



House of Commons

**GUIDE TO THE RULES ON
ALL-PARTY GROUPS**

March 2012

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INTRODUCTION

What are All-Party Groups (APGs)?

- 1) APGs are informal, cross-party interest groups that have no official status within Parliament and are not accorded any powers or funding by it. They should not be confused with select committees, which are formal institutions of the House.
- 2) There are a great number of APGs. They cover many and diverse fields such as health, education and transport. Some exist to foster links with other countries and parliaments, others to address a particular issue, and a couple exist mainly for social reasons (eg some sports groups). Some APGs have existed for many decades whereas others come and go in response to issues of the day.
- 3) APGs are essentially run by and for Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. Mostly they are run by backbenchers, though ministers may also be officers or members of APGs and many groups choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities.

Useful contacts for advice on APGs

- 4) A range of information relating to APGs can be found at www.parliament.uk (look under 'All-Party Groups' in the A-Z Index on Parliament's home page).
- 5) This Guide is principally to inform the officers and staff of APGs about how to comply with the rules governing APGs. For advice on **registration rules** please contact:

The Assistant Registrar
Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 0401
Fax: 020 7219 0490
Email: standardscommissioner@parliament.uk

- 6) For advice on **communications** matters such as the presentation of reports and the use of the crowned portcullis, please contact:

Department of Chamber and Committee Services
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 6208

- 7) For enquiries about the use of **meeting rooms** in the House of Commons please call 020 7219 3090 (or 020 7219 6049 for facilities in the House of Lords).
- 8) For enquiries about the use of **banqueting facilities** in the House of Commons please call 020 7219 4804 (or 020 7219 3356 for facilities in the House of Lords).
- 9) To place a Notice in the **All-Party Notices** operated by the Whips please contact allpartynotice@parliament.uk (or call 020 7219 4333). Tell the Whips the details of the meeting (ie day, date, time, place, name of your group, whether the meeting is anything other than an ordinary one – eg an AGM), and whom they should contact if they have any queries.
- 10) For enquiries about parliamentary **security passes** for APG staff please contact the Pass Office on 0207 219 2970.
- 11) For information about the **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association** or the **Inter-Parliamentary Union**, and possible affiliation to these organisations please call 020 7219 5373 (CPA) or 020 7219 3013 (IPU).
- 12) For enquiries about the provision of official House **stationery** please call 020 7219 3080.

PART 1: THE REGISTER OF ALL-PARTY GROUPS

About the Register

Purpose of the Register

- 13) The Register of All-Party Groups was set up by a Resolution of the House of Commons in 1985, primarily to show which APGs are recognised by Parliament, who their officers are, and information about the source and extent of financial and material assistance received by APGs from outside Parliament.

Administration of the Register

- 14) The Register is compiled by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, which publishes an updated edition of it every 6 weeks approximately when the House of Commons is sitting and also provides advice on the rules applying to APGs. The most recent edition of the Register may be viewed at www.parliament.uk by looking under 'All-Party Groups' in the A-Z Index on the home page there.
- 15) The Committee on Standards and Privileges advises the House of Commons on the rules relating to the registration of APGs and oversees the administration of those rules by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The Administration Committee also has an interest in APGs, chiefly in the use made of the House's facilities by groups, and advises the House on that aspect of the regulation of groups.
- 16) Complaints, whether from Members, the public or anyone else alleging that a group has acted in breach of the rules on APGs, should in the first instance be sent to the Registrar of Members' Interests in the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The Registrar will then seek to resolve the complaint, though in serious cases the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards may seek the agreement of the Committee on Standards and Privileges to undertake a formal investigation.

Applying for inclusion on the Register

The Registration Form for All-Party Groups

- 17) Any group whose membership:
 - is open to all Members of the House of Commons and House of Lords, and
 - includes at least 20 Members (each of whom must be a Member of the House of Commons or House of Lords), comprising: at least 10 Members

who are from the same political party¹ as the government, and at least 10 who are not from the government party² (of whom at least 6 must be from the main opposition party), and

- includes at least one officer who is a Member of the House of Commons

is required to complete the ‘Registration Form for All-Party Groups’ so that the group’s details may be recorded on the Register of All-Party Groups. The form is available at www.parliament.uk (look under ‘All-Party Groups’ in the A-Z Index on the home page there), or from the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

Cross-party groups that do not meet all of the criteria listed above do not qualify for registration. The Chair of such a group should, however, include in his or her entry on the Register of Members’ Financial Interests details of any financial or material support received in that capacity, subject to the rules governing that Register. Members requiring advice on this point should contact the Registrar on 020 7219 3277.

