



CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Overview

1. The National Skills Forum provides administrative and financial support (meeting costs) to the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group.
2. The Code of Governance is an agreement between the Associate Parliamentary Skills Group (APSG) Officers, Skills Commission and Members of the National Skills Forum/APSG on the rules under which the National Skills Forum and APSG operate and are administered. The document is signed by each Officer, Skills Commission Member and National Skills Forum/APSG Member, and a copy is made publicly available on the Policy Connect website. The intention of the Code is to supplement the statutory information that the Group provides on its entry in the Register of All-Party Groups, in order to ensure full transparency.

Parliamentary

3. The Associate Parliamentary Skills Group is an all-party parliamentary subject group on the approved list of parliamentary groups, and abides by the rules and guidelines as laid down in the official booklet of all-party groups compiled by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.
4. The APSG exists to generate an exchange of knowledge and understanding between Parliament and skills stakeholders about the best ways of ensuring that skills development brings a creative, successful economy with more able, skilled and fulfilled individuals.
5. The APSG is open to members of all parties and both Houses.
6. The APSG must have a minimum parliamentary membership of at least 20 'qualifying' members at any one time, 10 of which must be from the party of Government, and 10 from other parties. The parliamentary membership does not have an upper limit. No membership subscription fee is charged of parliamentary members of the Group.
7. The agenda of APSG is set by the group's officers. Officers are elected at least annually at the AGM, which is open to all parliamentarians and associate members.
8. The officers of APSG have executive authority over the group. Officers usually take the following positions:
 - a. Chair – with overall responsibility for group
 - b. Co-Chair – with shared secondary responsibility for the group
 - c. Secretary – responsible for coordinating group secretariat and for administration of official notices, correspondence and membership lists.
 - d. Treasurer – responsible for finances of group

9. The APSG is also comprised of two non-parliamentary elements: an associate membership of organisations with an interest in skills, and an independent advisory board (the Skills Commission) of senior figures with a strong knowledge of skills issues.

Associate Membership

10. The associate membership is open to non-parliamentary organisations.
 - a. Membership subscriptions from these organisations provide an independent source of funding that allows the APSG to maintain a full-time secretariat, run a regular meeting programme and provide extensive online resources.
 - b. The associate membership also offers the group a useful insight into present developments and the views of both employers and the skills sector on skills policy in the UK.
 - i. Member organisations are invited to send up to two representatives to all group meetings and are registered to receive all official group correspondence.
 - ii. At meetings, associate members are asked to participate actively in discussions, whilst recognising that the APSG is intended as a means of disseminating impartial information and that parliamentarians have priority in their contributions.
 - iii. The Officers and secretariat meets with the collective associate membership over the year in order to develop a programme that reflects the latest developments in skills.
 - iv. Associate members are also invited to support additional resources and meetings that fall outside the standard programme. Any support is given through educational grant, and no editorial influence is conferred by such sponsorship.

National Skills Forum

11. The National Skills Forum works separately to but often alongside the parliamentary group. It exists as a separate entity to allow for independent research and campaigns outside Parliament.

Skills Commission

12. The Skills Commission is comprised of senior figures from academia and the public, private and voluntary sectors, who share the belief that skills has a vital role to play in the economy and society of the UK. It operates as a think tank and guides the National Skills Forum in some of its research and campaigns. Officers of the APSG are automatically members of the Skills Commission to ensure a strong link with Parliament.

Secretariat

13. The National Skills Forum and APSG are administered by a full time secretariat, responsible for executing the programme and activities of the group agreed by the officers.
14. The secretariat and other administrative services are provided to the National Skills Forum and APSG by Policy Connect
 - a. Policy Connect is a not-for profit organisation dedicated to stimulating positive change in the UK by generating dialogue and understanding

between key stakeholders on important issues, which provides support services to a number of other all-party groups and initiatives.

- b. Secretarial and other administrative services includes provision of: management staff who act as Clerks to the Group; project and event management; shared costs of telephone, IT, web and email hosting; financial services; and shared office space external to the Palace of Westminster and other public buildings.
- c. The finances of the National Skills Forum are administered as follows:
 - i. Annual membership subscriptions and any additional sponsorship from associate members of are received by the National Skills Forum on behalf of itself and of the APSG, and used exclusively to cover all overheads and running costs of the group.
 - ii. The National Skills Forum is a not-for profit enterprise, with all finances generated by the group expended on the activities and administration of the National Skills Forum and APSG.
 - iii. The Special Advisor to the Group is also the Director responsible for the National Skills Forum, and sits on the Skills Commission.
- d. The above arrangement allows the group to share administrative and accommodation costs with other similar organisations, and acts as a safeguard to the financial liabilities of the APSG parliamentary officers.

Other organisations

15. Where possible and appropriate, other relevant organisations are invited to participate in Group meetings and resources.
 - a. Internal to Westminster, APSG meetings and resources are open to other parliamentary bodies such as Committee and Parliamentary Office staff, the House of Commons and Lords Libraries, and Members' own research staff.
 - b. External to Westminster, representatives from the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, other Government Departments, arm's length bodies and relevant charity and voluntary sector agencies are invited to attend meetings at which their contribution is of relevance to the subject area.
 - c. In order to comply with security and room booking regulations of the Palace of Westminster, attendance at meetings must be by invitation of the Group.

Endorsement

16. This code of governance is endorsed by the officers and members of the APSG, National Skills Forum and Skills Commission, representing an agreement on how each group operates and is administered.
17. Copies of the code are signed individually by representatives from the Commission, parliamentary officers and by each associate member of the group, and are available for inspection upon demand. A copy of the text of the code of governance is also made available on the Group's website.
18. *THIS IS THE PUBLIC COPY OF THE NATIONAL SKILLS FORUM AND ASSOCIATE PARLIAMENTARY SKILLS GROUP CODE OF GOVERNANCE. INDIVIDUAL SIGNED COPIES ARE HELD CENTRALLY BY THE GROUP AND ARE AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING UPON REQUEST.*