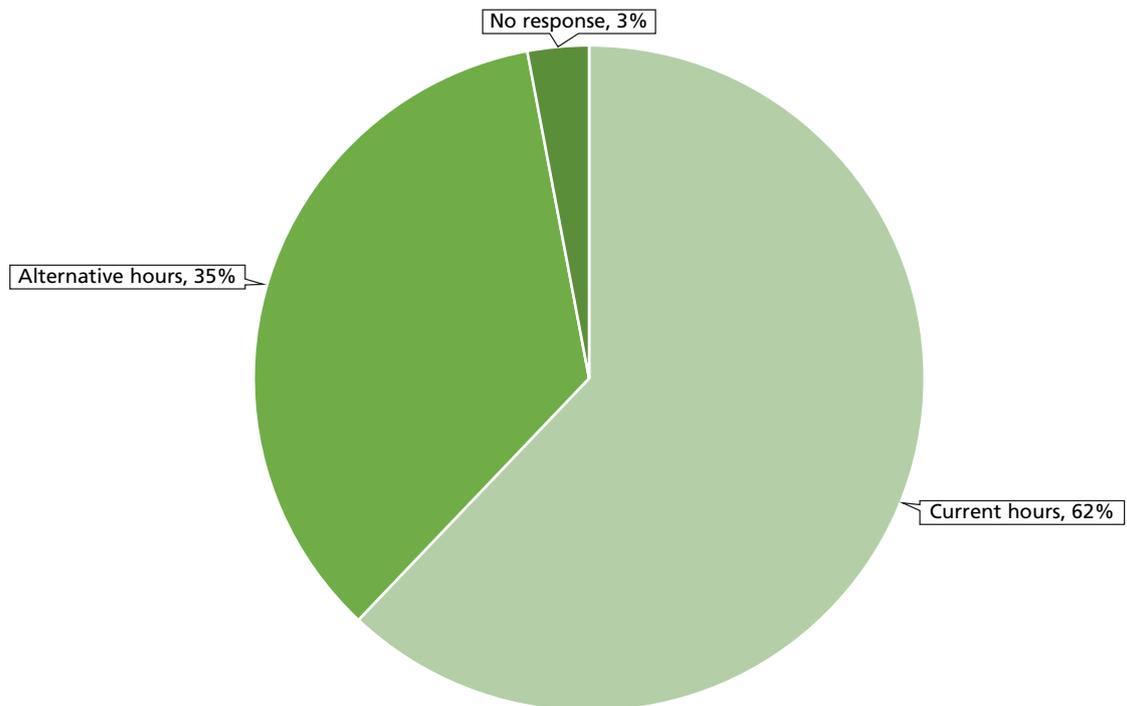


Source: Procedure Committee survey data, Annex 2, table 7

Wednesday

22. There was strong support (62%) amongst respondents for the current sitting times on a Wednesday.

Figure 3: preferences for sitting hours on Wednesdays



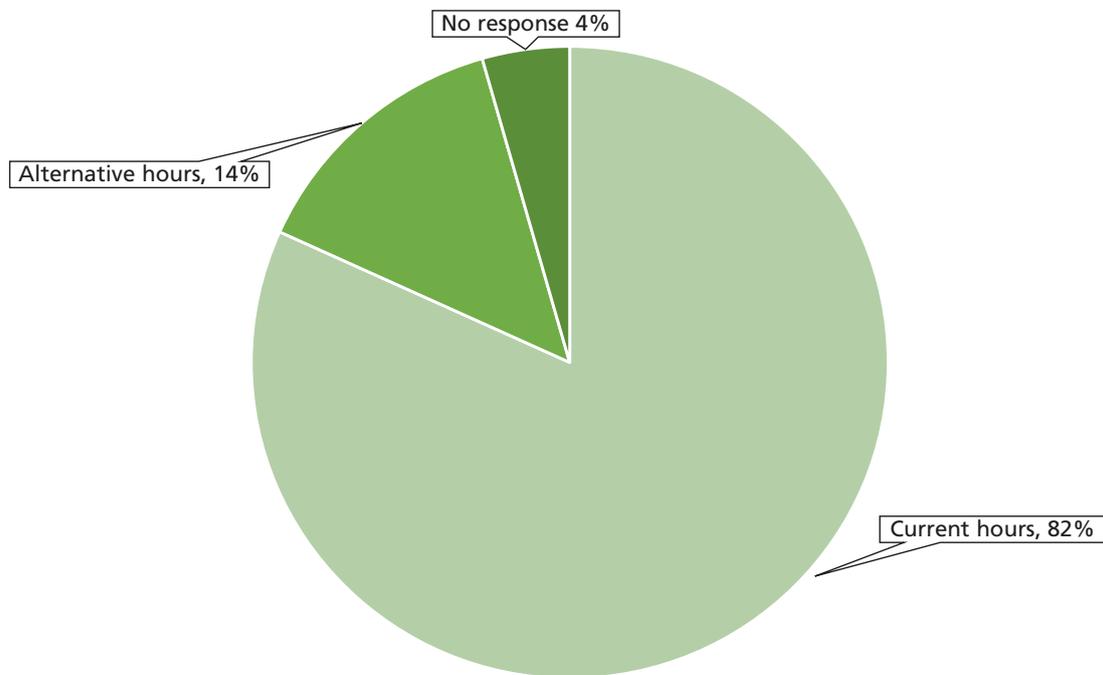
Source: Procedure Committee survey data, Annex 2, table 8

23. As with Tuesdays, there was support in some quarters for sitting times to be standardised on business hours, with the sitting day beginning at 9.30 am. While there was less support for Wednesday hours to revert to a 2.30 pm to 10.30 pm pattern, there was some support for Wednesday sittings to be extended into the evening to allow, for instance, for consideration of private Members' bills.

Thursday

24. There was very little call for change for Thursday sitting times (14%). Many recognised that the 5.30 pm finish time "allows non London based MPs to travel home that evening", although a number of respondents suggested earlier finishing times, some as early as 1.00 pm. Some with particularly far flung constituencies advocated an earlier finish in order to fit in with flight schedules. Where a net reduction in sitting time was proposed, some suggested that the time be made up on Tuesdays or Wednesdays.