Implications of being on the Register

- 18) Though not accorded any powers by the House, by being on the Register a group has certain advantages over unregistered groups in that:
 - a) Only registered cross-party groups are recognised by Parliament.
 - b) Only registered cross-party groups are allowed to call themselves an ‘All-Party Parliamentary Group’ or ‘Associate Parliamentary Group’ or use any part of those terms (with the exception of the word ‘group’) in their title.
 - i) Part of a registered group’s title is determined by whether or not persons other than Members of either the House of Commons or the House of Lords are allowed full membership (ie voting rights). If they are, then the words ‘Associate Parliamentary Group’ must be included in the group’s title; if they are not, the words ‘All-Party Parliamentary Group’ must be included instead.
 - ii) The rest of the group’s title should merely reflect the group’s subject so that the latter is obvious from its title alone (eg ‘All-Party Parliamentary Group on *Taxation*’).
 - c) With the exception of groups that:
 - i) are holding an inaugural election of officers in order to apply for inclusion on the Register, or
 - ii) have been removed from the Register but are holding an AGM in order to apply for reinstatement on it

¹ Or parties, in the case of a coalition government.

² Or parties, in the case of a coalition government.

only registered cross-party groups may advertise their meetings on the All-Party Notices circulated by the Whips.

- d) Registered cross-party groups take priority over unregistered cross-party groups when booking rooms in the Palace of Westminster.

Keeping the group's Register entry up to date

- 19) Once a group has been added to the Register it must keep its entry on the latter up to date.

Viewing a copy of the group's current Register entry

- 20) A copy of the group's Register entry is sent to its registered contact (ie the person nominated by the group as being responsible for the group's compliance with the rules) when the group is first registered and, with the exception of some minor amendments, whenever the entry is subsequently amended. The group's entry on the current Register may also be viewed on the parliamentary website (see para 14 for its location).

Registering changes required to the group's Register entry

- 21) Any registrable change (ie any addition or deletion required under the rules to the group's Register entry) must be put by the group in writing to the Commissioner's office within **28 days** of the change (eg the receipt of a donation) occurring, so that the entry may be updated.
- 22) It is not sufficient simply to update the entry once a year after the AGM, unless that happens to be the only time when changes requiring registration arise.
- 23) To register changes please send a letter or email to the Assistant Registrar (whose contact details are at para 5) stating what you want added to or deleted from the entry. Such a notification may be sent on behalf of the group either by an officer of the group, or by their personal staff, or by staff of the group.
- 24) Please note that there are, however, two important exceptions where the notification process differs from this:
 - a) *After an AGM* the group must send the Assistant Registrar a copy of its current Register entry annotated by hand with any additions or deletions the group is required to register. That entry must be signed by an officer of the group, not by staff, before being sent to the Assistant Registrar. (See paras 89-93 for details).
 - b) *If a group is applying for the first time for inclusion on the Register of All-Party Groups or else applying to be re-registered following a general election*, the group must complete the 'Registration Form for All-Party Groups'. That form must be signed by the person nominated by the group to act as its registered contact.

Confirmation sent to group regarding changes made to its Register entry

- 25) Once any amendments to the group's entry have been processed, the Assistant Registrar will send confirmation, including a revised copy of the entry, to the group via the group's registered contact (who must be both an officer of the group and an MP). The revised entry will appear in the next edition of the Register.

Removal of groups from the Register

Reasons for removal from the Register

- 26) Groups are not removed from the Register without warning and are usually removed for one of the following reasons:
- a) failure to hold an AGM by a given deadline
 - b) failure to register the result of an AGM by a given deadline
 - c) failure to register the name of a replacement qualifying member by a given deadline when one of the group's 20 qualifying members has resigned, died, or changed party
 - d) failure to re-register the group by a given deadline following a general election
 - e) group disbands or else is absorbed into another group.
- 27) When a group is removed from the Register the Commissioner's office informs the group (via its registered contact) that this has been done and explains what the group must do if it wishes to seek reinstatement.

