



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee on Procedures
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Paula Cowan
Clerk to the Committee
Committee on Procedure
Leinster House
Kildare Street
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25 June 2020

Dear Paula,

PROXY VOTING

On 31 March 2020 the Northern Ireland Assembly agreed temporary Standing Orders to allow Assembly business to proceed over the weeks and months ahead during the outbreak of Covid-19. Included in these temporary measures is Standing Order 112 which relates to proxy voting and helps to minimise risk to Members and staff during the pandemic.

Standing Order 112 can be found at the following link: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/standing-orders/standing-orders/#a112>

The Speaker recently wrote to the Committee following discussions held at the Business Committee regarding options for the management of Assembly business as we begin to emerge from the 'lockdown' restrictions. The Business Committee considers there is merit in retaining proxy voting in circumstances where Members cannot be physically present in the Chamber but are not otherwise prevented from casting their vote. The Business Committee therefore agreed to write to the Committee to suggest that it considers the instances in which proxy voting could be retained on a more permanent basis, and how this might be reflected in Standing Orders.

Following a meeting earlier this year with his counterparts from England, Scotland and Wales, the Speaker was made aware of proxy voting pilot schemes either being conducted or considered and that their experiences might be instructive. The Committee has therefore subsequently agreed to write to other local legislatures to seek their views and practices on proxy voting.

I would be grateful if you could provide your views by 17 July 2020.

Your sincerely,

Nick Mitford
Clerk to the Committee on Procedures