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Committee Stages of Bills

This research paper compares the committee stages of the legislative process in the devolved legislatures, House of Commons and Dail Éireann. It looks at the role committees play in consideration of both the general principles and detail of a Bill, the role of non-committee members during committee stages, and the ability of committees to amend legislation.

Executive Summary

Primary legislation governing the devolved legislatures in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales contains similar provisions relating to the legislative process. All three bodies must provide for their Members to:

- consider the general principles of a Bill
- consider and vote on the details of a Bill
- reject or pass the Bill

Standing Orders implement these provisions somewhat differently in each of the devolved legislatures.

At present, each of the devolved legislatures has established committees with remits that include the consideration of legislation and scrutiny of the relevant executive functions. In the past this was not the case, as separate legislation and scrutiny committees existed in the National Assembly for Wales.

Regarding consideration of the general principles of a bill, in the Scottish Parliament, Bills are referred to the committee within whose remit the subject matter of the Bill falls. The committee considers the general principles and reports on its consideration. The Parliament, taking into consideration the committee's report, then decides in plenary whether or not to agree the general principles.

In the National Assembly for Wales, consideration of general principles may occur in either committee or plenary. In the Northern Ireland Assembly, standing orders provide for the consideration of general principles, as a stage in the legislative process, to be undertaken in plenary only.

In each of the three devolved legislatures consideration of the detail of a bill occurs in committee. Differences in standing orders exist, however, in relation to the participation of non-committee members and the ability of committees to amend the bill during this stage of the legislative process.

In both the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, Members who are not members of a committee may, with the permission of the chair, participate in a committee meeting though they may not vote.

In the Northern Ireland Assembly, Members who are not members of a committee may, at the invitation of the Committee, participate in committee meetings though they may not vote.

In the National Assembly for Wales, any Assembly Member may table amendments to a Bill but only committee members may move, seek agreement to withdraw, or vote on an amendment.

In the Scottish Parliament, notice of an amendment may be given by any member and members who are not members of the committee taking Stage 2 of a Bill are also entitled to participate in the committee proceedings for the purpose of moving, debating or seeking agreement to withdraw an amendment in their name; they are not, however, entitled to vote.

In both the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales a Bill can be amended in Committee during the detailed consideration stage. The statutory committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly may propose amendments for consideration by the Assembly but committees cannot themselves amend the Bill.

In Dail Éireann, consideration of the general principles of a bill is undertaken in plenary as the second stage of the legislative process. Detailed consideration of a bill can be undertaken by a Committee of the whole Dail, a select committee or a special committee. Standing Orders also enable some provisions to be considered by a Committee of the whole Dáil, whilst others are considered by a Select or Special Committee. Committees undertaking detailed consideration are able to amend the Bill. It has been suggested, however, that 'the dominance of political parties in the Irish parliamentary process and the unwillingness to accept opposition party amendments means that few bills fundamentally change' during the legislative process.

In the House of Commons, debate on the general principles of a bill takes place in plenary sittings. Detailed examination of Bills is generally undertaken by Public Bills committees although a minority of Bills are dealt with by a Committee of the Whole House. House of Commons public Bills Committees can amend the bill during the committee stage.

In the House of Commons, there is a general rule that only those members nominated to a general committee (including Public Bill Committees) may take part in the deliberations of the committee, make any motion or move any amendment, be counted in the quorum of a committee, or vote. Therefore, non-committee members usually have to sit in the public gallery¹.

Research examining the case for reform of legislative committees in the House of Commons is currently being undertaken by the Constitution Unit in University College London. The final report based on this research is planned for release before the summer (2012).

¹ There are exceptions to this rule in relation to law officers and Ministers. See page 861 of Erskine May for details.