Consequences of removal from the Register

- 28) Once the group has been removed from the Register, associated privileges are withdrawn, meaning that the group:
- a) must change its title to exclude the term 'All-Party Parliamentary Group' or 'Associate Parliamentary Group' and any part thereof (bar the word 'group')
 - b) is not permitted to use the All-Party Notices to advertise any meetings (other than an AGM that is being held in order to apply for reinstatement on the Register)
 - c) has a lower priority than registered groups when booking rooms in the Palace of Westminster
 - d) is no longer recognised by Parliament.
- 29) Groups that do not appear on the Register are not bound by the rules that apply solely to registered groups, although please note the end of para 17 about the requirement to register certain financial and material support received by such groups.

Applying for reinstatement on the Register

- 30) The method of achieving reinstatement depends on why the group was removed from the Register:
- a) if the group failed to hold the AGM in question it must first hold one, ensuring that it is advertised in advance on the All-Party Notices, then register the result (see paras 64-93 for details).
 - b) if the group held the AGM in question but failed to register the result, it must register the result by returning an amended Register entry for the group (see paras 89-93 for details).
 - c) if the group failed to maintain a list of 20 current qualifying members on its Register entry, it must rectify the shortfall by registering the names of suitable replacements (see paras 47-52 for details).
- 31) Once any amendments required to the group's entry have been processed and the group has been reinstated on the Register the Commissioner's office will send confirmation to the group's registered contact, together with a copy of the entry that will appear in the next edition of the Register.

Re-registering the group after a general election

- 32) Once a general election has been publicly announced the Commissioner's office writes to every registered group to explain how to re-register the group in the new Parliament. In addition, the Commissioner's office posts periodic reminders about the re-registration process on the All-Party Notices issued by the Whips and also publishes related information on the APGs' page of the parliamentary website (www.parliament.uk then look under 'All-Party Groups' in the A-Z index on the home page there).
- 33) In essence, unless the group re-registers within two months from the date when Parliament first meets after a general election, it ceases to exist then and is removed from the Register. The two-month period is to allow groups some continuity from one parliament to the next and give them time to make any changes they see fit regarding officers, members, staff etc.
- 34) To re-register, groups must hold an 'inaugural election of officers' (which effectively counts as the group's first AGM of the new parliament) then complete the 'Registration Form for All-Party Groups' and return it to the Commissioner's office.
- 35) Once the two-month period has elapsed, the first edition of the Register relating to the new parliament is published.

- 36) Groups that choose not to re-register within the two-month period and are consequently removed from the Register may apply for reinstatement on the latter at any time thereafter. Their details will be included in subsequent editions of the Register.

PART 2: OFFICERS, MEMBERS AND STAFF OF APGs

Officers of the group

Role of the group's officers

- 37) Together the group's officers run the group, though it is the officer nominated by the group to act as its registered contact who is *ultimately* responsible for ensuring the group complies with the House's rules. The role of the registered contact is set out full in paras 42-44.
- 38) Groups typically have the following officers: a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. However, you may adapt those titles as you wish and may have fewer or more officers than the four listed above. The minimum number of officers allowed is two, one of whom must be the Chair (or whatever version of the title you prefer, eg Chairman). Jointly held posts are allowed (eg Joint Chairs), as are combined posts (eg Secretary/Treasurer).
- 39) At least one officer must be an MP and each of the other officers must be either an MP or a Member of the House of Lords.
- 40) At least one officer must be present at every meeting of the group.
- 41) Officers must be elected every 12 months, at the group's AGM (see paras 64-93 for full details of how to hold an AGM). An election may additionally be held between AGMs (eg to replace an officer or create a new post), should the group choose to do so (see paras 78-79 for how to do this).

Role of the group's registered contact

- 42) The group's 'registered contact' is the person nominated by the group as its main contact and as the person ultimately responsible for ensuring the group's compliance with the House's rules. That person must be an officer of the group and must also be a Member of the House of Commons, since the Register of All-Party Groups falls under the jurisdiction of the Commons.
- 43) When the Commissioner's office writes to the group (eg to remind the group about its AGM or to send the group a revised copy of its Register entry whenever a substantive amendment is made to the entry) they do so via its registered contact. How any such information is then relayed to the group's members or secretariat is up to the group to organise as multiple contacts are not registered.
- 44) If a new registered contact is appointed by the group you must register the new contact's name, address and telephone number (all of which should be the parliamentary or constituency details of the MP concerned and not those of staff to the group).

