

## **Statement on Modernisation Committee from the Inclusive Parliament coalition**

### **February 2025**

To mark the [United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) on 3 December 2024, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and [STAMMA](#), the stammering charity, brought together the [Inclusive Parliament coalition](#).

The coalition was made up of over 30 organisations united in submitting a joint submission to the House of Commons' Modernisation Committee. The coalition highlighted how the Commons' current standards, culture and working practices, and parliamentary procedures, can act as barriers to people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference from engaging with Parliament. We highlighted how this can effectively, if not actively, exclude, people from taking part in parliamentary debates or engaging with the political process.

#### **Inclusive Parliament coalition evidence published**

In our [evidence](#), newly published by the Modernisation Committee, we highlighted what we think needs to happen to make the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the wider parliamentary estate, and the political process more generally, more inclusive of its members, its staff, and the people engaging with Parliament, who have communication disability, difficulty, or difference.

#### **Modernisation Committee memorandum on next steps**

At the same time as publishing our evidence, the Modernisation Committee also issued a [memorandum on next steps](#).

**Much to welcome:** We were pleased to see that this echoed much of our evidence on improving accessibility for MPs, staff and the public.

**More to do:** While this is welcome, there is more to do. We are disappointed that there is not a greater focus on the procedures of parliamentary debates, as these can prevent or limit some MPs with communication disabilities from taking an active part in debates.

## **What the memorandum says on improving accessibility**

The memorandum states:

### **1. Improving accessibility for MPs, staff and the public**

This package of work will look at the accessibility of the physical parliamentary estate, and of House of Commons procedure and practices, and, more broadly, the accessibility of parliamentary language and information. It will consider the work that is already under way, as well as what more can be done.

Multiple responses to the call for views discussed the accessibility of the House of Commons to MPs, staff and visitors with disabilities, with this emerging as a particularly strong theme. Among internal parliamentary stakeholders, there was a view that the process for requesting reasonable adjustments could be improved. Responses that mentioned improving accessibility emphasised that this was a crucial part of ensuring that the House of Commons was inclusive and representative.

Some argued that parliamentary language and information about how the House of Commons works could be made more accessible, particularly in relation to the legislative process. To narrow the gap between the House of Commons and the public, it is important that the way the House works is easier to understand. It is also crucial that the tone of debates, and behaviour in debates, reflects what the public expects of its elected MPs.

## **Next steps**

We look forward to seeing how the Committee takes forward this piece of work and hope it will work with the coalition on improved accessibility to members, staff, and the public, with communication disability, difficulty, or difference. As part of that, we hope that the Committee will have a particular focus on how parliamentary procedures can be made accessible to MPs with communication disability, difficulty, or difference, rather than exclude them.

Although out of the scope of the Commons' Committee, work is needed in the House of Lords on this too.

## **New coalition member**

At the same time as welcoming the Modernisation Committee's memorandum, the Inclusive Parliament coalition is also delighted to welcome a new member: CLAPA (the Cleft Lip and Palate Association).

## **More information**

For more information, please contact [peter.just@rcslt.org](mailto:peter.just@rcslt.org) or [elissa.cregan@rcslt.org](mailto:elissa.cregan@rcslt.org)