Figure 4: preferences for sitting hours on Thursdays



Source: Procedure Committee survey data, Annex 2, table 9

General conclusion

25. **The outcome of the survey has demonstrated a majority for the present sitting hours on each regular sitting day. While Members have advanced a range of views about alternative sitting hours, there is no obvious consensus on an alternative programme.**

Other issues for consideration: the broader effect of the House's current sitting hours

26. Several issues affect the views of Members on sitting hours, including working convenience, caring responsibilities, the balance of time spent on external work and concerns about the effect of sitting hours on the diversity of the House's membership. Professor Sarah Childs of the University of Bristol recently undertook an extensive study of the practices of the House and their effect on diversity and equal representation, including in-depth interviews with Members and their staff.¹² The report of her study recommended that there be "trial sittings of the House based around 'normal business hours'".¹³ The Speaker has convened a reference group on diversity and inclusion to consider the conclusions and recommendations of the report of Professor Childs' study. The report was debated in Westminster Hall on 2 November 2016.¹⁴ We have not evaluated the recommendations on sitting hours made in that report, but we draw it to the House's attention.

12 [The Good Parliament](#), Professor Sarah Childs, Bristol, July 2016

13 *Ibid.*, p. 34

14 [HC Deb, 2 November 2016, cols. 391–417WH](#).

3 Friday sittings

27. Friday sitting times were not included in our Members' survey. In 2012–13 our predecessor committee recommended that “the House be invited to consider whether, subject to further inquiry by this Committee into the procedural and other consequences, it would prefer to leave consideration of private Member's bills on a Friday or to move them to an earlier weekday evening”.¹⁵ A series of inquiries on private Members' bills followed that report. Our predecessor's initial report on private Members' bills looked into the advantages and disadvantages of debating private Members' bills on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as opposed to Fridays.¹⁶ A range of sentiments on the matter were noted. For example, one disadvantage would be the increase in late-night sittings, which would “run counter to the whole thrust of recent sitting hours reforms, which has been to reduce late-night sittings”.¹⁷ Conversely there was support amongst many Members who

regard Fridays as an important day on which to undertake constituency work, and who are reluctant (or recognise the reluctance of colleagues) to forgo a day with their constituents to secure the passage of a Bill which, because of the nature of the rest of proceedings on private Members' bills, is unlikely ever to become law.¹⁸

28. Our most recent report on private Members' bills noted that “the business the House considers on sitting Fridays and the way the House conducts such business is now almost entirely orchestrated by the Government. Rarely are private Members' bills now ever defeated in a vote at Second Reading: bills are either handout bills or talked-out bills”.¹⁹ We observed that Members were now less and less likely to turn up on Fridays to support bills they agreed with, because their time could be better employed elsewhere.

29. Although Members were not specifically asked for their views on Friday sittings, some Members said, in response to our survey, that they would prefer to move consideration of private Members' bills to Tuesdays or Wednesdays. Others expressed a willingness to do away with sitting Fridays: “Additional time in the constituency would be beneficial and I would rather work longer [Monday to Thursday] and always have Friday in the constituency”.²⁰ Support for sittings on Fridays to consider private Members' bills may therefore be considered fragile.

30. We have warned, repeatedly, that failure to reform private Members' bill procedure threatens the future of the sitting Friday. Despite such warnings, the Government has not been prepared to support any reform which addresses the key issues which deter so many members from turning up on Fridays. In our view it will be a priority for the House elected in June 2017 to consider whether it is still productive to hold Friday sittings under the existing procedures in order to consider genuine backbench legislation.

15 Procedure Committee, First Report of Session 2012–13, *Sitting Hours and the Parliamentary Calendar*, HC 330, para 65

16 Procedure Committee, Second Report of Session 2013–14, *Private Members' bills*, HC 188

17 *Sitting Hours and the Parliamentary Calendar*, HC 330, para 61, referenced in *Private Members' bills*, HC 188, para 22

18 *Private Members' bills*, HC 188, para 22

19 Procedure Committee, Second Report of Session 2016–17, *Private Members' bills: observations on the Government response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16*, HC 701, Summary

20 See Annex 2, section D, for full response text

4 General conclusions

31. Owing to the forthcoming dissolution of the House, there will not be an opportunity to discuss sitting hours in this Parliament. *We recommend that the successor committee run a survey of Members in July 2018, to determine the views of the 2017 House on sitting hours. Following publication of the outcome, ideally in October 2018, we recommend that the successor committee seek a debate on sitting hours before the Christmas recess of 2018, with a view to implementation of any change in January 2019.*

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. In the light of the decision of the House of 19 April on an early general election, and the ensuing dissolution, we are unable to proceed further with this exercise in determining the House's sitting hours for the remainder of this Parliament. We are nevertheless making this report to the House elected in 2015. (Paragraph 5)
2. *We recommend that the Procedure Committee in the 2017 Parliament undertake a similar exercise.* (Paragraph 5)
3. *We recommend that the successor Committee in the 2017 Parliament inquire into the provision of 'injury time' in cases where the scheduled business has been substantially curtailed.* (Paragraph 8)

Outcome of the survey

4. The outcome of the survey has demonstrated a majority for the present sitting hours on each regular sitting day. While Members have advanced a range of views about alternative sitting hours, there is no obvious consensus on an alternative programme. (Paragraph 25)

Friday sittings

5. We have warned, repeatedly, that failure to reform private Members' bill procedure threatens the future of the sitting Friday. Despite such warnings, the Government has not been prepared to support any reform which addresses the key issues which deter so many members from turning up on Fridays. In our view it will be a priority for the House elected in June 2017 to consider whether it is still productive to hold Friday sittings under the existing procedures in order to consider genuine backbench legislation. (Paragraph 30)

General conclusions

6. Owing to the forthcoming dissolution of the House, there will not be an opportunity to discuss sitting hours in this Parliament. (Paragraph 31)
7. *We recommend that the successor committee run a survey of Members in July 2018, to determine the views of the 2017 House on sitting hours. Following publication of the outcome, ideally in October 2018, we recommend that the successor committee seek a debate on sitting hours before the Christmas recess of 2018, with a view to implementation of any change in January 2019.* (Paragraph 31)

Annex 1: Text of survey sent to Members

Procedure Committee: review of sitting hours, 2015 Parliament

The responses give to this survey will be treated in the strictest confidence by Committee staff

Do you consider that the House's sitting hours in the 2015 Parliament so far have a positive or negative effect on:

- your own personal effectiveness as a Member of Parliament?
 Positive Negative No effect
- your personal and/or family life?
 Positive Negative No effect
- the effectiveness of the House itself?
 Positive Negative No effect

Taking each day of the week, do you favour:

- on Mondays:
 - Sitting at the current time (2.30–10.30)
 - Alternative sitting hours (please specify) _____
- on Tuesdays:
 - Sitting at the current time (11.30–7.30)
 - Alternative sitting hours (please specify) _____
- on Wednesdays:
 - Sitting at the current time (11.30–7.30)
 - Alternative sitting hours (please specify) _____
- on Thursdays:
 - Sitting at the current time (9.30–5.30)
 - Alternative sitting hours (please specify) _____

Do you have any other observations on current sitting hours?