Members of the group

Membership list

- 45) The names of the group's officers and 20 qualifying members are cited on its Register entry. This may not constitute the group's full membership list. It is the group's responsibility to maintain a comprehensive and up-to-date membership list.
- 46) Registered groups are required to allow any Member of the House of Commons or House of Lords to join the group; anyone else may only join at the discretion of the group. There are no rules on the process by which new members are enrolled or come to be included on the group's full membership list, so the process may vary from group to group.

Group's 20 qualifying members

- 47) Qualifying members are no different from ordinary members of the group except that their names are cited on the Register as proof that the group qualifies for registration by meeting the membership quotas detailed below.
- 48) Each qualifying member must be a Member of either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. The names of exactly 20 qualifying members must be registered, namely 10 who are from the same political party³ as the government and 10 who are not from the government party⁴. At least 6 of the latter 10 must be from the main opposition party. No group's Register entry lists more than 20 qualifying members.
- 49) Officers may be listed on a group's Register entry as both officers *and* qualifying members.
- 50) If a qualifying member informs the group that he or she no longer wishes to be a member of the group, you must register the name of a replacement (bearing in mind the party quotas detailed in para 48) within 28 days of the member resigning.
- 51) Similarly, if a qualifying member changes his or her party affiliation or is for some reason no longer a Member of the House of Commons or House of Lords, the Commissioner's office will write to the group and give you 28 days to register an appropriate replacement before removing the group from the Register. Failure to meet that deadline means that the group ceases to qualify for inclusion on the Register and is removed from it (see paras 28-29 about the consequences of removal).
- 52) Before submitting the return required of it following an AGM, the group must ask each qualifying member listed on its current register entry to confirm that he or she wishes to remain as a member of the group, and replace any who do not (see paras 89-93 for full details).

³ Or parties, in the case of a coalition government.

⁴ Or parties, in the case of a coalition government.

Membership subscriptions

- 53) The group may charge members a subscription fee if it chooses. The maximum subscription fee chargeable to a Member of the House of Commons or House of Lords is £5 per year. There is no maximum fee for any other person or organisation and that is therefore at the discretion of the group.
- 54) Subscriptions of sufficient financial value to constitute a ‘benefit’ (ie support) to the group should be registered (see paras 94-98 for details).

Administrative assistance for groups

Group’s secretariat

- 55) Some officers handle the administration of the group themselves; others are assisted by individuals or organisations from outside Parliament who may, for example, act as the group’s secretariat. For most groups the provision of such services is of a sufficient financial value to constitute a ‘benefit’ to the group, in which case the benefit should be registered, as should the website address of the organisation acting as the group’s secretariat (see paras 94-113 for details).

Consultancies acting as secretariat to groups

- 56) Please note that if a consultancy (eg a public relations firm) wishes to act as the group’s secretariat, the consultancy must either publish its full client list on its website or else agree to provide such a list on request, otherwise the consultancy is not permitted to act as the group’s secretariat.

Charities or not-for-profit organisations acting as secretariat to groups

- 57) Similarly, if a charity or not-for-profit organisation wishes to act as the group’s secretariat, the charity or not-for-profit organisation must agree to making available, on request, a list citing any commercial company which has donated to the charity or not-for-profit organisation more than £5000 either as a single sum or cumulatively in the course of the 12 months prior to the month in which the request is made, otherwise the charity or not-for-profit organisation is not allowed to act as the group’s secretariat.

Other administrative assistance provided to groups

- 58) Other administrative assistance (eg legal advice) may also constitute support to the group and, if so, should be registered (see paras 99-102 for details).

Staff of the group who hold a parliamentary pass

- 59) Staff of APGs are not automatically issued with a parliamentary pass. However, they can apply to the Pass Office for an 'APG Pass' – a pale blue pass which must be sponsored by the chair (or one of the joint-chairs) of the group – if their primary reason for needing a pass is to work for the APG. For further information on the issue of passes please contact the Pass Office on 0207 219 2970.
- 60) Staff who hold an APG pass must be named, by the group, in its entry in Section 1 or 2 of the Register of APGs.
- 61) In addition, staff issued with an APG pass are automatically sent a Registration Form on which they are asked to provide information about their financial interests. Those interests (should they have any) are included in Section 3 of the Register of All-Party Groups.
- 62) Staff issued with an APG pass are required to register:
- a) any paid employment for which they receive more than 0.5% of the parliamentary salary; and
 - b) any gift, benefit or hospitality they receive, if the gift, benefit or hospitality in any way relates to or arises from their work in Parliament and its value is over 0.5% of the parliamentary salary in the course of a calendar year.

