

Code of Governance APPG

ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (APPGAT) CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Overview

1. The APPGAT Code of Governance is an agreement between the Officers, Advisory Board and Associate Members of the Group on the rules under which the APPGAT operates and is administered. A copy is made publicly available on the 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.
2. The APPGAT is committed to ensuring its activities and funding are entirely transparent. The APPGAT is funded through a combination of core funding from associate membership and ad hoc sponsorship of particular events and research, all of which is declared on the official Parliamentary Register of All-Party Groups [[LINK](#)]. The APPGAT does not endorse, support or campaign on behalf of one organisation. Rather, it campaigns for evidence based policy development in assistive technology and related fields. The group operates according to a strict Code of Governance, and its work is driven by its Parliamentary Officers.
3. The secretariat services are provided by Policy Connect, a membership-based cross-Party thinktank with an extensive network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to inform and improve UK public policy. Policy Connect is committed to upholding the principle of transparency in UK parliamentary and public affairs and welcomes any questions you may have on its work and activities. Further details on this are provided below.

Parliamentary membership

4. The APPGAT is an all-party parliamentary subject group on the approved list of all-party parliamentary groups, and abides by the rules and guidelines as laid down in the official booklet of all-party parliamentary groups compiled by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.
5. The APPGAT exists in order to help parliamentarians fully engage with assistive technology and related fields.
6. The APPGAT is open to members of all parties and both Houses.
7. The group must have a minimum parliamentary membership of at least 4 'qualifying' members at any one time. Each of the group's Officers must be an MP or Peer and must be elected at the AGM. At least two of the group's Officers (including the Chair, who must also be the APPGAT's Registered Contact), must be MPs. At least one officer must be from the government party or parties and at least one from the main opposition party. Peers may be appointed to any position except for that of Chair and Registered Contact. The parliamentary membership does not have an upper limit. No membership subscription fee is charged of parliamentary members of the Group.
8. The agenda of APPGAT is set by the group's Officers, in accordance with Article 18 (d) of the Guide to the Rules on All-Party Parliamentary Groups (March 2015). Associate members will be able to advise Parliamentary Officers but will have no executive decision-making powers over the content of the

programme. Officers are elected annually at the AGM, which is open to all parliamentarians. Only parliamentarians have voting rights at the AGM.

9. The Officers have executive authority over the group. Officers usually take the following positions:
 - a. (Co-)Chair – with (shared) overall responsibility for group
 - b. Secretary – responsible for coordinating group secretariat and for administration of official notices, correspondence and membership lists.
10. APPGAT is also comprised of one non-parliamentary element: an advisory board of figures from associate membership and central government, local government, the private sector, third sector and academic institutions in the assistive technology sector, appointed by the Parliamentary Officers. The Parliamentary Officers shall also hold the power to vote for the establishment of an affiliate membership group should the group desire to expand. The affiliate group would include non-fee paying organisations and allow for limited but official interaction with the group, the scope of which will be agreed upon by the secretariat.

Associate membership

11. The associate membership is open to non-parliamentary organisations.
12. Membership subscriptions from these organisations provide a source of funding that allows APPGAT to maintain a secretariat, on an annual basis. The secretariat will facilitate the running of a regular meeting programme, parliamentary work and support information distribution such as the website.
13. The associate membership also offers the group a useful insight into present developments and the views of the relevant sectors.
14. Associate member organisations are invited to send representatives to all group meetings and are registered to receive all official group correspondence.
15. At meetings, associate members are asked to participate actively in discussions, whilst recognising that the APPGAT is intended as a means of disseminating impartial information and that parliamentarians have priority in their contributions.
16. Associate members are also invited to sponsor additional resources, research or meetings that fall outside the standard programme. No editorial influence is conferred by such sponsorship.

Advisory Board

17. The advisory board is comprised of the Associated Members of the group and other relevant organisations from the public, private and third sectors, as appointed by the Officers.
18. The advisory board meets at least once annually with the parliamentary officers to evaluate the past and approve the future activities and administration of the group.

Secretariat

19. The APPGAT is administered by a full time member of staff, responsible for executing the programme and activities of the group agreed by the Officers.

20. The secretariat and other administrative services are provided by Policy Connect.

- a. Policy Connect is a membership-based, not-for-profit cross-Party thinktank working to inform, influence and improve UK public policy development and delivery. It leads and manages an extensive network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to bring together public and private sector with parliamentarians and leading experts on important issues. Policy Connect provides support services to a number of parliamentary groups and initiatives.
- b. Secretarial and other administrative services include provision of: management staff; project and event management; shared costs of telephone, IT, web and email hosting; financial services; and shared office space.

21. The finances are administered as follows:

- i. Annual membership subscriptions and any additional sponsorship for the [APPGAT] are managed by Policy Connect. Policy Connect prepares annual accounts which are externally audited and published at Companies House. The work of Policy Connect is overseen by a separate scrutiny committee to ensure governance of the use of funds, and chaired by parliamentarians. Please find more information on Policy Connect's financial governance arrangements here:
<http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/policy-connect-financial-governance>
- ii. The group shares administrative and accommodation costs with other Policy Connect groups.

22. The above arrangement acts as a safeguard to the financial liabilities of the Parliamentary Officers.

Other organisations

23. Where possible and appropriate, other relevant organisations are invited to participate in meetings and resources.

- a. Internal to Westminster, meetings and resources are open to other parliamentary bodies such as Committee and Parliamentary Office staff, the House of Commons and Lords Libraries, and Member's own research staff.
- b. External to Westminster, representatives from charity and voluntary sector agencies and other relevant organisations are invited to attend meetings at which their contribution is of relevance to the subject area.
- c. Attendance at meetings must be by invitation of and response to the APPGAT.

Endorsement

24. This code of governance is endorsed by the Officers of the group, representing an agreement on how the group operates and is administered.