

## **Policy Connect-supported APPGs, Forums and Commissions: Code of Governance**

### **Overview**

1. Policy Connect's Code of Governance is to ensure there are agreements between the Officers, Advisory Boards and Funders of All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), Forums and Commissions Policy Connect supports. A copy is made publicly available on the website. The intention of the Code of Governance is to supplement the statutory information that the APPGs, Forums and Commissions provide on entry in the Register of APPGs (if necessary), in order to ensure full transparency.
2. Policy Connect is committed to ensuring its activities and funding are entirely transparent. Our work is funded through a combination of core funding, membership, grants, and *ad hoc* sponsorship of particular events and research, all of which is declared on the official Parliamentary Register of APPGs where necessary [[LINK](#)] on our website and in our own accounts. Policy Connect does not endorse, support or campaign on behalf of one organisation. Rather, it campaigns for evidence-based policy development in the subject areas we work in. Each of our groups operate according to a strict Code of Governance.
3. Policy Connect provides the secretariat function to a number of APPGs. Policy Connect is a membership-based cross-party think tank 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 APPGs Policy Connect supports are on the approved list of APPGs and abide by the rules and guidelines as laid down in the official [Guide to the rules on All-Party Parliamentary Groups](#) provided by the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.
5. The APPGs, Forums and Commissions Policy Connect supports exist in order to help parliamentarians fully engage with and explore policy topics.
6. The APPGs, Forums and Commissions Policy Connect supports and Policy Connect's wider work is open to members of all parties and both Houses.
7. APPGs must be open to all non-government Members of either House. An APPG must have exactly four registered officers, including at least one from the government party (or parties) and at least one from the main opposition party. At least two officers must be from the Commons. The Group must have a Commons chair; Peers can be co-chairs. The Group must have a minimum of 20 supporting parliamentary members, including the registered officers.
8. The agenda of the APPGs Policy Connect supports is set by the group's Parliamentary Officers and Parliamentary Members and only the Parliamentary Officers have executive authority over the group. Non-parliamentary members will be able to advise Parliamentary Officers and Members 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.

### **Non-parliamentary membership**

9. The APPGs, Forums and Commissions Policy Connect supports are open to non-parliamentary membership.
10. Non-parliamentary membership subscriptions provide a source of funding that allows Policy Connect to maintain a secretariat and regular activities. The secretariat will facilitate the running of a regular meeting programme, parliamentary work, research work, and support information distribution.
11. The non-parliamentary membership also offers the group a useful insight into present developments and the views of the relevant sectors.
12. Non-parliamentary member organisations are invited to send representatives to all group meetings, except the AGM, and are registered to receive all official group correspondence.
13. At meetings, non-parliamentary members are asked to participate actively in discussions, whilst recognising that the group is intended as a means of disseminating impartial information and that parliamentarians have priority in their contributions.
14. Non-parliamentary 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.

### **Secretariat**

15. The APPGs, Forums and Commissions Policy Connect supports are administered by our team and are responsible for executing the programme and activities of the group agreed by the Officers.
16. The secretariat and other administrative services are provided by Policy Connect.
  - a. Policy Connect is a not-for-profit cross-party think tank. We specialise in supporting parliamentary groups, forums and commissions, delivering impactful policy research and event programmes and bringing together parliamentarians and government in collaboration with academia, business and civil society to help shape public policy in Westminster and Whitehall, so as to improve people's lives.
  - b. Policy Connect is a social enterprise, a Disability Confident and London Living Wage employer and is funded by a combination of regular annual membership subscriptions and time-limited sponsorships.
  - c. Secretariat and other administrative services include but are not limited to: management staff; project and event management; shared costs of communication; financial services; and shared office space.
17. The finances are administered as follows:
  - a. Annual membership subscriptions and any additional sponsorship for the APPGs, Forums and Commission supported by Policy Connect are collected and administered 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 board of directors to ensure transparent governance.

- b. Policy Connect publishes all of its funders in bands on its website and submits quarterly returns to the Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists.
- c. The APPGs, Forums and Commissions supported by Policy Connect share administrative and accommodation costs.

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

#### **Other organisations**

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

- a. Meetings and other activities 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. 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 secretariat.

#### **Endorsement**

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