'Parliamentary salary' above means an MP's parliamentary salary, 0.5% of which is £329 (as at March 2012).

- 63) Not all those who in some way assist APGs hold an APG Pass. Some hold a pass in their capacity as staff of an MP or Peer (as opposed to staff of an APG) and assisting the APG is not their primary reason for holding a pass. The financial interests of such staff are included on the Register of Interests of Members' Secretaries and Research Assistants (if the staff member's pass is sponsored by an MP), or in the Register of Interests of Lords Members' Staff (if the staff member's pass is sponsored by a Peer). Both Registers are published on Parliament's website.

PART 3: MEETINGS HELD BY APGs

Frequency and scheduling of meetings

- 64) To assist Members, meetings are usually held at Parliament and on a day when both Houses are sitting. Annual General Meetings (AGMs) *must* be held at Parliament and on a day when both Houses are sitting.
- 65) The group must meet at least twice per calendar year. An AGM counts as one meeting. The other meeting must be held on a different day from the AGM to qualify as a separate meeting.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- 66) In summary, the rules on AGMs (which you should read in full in paras 64-93 before organising an AGM) require the group to:
 - a) Hold an AGM every 12 months at Parliament and on a day when both Houses are sitting.
 - b) Advertise the meeting, making clear that it is an **AGM**, in advance on the All-Party Notices compiled by the Whips' Office.
 - c) Ensure the AGM is quorate.
 - d) Hold an election of officers at the AGM.
 - e) Register the result of the AGM by sending the Assistant Registrar, by whatever deadline the group has been given, a copy of the group's Register entry, annotated by hand with any additions or deletions required and signed by an officer.

Deadline for holding the AGM and registering the result

- 67) The date of the group's last registered AGM is shown on its Register entry. Groups must hold an AGM, at which an election of officers must be held, every 12 months. Hence if a group's last AGM was held in July 2010 its next one would be due in July 2011. The group's 'inaugural election of officers', the first elections held in a given parliament, effectively counts as its first AGM of that parliament.
- 68) When your AGM is due the Commissioner's office will write to the group's registered contact to remind the group of the procedures involved. The reminder letter will cite a deadline by which the group must both hold the AGM **and** register the AGM result. To give you some leeway the usual deadline, for both, is the end of the month after the one in which the AGM is actually due (though it may be slightly earlier if the deadline would otherwise fall on a day when the House of Commons is not sitting).

- 69) If the group fails to register the AGM result by the deadline given, it will immediately be removed from the Register. Paras 89-93 explain how to register the result and paras 28-29 set out the consequences of removal.

Booking meeting rooms and banqueting facilities

- 70) The group's officers are responsible for ensuring that the group complies with the House's rules on the use of parliamentary facilities.
- 71) For enquiries about the use of meeting rooms in the House of Commons call 020 7219 3090 (or call 020 7219 6049 to enquire about such facilities in the House of Lords).
- 72) For enquiries about the use of banqueting facilities in the House of Commons call 020 7219 4804 (or call 020 7219 3356 to enquire about such facilities in the House of Lords).

Advertising meetings

All-Party Notices

- 73) Registered groups are entitled to advertise their meetings on the All-Party Notices, which is a list compiled and issued by the Government Whips every week when the House of Commons is sitting. The list mainly details where and when groups are meeting in the week following its issue but also includes some meetings that are due to take place at a later date.
- 74) The Commissioner's office publicises ad-hoc announcements and reminders that concern all APGs on the All-Party Notices. These are usually about a particular aspect of the rules or procedures governing APGs (eg the requirement to re-register the group following a general election).

How to advertise a meeting on the All-Party Notices

- 75) The Whips' deadline for receipt of copy from you is currently the Wednesday before the week in which the meeting is due to take place but may be sooner if the House is in recess on the day on which their usual deadline would fall, so make sure you contact them in good time.
- 76) To place a Notice you will need to contact the Whips, whose details are: allpartynotice@parliament.uk; telephone 020 7219 4333. Tell them the details of the meeting (ie day, date, time, place, name of your group, whether the meeting is anything other than an ordinary one – eg an **AGM**, and whom they should contact if they have any queries.
- 77) Ordinary meetings (ie any meeting other than an AGM or a meeting at which officers are elected) need not be advertised on the All-Party Notices, but AGMs and any other meeting at which officers are elected *must* be (see paras 78-79).