Name (block capitals please): _____

Year entered Parliament: _____

Annex 2: Data from the Committee's survey

A. Participation

217 Members responded to the survey. Duplicate responses were eliminated. Where a Member submitted more than one response, and the responses were not identical, the responses were merged or the latest received response was recorded.

14 anonymous responses were received: these have not been reckoned for the purposes of the data analysis, though the free text comments sent anonymously have been recorded.

Of the 203 named responses received, 72 were from women Members and 131 from men.

Service in the House

Table 1: Parliament of first entry to the House of survey respondents

Parliament	Women	Men	Total
1970 to 1987	2	11	13
1992	2	10	12
1997	4	14	18
2001	0	9	9
2005	11	13	24
2010	23	37	60
2015	30	37	67
Total	72	131	203

Source: Procedure Committee survey

Geographical location

Table 2: Nation or English region of respondent's constituency

	Women	Men	Total
England:			
East of England	5	16	21
London	12	8	20
East Midlands	4	10	14
West Midlands	5	10	15
North East	2	7	9
North West	16	8	24
South East	7	14	21
South West	4	15	19
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	10	16
Scotland	9	14	23
Northern Ireland	0	9	9
Wales	2	10	12

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

B. Effect of sitting hours

Table 3: Do you consider that the House's sitting hours in the 2015 Parliament so far have had a positive or negative effect on your own personal effectiveness as a Member of Parliament?

	Women	Men	Total
Positive	24 (34%)	35 (26%)	59 (29%)
Negative	32 (45%)	48 (36%)	80 (39%)
No effect	12 (17%)	43 (33%)	55 (27%)
<i>No response</i>	3 (4%)	6 (5%)	9 (4%)

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Table 4: Do you consider that the House's sitting hours in the 2015 Parliament so far have had a positive or negative effect on your personal and/or family life?

	Women	Men	Total
Positive	15 (21%)	23 (17%)	38 (19%)
Negative	37 (52%)	46 (35%)	83 (41%)
No effect	18 (25%)	58 (44%)	76 (37%)
<i>No response</i>	2 (3%)	4 (3%)	6 (3%)

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Table 5: Do you consider that the House's sitting hours in the 2015 Parliament so far have had a positive or negative effect on the effectiveness of the House itself?

	Women	Men	Total
Positive	21 (29%)	34 (26%)	55 (27%)
Negative	33 (46%)	56 (43%)	89 (44%)
No effect	15 (21%)	36 (27%)	51 (25%)
<i>No response</i>	3 (4%)	5 (4%)	8 (4%)

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

C. Preferences for current and alternative sitting hours

Table 6: On Mondays, do you favour sitting at the current hours, or alternative hours?

	Women		Men		Overall	
	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative
England:						
<i>East of England</i>	2	3	10	6	12	9
<i>London</i>	9	3	6	2	15	5
<i>East Midlands</i>	2	2	8	1	10	3
<i>West Midlands</i>	2	3	8	2	10	5
<i>North East</i>	2	0	7	0	9	0
<i>North West</i>	8	7	7	1	15	8
<i>South East</i>	5	2	12	2	17	4
<i>South West</i>	2	2	11	4	13	6
<i>Yorkshire and the Humber</i>	2	4	8	2	10	6
Scotland	6	2	5	8	11	10
Northern Ireland	0	0	8	1	8	1
Wales	2	0	9	1	11	1
Total	42 (58%)	28 (39%)	99 (76%)	30 (23%)	141 (69%)	58 (29%)
<i>No response</i>	2 (3%)		2 (1%)		4 (2%)	

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Principal alternative sitting hours suggested

10.30 am–6.30 pm (3)

11.30 am–7.30 pm (7)

12 noon–10.30 pm (3)

1.00 pm–7.30 pm (3)

2.30 pm–8.30 pm (6)

Finishes no later than 7.30 pm (4)

NOTE: similar suggestions have been brigaded together

Table 7: On Tuesdays, do you favour sitting at the current hours, or alternative hours?

	Women		Men		Overall	
	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative
England:						
<i>East of England</i>	3	2	6	8	9	12
<i>London</i>	8	3	4	4	12	7
<i>East Midlands</i>	2	2	4	6	6	8
<i>West Midlands</i>	4	1	5	5	9	6
<i>North East</i>	2	0	4	2	6	2
<i>North West</i>	8	6	3	5	11	11
<i>South East</i>	5	2	6	8	11	10
<i>South West</i>	3	1	6	7	9	8
<i>Yorkshire and the Humber</i>	3	2	5	5	8	7
Scotland	3	4	7	7	10	11
Northern Ireland	0	0	3	5	3	5
Wales	2	0	8	1	10	1
Total	43 (60%)	23 (32%)	61 (47%)	63 (48%)	104 (51%)	88 (43%)
<i>No response</i>		6 (8%)		7 (5%)		13 (6%)

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Principal alternative sitting hours suggested

9.30 am–5.30 pm (7)

10.30 am–6.30 pm (17)

2.30 pm–10.00 pm (24)

Added time to consider private Members' bills (5)

NOTE: similar suggestions have been brigaded together

Table 8: On Wednesdays, do you favour sitting at the current hours, or alternative hours?

