



HOUSE OF LORDS

Conduct Committee

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2nd Report of Session 2019–21

# Remote voting and the Code of Conduct

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### *The Conduct Committee*

The Conduct Committee is appointed each session by the House of Lords to keep under review the Code of Conduct, the Guide to the Code, and the Code of Conduct for Members' Staff; and to oversee the operation of the Codes of Conduct and the work of the House of Lords Commissioner for Standards.

### *Current membership*

The members of the Conduct Committee are:

Baroness Anelay of St Johns  
Lord Brown of Eaton-under-Heywood  
Baroness Donaghy  
Baroness Hussein-Ece  
Lord Mance (Chair)  
Cindy Butts (lay member)  
Mark Castle (lay member)  
Andrea Coomber (lay member)  
Dr Vanessa Davies (lay member)

### *Further information*

The Codes of Conduct and Guide to the Code are available at [www.parliament.uk/hl-code](http://www.parliament.uk/hl-code), and the Registers of Interests at [www.parliament.uk/hlregister](http://www.parliament.uk/hlregister).

### *Contact details*

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerks of the Conduct Committee, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW (telephone 020 7219 8796/1624).

# Remote voting and the Code of Conduct

1. A remote voting system has been agreed in principle by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. This system will allow members to vote in divisions of the House online during the continuing pandemic. The system is now being developed and, subject to sign-off by the Procedure and Privileges Committee, it is hoped it will be rolled out in the week beginning 15 June.
2. Normally it is impossible for members to misuse the voting system, because they must attend in person in the division lobbies and be counted by a Teller or in the Chamber and give their name to a clerk: both Tellers and clerks will recognise them. The rules of the House prohibit voting by proxy (Standing Order 60). There is concern that there is more scope to misuse a remote voting system, most probably by members asking somebody to cast their vote for them. The Committee were asked to consider this issue which we did at our meeting on 21 May.
3. It is our view that it should be a breach of the Code of Conduct to misuse the new remote voting system by having any other person vote on behalf of a member. Having someone else vote on behalf of a member should be considered a serious breach of the Code.
4. An investigation into alleged abuse of remote voting would, as usual, be conducted by the Commissioner for Standards in response to a complaint, whether by another member of the House or by a member of the public.
5. **We therefore propose the insertion of a new provision in the Code of Conduct:**

**“16B. Members may not allow another member or other person to cast a vote on their behalf during any electronic division in proceedings of the House or its committees. Any member who does so commits a breach of this Code which the House would view with the utmost seriousness.”**