Advertising AGMs and other meeting at which officers are elected

- 78) It is not acceptable simply to notify all members of the group that an AGM, or any other meeting at which one or more officers are to be elected, is being held. Any such meeting must be advertised in advance on the All-Party Notices so that all Members of both Houses are informed.
- 79) As a bare minimum ensure that such meetings appear in the printed edition of the All-Party Notices that is published the week before the week in which the meeting is being held. You must also ensure that the nature of the elections (eg ‘AGM’, or ‘Election of *Secretary*’) is clearly stated on any Notice you place so that such meetings are distinguished from ordinary meetings.

Quorum and attendance at meetings

- 80) The quorum for any meeting of the group is three members, at least one of whom must be an officer of the group. Each of the three must be a Member of either the House of Commons or the House of Lords.
- 81) Any Member of either House may turn up and speak at any meeting of the group; anyone else may only attend if invited by the group.
- 82) Meetings of the groups must never be advertised anywhere as ‘public meetings’ as this may cause security problems.

Agenda for meetings

- 83) For any meeting of the group, the form and content of the agenda and the business addressed by the meeting are up to the group, except that an AGM must include an *election of officers* as part of the business addressed.

Voting rights at meetings

- 84) Any Member of the House of Commons or House of Lords may vote at any meeting of the group – unless a subscription is charged, in which case the group may decide to allow only paid-up members of the group to vote.
- 85) Some groups allow non-parliamentarian members of the group (ie members who are not Members of the House of Commons or House of Lords) to have voting rights; other groups choose not to allow this.
- 86) Voting rights determine part of the group’s title (see paras 121-122 for details), so if you change members’ voting rights you must also change the group’s title.
- 87) Apart from the voting rights cited above in paras 84-85, there are no rules on the process by which officers are nominated or how they are elected at the meeting, so procedures may vary from group to group.

Minutes of meetings

- 88) The form, content and distribution of minutes is a matter for the group, except that the group must keep sufficient records to enable it to prove that every meeting of the group is quorate and that the group meets at least twice each calendar year. The Commissioner's office will only ask you to provide this information if they have reason to believe the group is in breach of the rules, so please do not send them any minutes unless they specifically ask you to.

Registering the result of an AGM

- 89) After an AGM you must register the AGM result by the deadline given in the letter that will have been sent by the Commissioner's office to the group's registered contact to remind the group that its AGM is due. If you fail to meet that deadline the group will be removed from the Register (see paras 28-29 about the consequences of removal).
- 90) Do not register the result by sending the Commissioner's office the group's minutes, annual report, accounts, or membership list. Instead, you must check each section of a copy of the group's current Register entry and write on it any additions or deletions required by the rules (see para 92 for full details of how to do this).
- 91) A copy of the group's Register entry is sent to the group via its registered contact whenever any substantive amendment is made to it, but you can also print a copy from the Register at www.parliament.uk (look under 'All-Party Groups' in the A-Z Index on the home page there).

Reviewing the group's Register entry after an AGM

- 92) The following list is not exhaustive but indicates the most common amendments that arise when groups review their Register entry after an AGM.
- a) Strike out the name of any officer listed who is no longer an **officer** and write in the name, title and party affiliation of any officers who were elected at the AGM you have just held (see paras 38-39 for more information about officers).
 - b) If the group's **registered contact** is no longer an officer you must provide the details of another officer, who must be an MP, by registering his or her parliamentary or constituency address and telephone number (see paras 42-44 for the role of the registered contact).
 - c) As part of reviewing its Register entry the group must ask each **qualifying member** listed on its current register entry to confirm that he or she wishes to remain as a member of the group and replace any who do not. The revised entry you submit should list the names of *exactly 20* current qualifying members (see paras 47-49 about who is eligible to be a qualifying member and about party quotas required).

- d) For information about how to register **financial and material support received by the group** see paras 94-113. Please note that any benefit that has ‘registered [date]’ appended to it on the group’s Register entry is automatically deleted from the Register once it has been on the latter for a year. This includes such things as membership subscriptions and donations, both of which you should register each time they are renewed (assuming the value of the renewed benefit meets the financial threshold for registration).
 - e) Under the heading ‘**Date of group’s last annual general meeting**’ on the group’s entry please add the date of the AGM you have just held.
 - f) Before sending the group’s Register entry to the Assistant Registrar (whose contact details are in para 5) **the entry must be signed anywhere at the bottom by one of the group’s officers, not staff.**
 - g) Even if only minimal changes are required the group must still submit an amended Register entry as **proof** that you have checked all of it.
- 93) Once the Commissioner’s office has received an amended Register entry from the group after its AGM, they will send confirmation (including a copy of the entry that will accordingly appear in the next edition of the Register) to the group via its registered contact.