	Women		Men		Overall	
	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative
England:						
East of England	4	1	7	9	11	10
London	8	4	7	1	15	5
East Midlands	3	1	6	3	9	4
West Midlands	4	0	7	3	11	3
North East	2	0	5	1	7	1
North West	8	8	5	3	13	11
South East	7	0	8	6	15	6
South West	2	2	9	5	11	7
Yorkshire and the Humber	3	2	8	2	11	4
Scotland	3	6	6	8	9	14
Northern Ireland	0	0	5	4	5	4
Wales	2	0	7	2	9	2
Total	46 (64%)	24 (33%)	80 (61%)	47 (36%)	126 (62%)	71 (35%)
<i>No response</i>		2 (3%)		4 (3%)		6 (3%)

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Principal alternative sitting hours suggested

9.30 am–5.30 pm (15)

10.30 am–6.30 pm (24)

2.30 pm–10.00 pm (8)

Added time to consider private Members' bills (5)

NOTE: similar suggestions have been brigaded together

Table 9: On Thursdays, do you favour sitting at the current hours, or alternative hours?

	Women		Men		Overall	
	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative	Current	Alternative
England:						
East of England	4	1	12	3	16	4
London	11	0	6	2	17	2
East Midlands	4	0	8	1	12	1
West Midlands	4	1	9	1	13	2
North East	2	0	3	3	5	3
North West	11	3	7	1	18	4
South East	6	1	12	2	18	3
South West	3	1	12	1	15	2
Yorkshire and the Humber	6	0	9	1	15	1
Scotland	7	2	11	2	18	4
Northern Ireland	0	0	8	1	8	1
Wales	2	0	9	1	11	1
Total	60 (83%)	9 (12%)	106 (81%)	19 (14%)	166 (82%)	28 (14%)
<i>No response</i>	3 (4%)		6 (5%)		9 (4%)	

Source: Procedure Committee survey data

Principal alternative sitting hours suggested

9.30 am–2.30 pm (4)

No sitting (3)

NOTE: similar suggestions have been brigaded together

D. Selected comments received from individual Members

Note: Comments have been edited for relevance. Where available, the Member's sex and the nation or region in England of the constituency is given.

- Tuesdays and Wednesdays could be used for private Members' bills. (male, North West)
- I'd move Friday to Wednesday night to free up private Members' bills for a midweek session, which would mean Fridays could be constituency-focused and would not mean the further stay away from home a Friday sitting entails for those a long way from London. (male, Wales)
- "Family Friendly hours" are irrelevant to the vast majority of MPs who have to leave their families in their constituencies because of distances travelled. I would rather sit late on a Tuesday and Wednesday and not sit on a Thursday, which would allow me to spend more time with my family. (female, North West)
- Late night debates are not always of the highest standard or attendance. For those Members and staff with families in London these working hours are difficult. (female, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- We need a holistic review of Westminster Hall sitting times, times of Questions, days of the week that departments answer, sitting Fridays, and pattern of business. We need to look at impact on staff who are running near-empty dining rooms etc. There is some loss of "camaraderie" due to sitting hours. (male, West Midlands)
- Additional time in the constituency would be beneficial, and I would rather work longer Mon-Thurs and always have Friday in the constituency. (male, East of England)
- We should consider moving Friday business to Monday mornings—it would just mean (most) MPs had to travel down the night before if they wanted to attend and wouldn't have to give up a constituency day—this might mean we have to stick to current Monday hours. (female, South West)
- Any return to regular late sittings on Tuesday or Wednesday would be highly retrograde! The present arrangements seem to strike a reasonable balance and should not be subject to any significant change. (female, London)
- As my constituency is over 200 miles away there is no such thing as family friendly hours. (male, Wales)
- Broadly these hours work. The finish is not early but allows more sleep and for those who have family in London (not just London MPs) a chance of seeing them (though young children are still in bed by the time we get home). My general well-being has been improved. Mondays must be kept the same (I am a London member) or it would be unreasonable for members outside London. (female, London)

- Cease Friday sittings for private Members' bills and assign Tuesday evenings and/or Thursday afternoons to these instead. Let Wednesday evenings 7.30pm–9.00pm/9.40pm/10.00pm be available for high-demand Westminster Hall debates, giving good notice and with no rival business in the Chamber. (male, Northern Ireland)
- Changes would encourage more people, particularly those with young families, to enter Parliament. (male, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Changing the hours back is detrimental for MPs with families and particularly for women. (female, North East)
- Changing Tuesday hours to the same as Monday would allow more time for non-Chamber parliamentary activities and more productive use of time. (male, Northern Ireland)
- Consideration could be given to offering a selection of Tuesday evenings for a single private Member's bill as this would not be part of the core sitting of the House but would probably attract a larger number of MPs than a Friday. Perhaps from 6pm–9pm. (female, Scotland.)
- Consistency and a finish time that lines up with other professional jobs should be the guiding factors. As an MP who commutes from out of London these hours allow the maximum flexibility for both those who live in London and outside it. (male, East of England)
- The current hours are a big improvement on previous arrangements. (male, North West)
- Current hours on Tuesdays make select committees less effective because of diary clashes. (male, North West)
- Current Monday sitting hours (especially when extended after a recess) put an unnecessary strain on the working week for Members, their teams and the House staff. (female, West Midlands)
- Definitely need Tuesday sorted to later nights: there are clashes with select committees and one can't be in two places at once. (female, London)
- For anyone working with a family it will never be easy to juggle work and family—but the current hours are about as good as it can be whilst accommodating those who have long journeys at each end of the week. It helps to have some of the morning on a Tuesday and Wednesday for those with children in school. (female, South East)
- For MPs from far away, the sitting hours don't work particularly well. I would be much happier with three long days. I have to leave my house on Monday morning and, if I stay for votes on Thursday, I don't get home until about midnight that night. It would be great if the government would commit to not having UK-wide Government business on Thursdays—Or no business on Thursdays and they could cancel the conference recess. I find it very very difficult to spend enough time in the constituency and to see my family enough with the current sitting

hours. The hours are not family friendly for those of us further away. I also cannot get home if there are 7pm votes. There's no flight that gets me back to [my constituency] on a Wednesday after Wednesday votes. Tinkering isn't going to work for me. In order for this to be fixed for my situation there would require to be wholesale review. If the days were longer then debate would be less curtailed by urgent questions. (female, Scotland)