Contents

Executive Summary.....3

1 Introduction.....7

2 Background7

3 House of Commons.....7

4 Scottish Parliament.....9

5 National Assembly for Wales.....12

6 Dáil Éireann.....13

7 Northern Ireland Assembly14

1 Introduction

The paper outlines the processes for the Committee stage of Bills in the UK Legislatures and Dail Éireann and highlights issues relating to how Committees scrutinise legislation. It focuses on the most common type of legislation, Public Bills (Government and Executive Bills). In addition, Table 1 at the end of the paper provides an overview of the procedures in each legislature.

2 Background

The House of Commons, Dáil Éireann and the Northern Ireland Assembly share common practices in relation to the passage of legislation. This includes referral of a Bill to a Committee after its introduction and second reading or debate by the whole House. The Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales are different in that a Bill may be referred to Committee as soon as it is introduced.

3 House of Commons

The Committee Stage of Public Bills in the House of Commons has undergone significant transformation in recent years. In 2006 the Modernisation Committee produced a report which recommended that the system of standing committees should be replaced by Public Bill Committees. The “old standing committee system, though vital to the legislative process, was deemed ineffective by numerous commentators on parliament and had long faced pressure for reform. Ad hoc and unspecialised, standing committees lacked many of the features characteristic of effective committees found in other parliaments around the world”². These reforms also empowered the new Public Bill Committees to take “evidence and submissions in relation to Bills”³.

The website of the House of Commons provides the following guidance on the Committee stage of Public Bills⁴:

Committee Stage - Line by line examination of the Bill

Committee stage is where detailed examination of the Bill takes place. It usually starts within a couple of weeks of a Bill's second reading, although this is not guaranteed. Government Bills are usually formally timetabled after they have received a second reading. Most Bills are dealt with in a Public Bill Committee. If the Bill starts in the Commons the committee is able to take evidence from experts and interest groups from outside Parliament. Amendments (proposals for change) for discussion are selected by the chairman of the committee and only members of the committee can vote on amendments during committee stage. Amendments proposed by MPs to the Bill will be published daily and reprinted as a marshalled list of amendments for each day the committee discusses the Bill. Every clause in the Bill is agreed to, changed or removed from the Bill, although this may happen (particularly under a programme order) without debate. A minority of Bills are dealt with by a Committee of the Whole House (takes place on the floor of the House of Commons), with every MP able to take part. Bills fast tracked through the House of Commons will receive less consideration. Consolidated Fund Bills do not have a committee stage at all.

² *Strengthening Parliament's Powers of Scrutiny?* The Constitution Unit, University College London, 2009

³ Conan McKenna: *Parliamentary scrutiny by committee: Ireland in context. A comparative study on issues and effectiveness in parliamentary committees* Thesis 2010 Queen's University Belfast

⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/passage-bill/commons/coms-commons-committee-stage/>

A public bill committee:

generally has about 17 members though this can vary (the Committee of Selection must nominate between 16 and 50 Members to serve on each general committee) and its membership reflects the party composition of the House. At least one Minister from the Government Department in charge of the bill will be on the committee, as will a front-bench spokesman from each of the opposition parties represented. A new public bill committee is appointed for each bill and the membership of each committee is discharged when it has reported its bill to the House. There may be several public bill committees appointed at any one time and they are named after the bill that they examine e.g. the Welfare Reform Bill Committee⁵.

Programme Motions/Orders

Programme Motions and Orders are unique to the House of Commons among the legislatures examined. A “programme motion in the House of Commons is usually agreed to immediately after a Bill's second reading and then becomes known as the 'programme order'. Programme orders help to make a Bill's progress through its various stages much more predictable”⁶. The Cabinet Office provides a useful overview⁷ of the process and its impact on committee stages of bills:

- Most Government Bills are subject to programming in the Commons. Programming allows the House, following consultation through the usual channels, to determine a timetable for proceedings in Public Bill Committee and the duration of remaining stages on the floor of the House.
- The Bill team needs to provide a reasonable assessment of the time required in Committee, based on their knowledge of the Bill, its complexity and degree of controversy, and experience with similar Bills.
- Parliamentary Counsel drafts the required Programme Motion setting out the completion date for Public Bill Committee and outline provision for later stages, which is taken immediately after Second Reading.
- For Bills being considered by a Public Bill Committee, the Programming Sub-Committee can recommend detailed proposals for particular witnesses and for the internal division of time between oral evidence sessions and clause by clause consideration and between different parts of the Bill within the overall time for Committee stage (“knives”). They may also recommend to the House that the out-date is changed, if this is felt necessary.
- As for how the programme motion provides for clause by clause consideration, on minor Bills the Programming Sub-Committee may simply have to suggest the order of consideration and the number of Committee sittings required to

⁵ *Parliamentary stages of a Government Bill*, House of Commons Information Office, August 2010

⁶ <http://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/programme-motion/>

⁷ Cabinet Office, Programming, retrieved 11 August 2010

deal with the business, the time at which those meetings will take place and the time for conclusion of proceedings at the last meeting. On others, the order of consideration and the business for each sitting may be specified in detail. For larger Bills there are usually regular 'knives' to ensure that all parts of the Bill are dealt with in the time allotted. 'Knives' are the cut-off points at which debate on particular sections of the Bill must be completed. Importantly, these affect votes as well as debates.

Research examining the case for reform of the legislative committee system in the House of Commons is currently being undertaken by the Constitution Unit in University College London. The project website states that 'The legislative process in the UK House of Commons has long been criticised, in particular with relation to its committee stage. Almost uniquely amongst established, developed parliamentary democracies this is taken in non-specialist and temporary ('public bill') committees, rather than specialist, permanent committees'. The research, therefore, is '...seeking to contribute to the evidence base in support of reform of the way in which the House of Commons deals with legislation by investigating how legislative committees function in other jurisdictions'. The final report based on the research is planned for release in spring 2012.

4 Scottish Parliament

Following the introduction of the Scotland Act 1998, the Consultative Steering Group (CSG) was established to determine how the Scottish Parliament would carry out its business. It was largely responsible for drafting the Standing Orders of the Parliament and its proposals were endorsed by all the main political parties. The CSG recommended the following in relation to the scrutiny role of committees⁸:

10. We recommend that Stage 1, debate and vote on the principles of the Bill, should be conducted in Plenary. A Bill, once introduced, should be referred to the relevant Committee, which should consider and report on the general principles in the Bill, to inform a debate and vote on the principles of the Bill in the Plenary session.

11. The role of the Committee as proposed would be to provide a report to the Parliament as to whether or not the Bill should be approved in principle. It would not at this stage be a detailed consideration on a line by line basis of the Bill's content. At this stage, the Committee would also be able to comment on the Memorandum accompanying the Bill, in particular on the extent of consultation undertaken, and to recommend whether further evidence should be taken to inform the next stage of consideration of the Bill.

12. Following a debate and positive vote in Plenary on the principles of the Bill, the Bill should be referred again to Committee for detailed consideration. Where there are 2 or more interested Committees, one Committee should be identified as the "lead" and other interested Committees should submit their views to the lead Committee within a

⁸ Report of the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament, *Shaping Scotland's Future*, December 1998: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w5/rcsg-00.htm>

specified time.

As noted in the introduction, the Committee stage of legislation in the Scottish Parliament differs somewhat from the model in the House of Commons, Dail Éireann and Northern Ireland Assembly. Section 36 of the Scotland Act 1998 and Chapter 9 of Standing Orders outline the process for Public Bills in the Scottish Parliament.

Scotland Act 1998

Section 36 Stages of Bills

(1) Standing orders shall include provision—

- (a) for general debate on a Bill with an opportunity for members to vote on its general principles,
- (b) for the consideration of, and an opportunity for members to vote on, the details of a Bill, and
- (c) for a final stage at which a Bill can be passed or rejected.