**PART 4: FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE RECEIVED
BY APGs**

Accounting procedures for groups

- 94) How the group manages its accounts is a matter for the group as the House has not laid down any rules on this. The group must, however, keep sufficient records to enable it to *register* financial and material assistance it receives in accordance with the rules below.

Definition of financial and material benefits received by the group

- 95) The group must register within 28 days from the date it receives from the same source outside Parliament one or more financial or material benefits whose total value is £1,500 or more in a calendar year.
- 96) ‘Financial benefits’ means **money** received by the group (eg donations, grants, subscriptions).
- 97) ‘Material benefits’ means the provision of **goods or services, not money** (eg administrative services, hospitality, gifts).

How to register financial benefits received by the group

- 98) To register a financial benefit the group must register the name of the organisation providing the money and the amount provided, for example:
- £10,000 from Quality Products Ltd

When registering the name of an organisation please avoid unnecessary acronyms and abbreviations.

How to register material benefits received by the group

- 99) To register a material benefit the group must register the name of the organisation providing the benefit and describe the nature of the benefit (some examples follow in paras 102-106).
- 100) You are not required to register the financial value of the benefit but by registering the benefit you are indicating that you either know for certain or else believe it likely that its value is £1,500 or more.
- 101) When registering the name of an organisation please avoid unnecessary acronyms and abbreviations.

102) Below are some examples of register entries for material benefits, although if the material benefit is the provision of **secretariat services** please see para to para 103 instead.

- Quality Products Ltd paid for a group **reception** held on 21 July 2010.
- Quality Products Ltd paid the **printing costs** of a report published by the group in July 2010.
- Quality Products Ltd paid for **air fares and accommodation** when members of the group visited Italy from 16-20 July 2010.
- Quality Products Ltd paid for **tickets** to a performance at the Royal Opera House on 21 July 2010.

Provision of secretariat services

103) If an organisation is acting as the group's secretariat and if the provision of this service constitutes a benefit worth £1,500 or more per calendar year to the group, register the name and website address of the organisation and describe the service it provides, eg:

- Quality Products Ltd, whose website is [.....], acts as the group's secretariat.

Please note that slightly different information is required if the organisation in question is a **consultancy, charity, or not-for-profit organisation**, or if an **individual** (rather than an organisation) is providing secretariat services in a personal and unpaid capacity. This is detailed in paras 104-106 below. Please also see paras 56-57 regarding obligations to disclose consultancies' client lists and charities' sources of funding.

Consultancies acting as secretariat to groups

104) If the organisation acting as the group's secretariat is a consultancy (eg a public relations firm), register the name and website of the consultancy and state that it is a consultancy. Furthermore, if any client of the consultancy is specifically paying the consultancy to act as the group's secretariat, register the name of any such client/s, eg:

- [Name of client] employs [Name of consultancy], which is a consultancy whose website is [.....], to act as the group's secretariat.

Charities or not-for-profit organisations acting as secretariat to groups

105) If the organisation acting as the group's secretariat is a charity or not-for-profit organisation, register the name and website of the organisation and state whether it is a charity or not-for-profit organisation, eg:

- [Name of charity or not-for-profit organisation], which is a [charity or not-for-profit organisation - *state which*] whose website is [.....], acts as the group's secretariat.

Individual acting in a personal capacity as group's secretariat

106) If an individual (rather than an organisation) is providing secretariat services in a personal and unpaid capacity and if the provision of this service constitutes a benefit worth £1,500 or more per calendar year to the group, register the name of the individual, state the basis on which he or she works for the group, and provide some contact details for the person (bearing in mind that those contact details will be published in the Register of APGs) eg:

- '[Name of individual] acts as the group's secretariat in a personal and unpaid capacity and may be contacted at [address, email, telephone number].'

Registration of cumulative benefits received by the group

107) A donation of, say, £1,000 from a single source would on its own be exempt from registration as it is below the £1,500 threshold for registration. But if the group subsequently receives, say, £700 from the same source in the same calendar year, you must register the total benefit (ie £1700) within 28 days of receiving the £700. Once the group has made that initial registration, any further donation received, whether singly or cumulatively, from the same source in the same calendar year should be registered if its value exceeds £500. The rules on cumulative benefits apply equally to both financial and material benefits.