- For those MPs with children (or indeed those without) it would be helpful to either sit during the hours of (say) 10–5 each day Monday-Thursday, so that those within a commutable distance of approx. 2 hours or less could travel home each day and facilitate a semi normal home life, or alternatively, top-load the sitting hours during Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, shortening the days of the week spent away from home. It is also not beyond the realms of possibility to examine remote voting for those with family responsibilities for an allowed period of time per week. This may allow MPs to travel home to collect children etc. It would probably not be prudent to allow this as a matter of course (I suspect there would be no one left) but to allow certain dispensation for care commitments and quality of family life would not be unreasonable. (female, North West)
- Friday PMB sittings should be moved to a Tuesday evening. (male, South West)
- Fridays seem to be a waste of a sitting day if Members are allowed to talk out bills. This time could best be spent in the constituency. Fridays should not be a sitting day. The House does not have to sit late to be effective. Time just needs to be used constructively and effectively. (female, London)
- Given that my family live in the constituency and my London flat has the size and appeal of a small hotel room, I don't really mind being in Parliament much later on Tuesdays and Wednesdays—especially if that would mean I could get back to the constituency at a decent hour more regularly on Thursdays. (male, West Midlands)
- Having been an MP for many years, I think the current arrangements are vastly preferable to the arrangements when I first became an MP. (male, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Holidays are currently based around English school holidays and it is unfair to us who live in Scotland and don't get to see the kids during that time. (male, Scotland)
- I am a member with a young family. This is not easy, but I fully accept that long sitting hours are necessary to get through Parliamentary business and I think that the current hours provide about the right balance. I like having one late night on a Monday, but I think that any change back to more late nights across the week would have a negative effect on the extent to which people with young children or caring responsibilities (or indeed who value any kind of balance in life at all) would feel able to pursue a career in Parliamentary politics, and that would be to the detriment of our diversity in the House of Commons. I therefore strongly support the retention of the current sitting hours. (Anonymous)

- I am happy with current sitting hours apart from Mondays. For MPs who have to travel to London on Monday morning the 2.30 start and late finish make it a very long day, the effect of which carries over into the week ahead. I would not wish to see longer hours on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday; I feel this would be a retrograde step. (female, North West)
- I am in favour of allowing private Members' business to be debated on Wednesday evenings between 7 and 10 as a substitute for some sitting Fridays. (male, South West)
- I am totally opposed to changing the hours back to 10 pm on Tuesdays. (male, East Midlands)
- The recess period in the summer should be at a time which accommodates all members throughout the UK, with Scotland's schools finishing earlier than England it means that childcare becomes an issue for members with small children. (female, Scotland)
- I do not regard the current sitting hours on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as particularly family friendly. It depends on whether the family is in London during the week and the ages of the children. Leaving Westminster at 7:30pm isn't much use if young children have gone to bed at their appropriate time. If a parent has to get a child to school in the morning, an earlier Committee meeting becomes a problem. The earlier sittings require staff to be on duty at an earlier time. For many constituencies visits to the Palace are now more difficult to arrange, capacity having been reduced by earlier sittings. IPSA's arbitrary decision to deny 96 colleagues accommodation close to Westminster understandably has caused many of them to want to leave early. Yet colleagues not in that category seem to melt away. Collegiality suffers and with it party cohesion. Arranging events at lunchtime outside the House has now become more problematic. It may be a minor point, but the House's catering service has taken a hit. (male, East of England)
- I don't have a fixed view on the exact hours but have a strong preference for all Government business to be dealt with in fewer but longer days. In general this would make life simpler for members with distant constituencies (especially those with families). More predictable hours on the core sitting days would also assist London members needing to arrange childcare. (male, North West)
- I don't have children so I think the views of parents should be given more prominence in this debate. (male, Scotland)
- I don't like the votes/debates on Mondays sometimes going on until midnight or even later! (female, Scotland)
- I fear it's too late to go back to the old system of afternoon starts so I suggest we leave things as they currently are since that is what we now are used to. There is no ideal set of hours as our job does not fit into a 9 to 5 system but Ministerial work and a working life outside Parliament are not assisted by morning sittings. (male, East Midlands)

- I feel that the current sitting hours are not conducive to family life, particularly on the Monday as even for personal safety I do not feel safe traveling on a tube after 10.30 pm. Many colleagues travel back late on Wednesday to their constituencies and even at the earliest I don't get back to [my constituency] until after 11pm. (female, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- I have a travel time from [my constituency] of between 5 and 6 hours. So sitting from 2.30 on a Monday ensures that I can always arrive on time (even if there are problems with the train!). The last train home on a Thursday is at 7.30pm so if the House sat until 7pm on a Thursday I would not be able to get home until Friday lunchtime. This would be detrimental both to my family life and to my ability to meet constituents on Fridays and therefore my ability to represent my constituency effectively. Finishing at 5pm on a Thursday means that even if there are a number of votes I can always get home. (female, North West)
- I know some Members would like to change the times to 9–5 but this would make it very difficult to conduct business outside the Chamber, and also getting in for 9 would mean no constituency activity could take place when the House is sitting. I also find that a late start on a Monday means I can see my family at least on a Monday morning until my return Thursday night. (female, South East)
- I know the hours aren't perfect but, whatever we come up with, can we keep in mind that many of us have children and partners based in the constituency and not London? We need a balance that allows a good system for those based in London or London MPs but that doesn't extend the week for those of us based in our constituencies elsewhere. (female, Wales)
- I strongly agreed with the proposal that would see private Members' business scheduled for Wednesday evenings after Opposition day debates have finished at 7pm. Many members would like to attend more Fridays but it requires sacrificing precious constituency days; it is also an inconvenience to duty Ministers. Consequently PMBs do not get the attention they deserve. (male, East of England)
- I think currently designating Fridays for private Members' bills is a waste of everyone's time as they are invariably blocked and talked out. This is a day that could be spent more productively doing constituency work or other commitments. (male, North East)
- I think in general we should start earlier and finish earlier: that would enable Members with children in London to say goodnight to them and those without to go to the theatre occasionally. I accept Monday has to be as it is and I recognise that the timing of PMQs suits the media on Wednesday, so why not move Tuesday back one hour (not more, as that would create challenges for select committees)?
- I think it is ideal if as much notice as possible can be given for recesses etc. so people can plan how to look after families over half-terms and school holidays. (female, East Midlands)

