

Inclusive Parliament coalition statement on Modernisation Committee report

22 January 2026

Summary

The Inclusive Parliament Coalition welcomes the House of Commons cross-party Modernisation Committee's Access to the House of Commons and its Procedures report.

We are grateful for the way the Committee engaged with us as it worked on its inquiry. We support its call for accessibility to become a major priority for the House of Commons and be woven into the fabric of what it does.

However, some of the key issues affecting signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference are not addressed and there is a lack of specificity about how other issues will be.

We urge the House of Commons Administration to accept the Committee's recommendations and to work with us, and other relevant organisations, and signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, and difference on the wider practical solutions we have suggested on how Parliament can start to be made more accessible to and inclusive of everyone.

What we welcome

The Inclusive Parliament coalition welcomes the report and that it has been produced in accessible formats. We are delighted that our written evidence and the oral evidence given on our behalf by speech and language therapist Gillian Rudd is quoted, including on:

- accessibility of the current Parliamentary estate;
- culture of accessibility;
- parliamentary language; and
- accessible formats.

There are specific recommendations that we welcome. With appropriate input from the Coalition into how they are implemented, these have the potential significantly to improve accessibility for signers and people with communication differences, including on:

Accessibility of the current Parliamentary estate

- Paragraph 37: External Accessibility Advisory Group.

- Paragraph 38: accessibility audit recommendations.
- Paragraph 57: training on accessibility, including on how to support disabled and neurodivergent people.
- Paragraph 58: accessibility being a major priority, alongside security and safety.
- Paragraph 59: identifying and supporting accessibility requirements.
- Paragraph 61: House of Commons Executive Board communication campaign.

House of Commons Procedures and Processes

- Paragraph 68: reasonable adjustments for MPs.
- Paragraph 108: 'Reasonable adjustments card' for MPs.

Communicating what the House of Commons does

- Paragraph 142: explainers of terms, processes and procedures and the co-design of other resources with and aimed at disabled and neurodivergent people and people with learning difficulties.
- Paragraph 151: working group to consider the merits of bringing the production of accessible formats in-house.

What needs to happen

To ensure that accessibility to signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference is embedded across the parliamentary estate, we are calling for:

- the coalition to be one of the organisations included on the External Accessibility Advisory Group;
- the accessibility audit to include accessibility issues affecting signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, and difference;
- the training on accessibility to include mandatory training on communication accessibility, for example, through training such as that provided by Communication Access UK;
- the definition of accessibility to include accessibility to signers and people with communication differences;
- the identification and support of accessibility requirements to include signing and communication requirements;
- the House of Commons Executive Board's communications campaign to include information on signing and communication differences and to be pitched at an appropriate reading level; and

- the recognition that information being made available in accessible formats will help to improve the accessibility and understanding of Parliament to everyone, not just to signers and people with communication differences.

What more needs to happen

We are pleased that the report explicitly states, 'This inquiry is just the beginning of making Parliament a more accessible place to work.' As the House of Commons authorities take forward this work, they must also address the totality of the issues we highlighted in our written and oral evidence. These include the following areas where, disappointingly, the report does not make recommendations on and adopt the practical solutions we put forward.

- **Culture of and behaviour in debates** - the way debates in the Chamber of the House of Commons are conducted, and the way in which some MPs can act on occasion, can render parliamentary business inaccessible to MPs who sign or who have communication differences.
- **Parliamentary procedure and processes** - while it is welcome that issues such as 'bobbing' are proposed to be addressed, other procedural and process issues that have the potential very significantly to affect accessibility to signers and people with communication differences, such as time limits and the need to use specific forms of language, must also be addressed.

Beyond that, given the lack of specifics in the report on these areas, we repeat the calls we made in our supplementary evidence:

- **Embed inclusive language and communication support into Standing Orders and Erskine May** - to ensure members are explicitly entitled to reasonable adjustments, including the provision of extra time, the use of communication professionals, visual supports, or alternative forms of expression, including BSL (British Sign Language), and augmentative and alternative communication.
- **Establish a confidential MP access needs register within the Parliamentary Digital Service** - this should be MP-owned, uphold privacy, and ensure continuity across procedural, digital, and administrative functions – avoiding ad hoc solutions and removing the burden of repeated disclosure.

More fundamentally, the work to improve the accessibility to and inclusion of Parliament to signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference must also involve

the House of Lords. We were pleased to see the [House of Lords Autism Act 2009 Committee's comments](#) on this in its recent report.

The Coalition stands ready to help make a reality of the Committee's vision of 'a new dawn for accessibility in the House of Commons' so that finally Parliament represents everyone.

The Inclusive Parliament Coalition

The Inclusive Parliament Coalition is made up of over 30 organisations calling for the United Kingdom Parliament to be inclusive of and accessible to signers and people with communication disability, difficulty, or difference.