Registration of personal benefits received by Members and staff in connection with APGs

108) Members of the House of Commons should bear in mind that benefits provided to members of APGs may on occasion need to be registered in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, as well as in the Register of All-Party Groups. Such benefits could include the receipt of hospitality, reimbursement of travel costs or the provision of research services to an individual Member. Members should contact the Registrar on 020 7219 3277 if they need advice on this point. Similarly, Members of the House of Lords who receive such benefits should consult the House of Lords Registrar on 020 7219 3120 for advice.

109) By the same token, any staff to the group who hold an APG pass may need to register benefits they receive in connection with their work for the APG by including them in their personal entry in Section 3 of the Register of APGs. For advice contact the Assistant Registrar on 020 7219 0401.

110) Staff to Members of either House (as distinct from staff of APGs) may also on occasion receive benefits arising from their involvement with APGs, in which case they may have to register those benefits by including them in the registers held by the Commons and Lords on the financial interests of Members' staff. For advice contact 020 7219 0401 (Commons) or 0207 219 3120 (Lords).

Removal of benefits from the Register

- 111) Any text on the Register regarding an organisation or individual who acts as the group's secretariat will remain on the group's Register entry unless you instruct the Commissioner's Office that it should be amended or deleted (something you must do if, for example, the organisation ceases to provide this service).
- 112) Most other benefits (typically subscriptions, financial donations, hospitality) will have appended to their details on the Register the date on which you notified the Commissioner's office of the benefit. Any such benefit will automatically be deleted from the Register once it has appeared on the latter for a year.
- 113) If a benefit such as a membership subscription is renewed you must register this within 28 days of it being renewed (assuming that the value of the renewed benefit meets the financial threshold for registration). Register the name of the organisation providing the benefit and the amount of the renewal.

PART 5: MISCELLANEOUS

Communications, publications and the use of the crowned portcullis

- 114) It is important that groups distinguish themselves from committees of the House in their activities, the language they use and the way in which their reports are presented, so that they do not appear in the public mind to be select committees. This is particularly relevant when it comes to the group's publications, which should not give the impression that the group has been appointed by the House or is part of its official structure.
- 115) Groups may use the crowned portcullis on their official stationery, reports and websites provided that it is appropriate to demonstrate a connection with the House in this way, and provided that there is no risk that the use of the crowned portcullis might suggest that the group or its communications have the authority of the House. In addition, paras 118-119 below apply in relation to websites.
- 116) Group publications (eg reports, press notices) should make clear who authored them, name the group's secretariat, and name any body that sponsored the production of the publication concerned (eg by meeting associated printing costs).
- 117) Assistance with the group's communications may also constitute registrable material or financial support to the group (see paras 94-113 about registering benefits).

Websites

- 118) Group websites using the crowned portcullis must carry a disclaimer to make it clear that the House of Commons does not take responsibility for the content of that website.
- 119) If your group has its own website you must include its address on the group's Register entry and ensure that the website specifies who the group's sponsors and secretariat are.

Sources of advice

- 120) Should you need advice about communications matters such as the presentation of reports, the use of the crowned portcullis or the words 'House of Commons', please contact the Department of Chamber and Committee Services on 020 7219 6208 in the first instance. For enquiries about the provision of official House stationery call 020 7219 3080.

Group's title

- 121) Para 18(b) sets out the key rules regarding the group's title. To avoid replicating the title of another group please consult the Commissioner's office if you are considering changing the group's title.
- 122) Abbreviations of groups' titles are often very similar looking and, given the large number of groups in existence, not easily understood. You should therefore use the group's full registered title in all communications about the group. This helps distinguish between APGs with similar titles and also between APGs and other cross-party bodies such as select committees and unregistered groups.

Group's statement of purpose

- 123) If you wish to amend the 'statement of purpose' cited on the group's Register entry please send the revised text to the Assistant Registrar so that the Register may be updated. Only key points summarising the group's remit should be registered.

Group's affiliation to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and/or Inter-Parliamentary Union

- 124) Country groups (ie groups which relate to a particular country or region) may be eligible to affiliate to the CPA or IPU. For further information about the nature of these organisations and the possible benefits of affiliation please consult the CPA on 020 7219 5373 or IPU on 020 7219 3013.
- 125) If your group is affiliated to the CPA or IPU you must include this on the group's Register entry.