- I think that Friday's business should be brought forward, possibly to Monday morning, to ensure that there is more engagement. (female, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Ideally I'd have the House finish no later than 7pm to allow Members—especially those with young children—family time in the evening. (male, Scotland)
- I think they work well but would much prefer not to sit till 10.00 on Mondays. When we go beyond the usual sitting hours, it gets very late and we often have to be back by 9.30 or 10.00 the following day. Getting home after midnight and having to leave home at 8.00 or earlier the next day is draining, especially when there is a lot on—particularly difficult for those with daily commutes. I accept we need to balance the needs of those who do long journeys on Mondays and Thursdays, but others have daily commutes of an hour or more each way every day. (Anonymous)
- I travel 200 miles on a Monday to get to Westminster, leaving the house at 9 am; I usually get “home” to my London flat by 10:30 or 11 pm that evening. In other words, I begin the week with a 13.5 to 14 hour day. It makes no sense to require Members to work such long hours; this has a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing, and, I believe, on the quality of work too. Like most MPs, I work 6 days a week; I do feel that this is unreasonable. The dangers of stress to health are real and well-documented, and I ask you to consider this. (female, North West)
- I understand the logic of the hours as they are, and don't have major complaints. However, I think 10pm on a Monday is too late, particularly if there are votes. An electronic voting system would be the obvious answer, but until that happens I have to advocate for an earlier finish. A slightly earlier Thursday finish would also be nice for those with hundreds of miles to travel home. However, far more important than anything I have to say will be submissions by our colleagues with young kids. We should listen to them more than anyone else. (male, Scotland)
- I would prefer fewer sitting Fridays as that is an important day for my constituency work. (female, London)
- I would move Friday sittings to the hours after 7 on Wednesday and 5 on Thursday. (male, South East)
- I would much prefer to do longer hours on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and shorter hours or 1-line whips on Thursday. Living a long way from London it makes no difference to me whether we finish at 7.30 or carry on until midnight in the week. (male, Wales)
- I would naturally prefer NOT to sit so late on Mondays but the key is reliability which is more in the gift of the Whips. it makes it very difficult to plan family and private life and childcare etc if hours change at short notice. (female, east of England)
- I would strongly oppose changes to the sitting hours that would involve later starts and later finishes. I have a young family and the changes post 2010 have

had a positive impact, although they are far from perfect. I would not suggest any changes on Monday as it allows those who represent constituencies further from London to travel. (Anonymous)

- If away from home rather than an MP whose home is London, I do not want to do 9 to 5 because many MPs will be very lonely and depressed having every evening free. Collegiality has diminished since the hours were reduced. (female, East Midlands)
- I'm concerned that the dates of recess do not sufficiently coincide with school holidays. This does not affect me as I don't have children, but I really do feel for colleagues. (male, London)
- It is incredibly important to have the later sitting hours on Mondays, to enable Members to come up to London from constituencies. It also means that I can hold a (very) brief constituency meeting on Monday morning, if the matter is urgent. The travel time [from my constituency] is 2.5 to 3 hours, and therefore finishing earlier mid-week does not make Parliament any more family friendly, as I am here in London anyway and therefore away from my family. Therefore the sitting hours per se do not affect my personal / family life, and if they changed I would not be able to get back to the constituency to see them in any event. I have found that the balance is about right. (male, South West)
- Given the distance from Parliament to my constituency it would make sense to be able to vote remotely on occasions. (female, Scotland)
- It would be good if we could never sit on Fridays and move PMBs to Tuesday evenings. Earlier finish times on Wednesdays help me get home to the constituency when it's a one line whip on Thursdays. (female, North west)
- It's an excellent balance between all the different pressures. I think the arguments that won the day in the last Parliament have proved effective and to strike a good balance: for MPs with families in London they allow normal family life on Tuesday & Wednesday, and for MPs with families in the constituency they allow travel in on Monday morning and back on Thursday night. Later sittings on Tuesdays and Wednesdays would be a highly retrograde step for the quality of life on the many MPs who balance the pressures of an MP's life by having their family in London. Earlier sitting on Mondays or later on Thursdays would make life unnecessarily harder for MPs whose families live in the constituency. (male, East of England)
- Monday ending at 1030 is an anachronism. (male, London)
- Monday nights go far too late. (male, South East)
- More use of backbench business could be made on Tuesday evenings with debates in the Chamber. This would provide a balance for those members who have to commute home each evening and those who stay in London. (male, East of England)
- My constituency is 2.5 hours away by train and road. If I'm down in London on a Tuesday then I/we may as well be sitting until 10pm. It would also improve

the atmosphere if we sat until 10pm on Tuesdays. Rise earlier on Wednesday so those returning to their constituencies can catch more reliable and earlier trains. We should only sit beyond 10pm in emergency situations. I have changed my mind having supported rising earlier on Tuesdays. (female, East Midlands)

- I strongly argue against any suggestions that the House should sit 9am–5pm Monday to Thursday should that be suggested by others. It is not ideal that we sit into the evening three days a week but select committees need to be able to meet when ideally the House is not sitting and the time in the mornings is hugely useful for giving constituents tours of Parliament and taking the myriad meetings that one requires to keep on top of whatever policy or constituency issues are at hand. The 8 hours each day that the House sits is not the totality of a MP’s working day. The hours beforehand are equally important and we cannot afford to lose them. (male, South West)
- The sitting hours now are ridiculous. It is fixed between the Whips and has become a 9–5 job but isn’t even that any more. More often than not you only have to effectively be in Parliament for 2 days. It is utter rubbish that we are laden with work compared to how it used to be. It seems to me that half the time people are scratching round for things to do or attending “pointless events”. (male, East of England)
- Putting the Tuesday sitting hours back would help colleagues attend the Chamber and select committees and Westminster Hall. There are currently too many clashes. (male, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- Shorter sitting hours are detrimental. There is less time for Members to meet and discuss issues informally, and there is less time to interact with colleagues on both sides of the House. The House is less collegiate—more like a tourist attraction, and less like a living, breathing group of colleagues. (female, London)
- Sitting from 11.30 to 7.30 pm means that we are always late for any evening event. Starting earlier would allow most MPs who see their families to still do so but make it significantly more civilised. I don’t see why we need so many hours in Thursdays on current practice. (male, East Midlands)
- Sitting an extra hour on Tuesdays and Wednesday and reducing Thursday would facilitate an earlier Thursday return to the constituency and would enable attendance at evening meetings and even a hour or so at home. Fridays are always used for meetings in the constituency with agencies and business, Saturday campaigning and community groups, and very often Sundays. (female, North West)
- Sitting four days is not family friendly. It would be much better to sit for longer on three days than to spread it out over four. Later starts would also help those with caring responsibilities, e.g. the school run or mealtimes for babies. Separately, returning for two weeks in September is bizarre and is the worst of gesture politics. It costs the House a ridiculous amount, not only in Members’ costs but also due to all the refurbishment work having to cease and recommence, e.g. scaffolding etc. It would be much better for the House to remain in recess until

after Party Conferences—and this would provide Members with more family time to compensate a little for working hours over the rest of the year. (male, South East)

- Sitting hours have limited, if any, impact on my work/personal life as my constituency is more than 200 miles from Westminster, but I supported in particular the changes to Tuesday in the interests of those who can get home to their families that evening. To enable those who live far off to get home before bedtime on a Thursday I'd favour extending working hours slightly on a Tuesday or Wednesday and reducing them on Thursdays. (male, North East)
- Sitting so late on Mondays means that we are tired for the rest of the week. There is a difficulty in getting Members to Westminster any earlier, however. Late sittings beyond 10.30 are another issue. Tiredness does not make for good decision making. (female, Scotland)
- Sitting until 10pm is really destructive for MPs with young children, including MPs from outside of London who bring very young children down to London during the week but do not have friends and family to help with babysitting. It is also really unhelpful to decision-making to still be debating and voting on important issues late at night. There are many other aspects of the way the House operates, including the fact that we vote throughout the day rather than at a defined time, and that we cannot vote electronically, that cause real problems for families. While these are outside of the scope of this consultation it would be helpful if they were considered elsewhere. (female, North West)
- The present sitting hours are fine, but I would like to see debates being planned as best as possible two weeks ahead, and amendments earlier too. (male, Northern Ireland)
- Regardless of marital/parental responsibilities, most of us want to be able to work long and hard for three days in the House, then return to do constituency based work (whilst being able to see our families—we have as much right as safe seat MPs based in London) for the other four days of the week. Safe seat MPs and those in Government jobs seem to think that Parliament is their plaything. Tuesday mornings are non-starters now for anything offsite—Select Committee visits, constituency stuff or Parliamentary Group visits. The current hours only suit 'safe seat' MPs predominantly based in or close to central London from before they were MPs. (male, East Midlands)
- Standard sitting hours are not so much of a problem. A much bigger issue is the unpredictability of business, leading to no possibility of forward planning. A system that allows important votes almost any time during a six or seven hour window is unworkable. We also need to look at the use of "protected time" especially on Mondays when there is much greater chance of urgent questions or statements. Bearing in mind that many MPs leave home before 7 o'clock on a Monday morning, we're already working a 17-hour day and any extension beyond 10.30pm should only be allowed in circumstances which are both unforeseeable and unavoidable. (Anonymous)

- Start Monday and Wednesday slightly earlier. Mondays can be a killer for the rest of the week if we end very late. (female, South west)
- That the House runs all the way through the day with no lunch or dinner break means that often I don't have time to eat. I also feel that the timing could be better managed, by setting time limits earlier in debates.
- The 11.30 start on Tuesdays eats into time for Select Committee meetings, Ministers' Departmental meetings, other bilateral meetings, and face time with our office staff, whilst leaving Members, particularly those outside the London travel area, kicking their heels in the evening. A second evening sitting increases time for collegiate meetings with colleagues—the sort of informal contacts which are insufficiently valued in making the House run smoothly. (male, London)
- The current distribution of sitting hours across the week is not efficient, particularly in striking a balance between constituency and House duties. Greater certainty would also be helpful. My proposals would concentrate sitting hours on a Mon/Tues/Wed. By finishing at 230pm on a Thurs (which would replace sitting Fridays), members would be able to plan constituency events on Thurs evening and Friday with greater certainty. (male, East of England)
- The current hours continue to make conflicts between important Statements and UQs and normal lunchtimes. They also create clashes between Select and other Committee meetings and make it hard to reserve time dedicated to constituency matters. It takes time for new MPs to realise the advantages of beginning at 2.30pm, such as being able to avoid clashes when important UQs or Statements are announced at very short notice. Currently, one can never make arrangements for lunch meetings without running the risk of such a clash. (male, South East)
- The current sitting hours are still quite anti-social—'normal' working hours on all days except Mondays would not prevent Members from working later, should they choose to do so, but would allow others to have a better work-life balance. It would also enable some staff (Clerks, catering, some security personnel) to work more regular hours. For those of us with lengthy commutes to our constituencies, a 7.30pm end to business on Wednesday is too late to catch last planes and trains if we are hoping to leave London that evening. (female, Scotland)
- The current times on Friday seem appropriate, and allow plenty of time to return to the constituency for evening surgeries. (male, South West)
- The early finish on Tuesday and Wednesday is no help to family life for Members whose constituencies are more than an hour or so travel from Westminster. At the same time, the fact that the Chamber sits at the same time as Select and Bill Committees places huge pressure on MPs over juggling competing demands on their time. If the Chamber sitting started at 2.30, the mornings would be freed for Committee and constituency work. (male, South East)
- The fact that the House starts sitting later than 9.30am three days a week is very helpful to me as a parent—since it means I can take my children to school on those days. If we started and finished earlier every day I would see less of them. The 11.30 start on Tuesday gives time for our select committee to hold a hearing

before departmental questions. I would prefer to start earlier on Monday and finish earlier as the late nights do take their toll on health. That said, I appreciate for some MPs it's difficult to get to Westminster any earlier, and I would not want to make people leave home on Sunday evenings as that's terrible for family life. (female, South East)

- The lack of certainty around timings for debates and votes makes planning ahead very difficult. It would be better to have set vote times. Overall the times are not family friendly and there is much that could be learned from the Scottish Parliament. (male, Scotland)
- The late finish on Mondays is tiring, as that is the day when many MPs travel. It would be better to have an earlier finish on Mondays and not to let business run late on Mondays (which it often does). The late finish on Mondays is not good for either personal or family life. I do not support any return to late finishes on other days of the week. Parliament should start to work normal hours. (female, North West)
- The late night on Monday, especially after 10pm, is not good for policy making. (female, South East)
- The late sitting on Monday assumes that all Members live within inner London and are not reliant on trains (rather than the Underground which runs regularly after 10.30pm). In fact, a large minority of Members have to use commuter trains which are very irregular by 10.30pm. (female, North West)
- The main problem arises when business drifts past the normal hour of interruption. This is usually a matter of poor House management, not Standing Orders. Clarity about sitting hours lets people plan ahead. (male, East of England)
- The Monday late sittings do make it very difficult for family life balance, and Tuesday/Wednesday evening sittings mean that many of us do not get home till 8 or 9pm in the evening, and till 11 or midnight on Wednesday to our constituency. The House should rise much earlier when possible. (female, North West)
- The most challenging issues when hours are extended at late notice. This has a catastrophic effect on pre booked trains, babysitters etc (female, Yorkshire and the Humber)
- The rough balance works well but I would query whether it would be better to revert to sitting later on Tuesdays so as to have more time when Members can be around in the evenings and more mornings when the House can be open to the public. The early finish on Thursday certainly makes sense if Members are expected to get back to their constituencies. (male, West Midlands)
- The Tuesday sitting hours create conflict between Chamber and committee work. They do not add to family friendly arrangements for Members outside London. They have also reduced Member use of catering facilities. Many would prefer a slightly earlier finish on a Thursday afternoon, in order to return to the constituency, in return for a later finish on Tuesday evenings. (male, South West)

- There should be better scheduling of parliamentary business on Mondays after recess when inevitably we seem to have UQs and statements. It is crazy starting main business on such days at 6pm and then going on until beyond midnight. How can this help the quality of debate, especially when many colleagues have important select committees the following morning? (female, West Midlands)
- Sitting hours cannot work for everyone, but, as someone who is required to commute every day, the late Monday shifting to an early Tuesday is very wearing. Those of us in the outer London area are badly disadvantaged. This is exacerbated by IPSA rules which forbid claiming for hotel rooms. (female, East of England)
- Things get very truncated when there are multiple statements: give the Speaker the right to extend the sitting by one hour to compensate. (male, North West)
- Please keep the late start on Mondays, as I and other MPs who live a long distance from Westminster would otherwise have to travel up on Sunday nights, which would be hugely disruptive to our families. (female, South west)
- Thursday has become a non-day, with poor attendance, and I think this is unfortunate. (male, South West)
- Thursday hours are a nightmare for Urgent Questions. There simply isn't enough time for either backbenchers or either front bench to prepare for a UQ at 10:30, when they get the notice sometimes as late as just after 9am. (male, London)
- Thursday mornings should be reserved for Government business and the afternoons for backbench and Opposition business. This would ensure greater attendance and interaction in both parts of the day. It would also mean we wouldn't have to sit on Fridays, as MPs often book constituency events many weeks in advance and then end up having to cancel at short notice on those occasions when something is announced. This causes understandable resentment amongst constituents. (male, London)
- Too many of the Mondays end up going well beyond 10pm: that exhausts MPs at the start of the week and reduces their effectiveness. Also, this happens at short notice, making it hard for those with childcare responsibilities. (female, West Midlands)
- Sitting hours are utterly chaotic and would not be acceptable in any other workplace; they create a dysfunctional way of working and undermine Members' abilities to be effective in holding the process of government to account. (male, Scotland)
- We could extend Westminster Hall sitting hours, as this is a good way to hold Ministers to account without taking up Chamber time. (male, East of England)
- We have lost much of the collegiate nature of the Commons. That happens through dinners, meetings, receptions. People push off home now apart from when the Whips require them to be here. I may be exaggerating my claim by advocating the *status quo ante*, but some move towards it, at least on a Tuesday, would be good. (male, South west)

- We need better organisation of business. Can we limit the number of UQs or statements, or at least the time they are allowed, on days where the following parliamentary business is lengthy? We do our constituents no service when we are still there beyond 'reasonable' hours. (female, East of England)
- When a sitting week finishes early (e.g. on a Tuesday or Wednesday before recess), Thursday hours should be kept in the same way a Monday hours are kept when the House meets for the first time in a week on a day other than Monday. (This would not apply when for any reason the House only meets on one day of that week). A fixed 'decision time' and electronic voting to reduce the time spent in division lobbies would be considerably more effective in helping to manage time than any particular change to sitting hours. There is potential to use Monday mornings, Tuesday evenings and/or backbench time on Thursdays for PMB business, and to abolish sitting Fridays other than in exceptional circumstances. (male, Scotland.)
- Whilst the late sittings on Mondays can create a very long working day and be tiring, an earlier start time might mean having to travel down to Westminster on Sunday evening which would have a very negative impact on family time at the weekend. I really value being able to see my daughter off to school on Monday morning before heading down to Parliament. Having worked under the original hours at the start of the 2010 Parliament, I think the new hours are a better compromise for an MP from outside London whose family live in the constituency. (female, East Midlands)
- It's in no-one's interest for us to sit late into the evening. It is not conducive to effective working. And it's bad for family life. The voting system also extends the working day totally needlessly. Three votes via the lobbies can add as much as an hour. (Anonymous)

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 19 April 2017

Members present:

Mr Charles Walker, in the Chair

James Duddridge	Sir Edward Leigh
Patricia Gibson	Mr David Nuttall
Patrick Grady	

Draft Report (*Sitting hours of the House: response to a survey of Members*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 31 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Annexes 1 and 2 agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 26 April at 2.30 pm.]

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in parenthesis after the HC printing number.

Session 2015–16

First Report	Government proposals for English votes for English laws Standing Orders: Interim Report	HC 410 (HCWS (2015–16) 251)
Second Report	Notification of the arrest of Members	HC 649
Third Report	Private Members' bills	HC 684
Fourth Report	Programming: evaluation of the trial of new arrangements for tabling amendments	HC 823

Session 2016–17

First Report	Monitoring of written Parliamentary questions: progress report for Session 2015–16	HC 191
Second Report	Private Members' bills: Observations on the Government response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2015–16 HC 684	HC 701 (HC 937)
Third Report	English votes for English laws Standing Orders: report of the Committee's technical evaluation	HC 189 (Cm 9430)
Fourth Report	Use of the Welsh language in the Welsh Grand Committee at Westminster	HC 816 (HC 1043)
Fifth Report	Authorising Government expenditure: steps to more effective scrutiny	HC 190
First Special Report	Private Members' bills: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2016–17	HC 937
Second Special Report	Use of the Welsh language in the Welsh Grand Committee at Westminster: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1043