In particular, rules 9.5 to 9.9 of Standing Orders⁹ detail the various stages of a Bill. Below is a summary of that process:

Stage 1

- Once introduced, the Parliamentary Bureau refers the Bill to whichever Committee has the Bill within its remit – known as the ‘lead committee’. If the Bill could go to more than one Committee, then the Bureau must recommend to Parliament which should be the lead Committee
- The Bureau also sets a timescale within which the lead committee is expected to report

Stage 1 report

- The lead committee’s role is to report to the Parliament on the general principles of the Bill – that is, on the principal purposes of the Bill, rather than the fine detail. It is normal (but not obligatory) for a Stage 1 Report to include a recommendation to the Parliament as to whether the general principles of the Bill should be agreed to
- The Committee can take evidence from witnesses and may issue a call for written evidence
- The lead committee must include in the Stage 1 Report consideration of the Financial Memorandum, taking into account any report on that document that may (but need not) be made to it by the Finance Committee. In the case of an Executive Bill, the Report must also include consideration of the Policy Memorandum. This enables the lead committee to consider, for example, whether sufficient consultation was undertaken before introduction.

⁹ Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament, Nov 2011:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Parliamentaryprocedureandguidance/StandingOrdersv4.1.pdf>

Stage 2 Committee

- The minimum period that must elapse between the day on which Stage 1 is completed and the day on which Stage 2 starts is 11 sitting days. If the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Bill at Stage 1, the Bill proceeds to Stage 2. (If the general principles are rejected, the Bill falls.) The Parliamentary Bureau may refer the Bill back to the Stage 1 lead committee for Stage 2 or propose (by motion) that a different committee or committees take that Stage. The Stage 2 committee can be a Committee of the Whole Parliament, of which all MSPs are members and the Presiding Officer is the convener. For example, the stage 2 debate on Criminal Procedure (Legal Assistance, Detention and Appeals) (Scotland) Bill in October 2010 took place in a Committee of the Whole House. The Bureau may also propose that the Bill be divided among two or more committees for Stage 2 consideration – preferably with each committee being allocated whole Parts or Chapters to deal with.
- The Bureau may set a timescale within which Stage 2 is to be completed. Except for Budget and Emergency Bills, there must be at least eleven whole sitting days between the completion of Stage 1 (i.e. the decision at the end of the Stage 1 debate) and the beginning of Stage 2
- The principal role of the Stage 2 committee is to consider and dispose of amendments. Any MSP may lodge an amendment – not just members of the relevant committee. And there is no limit to the number of amendments that each MSP may lodge. The convener of a committee may lodge (or support) an amendment on behalf of the committee if the committee has made a formal decision during a meeting to that effect. Such “committee amendments” are printed in the name of the convener followed by the words “(on behalf of the [name] Committee)”. There is no procedural distinction between committee amendments and amendments in the name of an individual member, but the stated endorsement of the committee may be helpful as an indication of cross-party support. It is also open to the committee, within the timescale available, to take further evidence on the Bill at Stage 2.
- A member who is not a member of a committee taking Stage 2 of a Bill is entitled to participate in the committee proceedings for the purpose of moving, debating or seeking agreement to withdraw an amendment in their name but they are not able to vote.

Stage 3

- Stage 3 takes place at a meeting of the whole Parliament. Except in the case of a Budget or Emergency Bill, the day on which Stage 3 begins must be at least nine whole sitting days after the day on which Stage 2 ends

5 National Assembly for Wales

Section 111 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 relates to Bill proceedings in the Assembly:

Government of Wales Act 2006

Section 111 Proceedings on Bills

(1) The standing orders must include provision—

- (a) for general debate on a Bill with an opportunity for Assembly members to vote on its general principles,
- (b) for the consideration of, and an opportunity for Assembly members to vote on, the details of a Bill, and
- (c) for a final stage at which a Bill can be passed or rejected.

Standing Order¹⁰ 16.1 of the Assembly states:

The Assembly must establish committees with power within their remit to:

- (i) examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the government and associated public bodies;
- (ii) examine legislation;
- (iii) undertake other functions specified in Standing Orders; and
- (iv) consider any matter affecting Wales.

In June 2011, the National Assembly for Wales established five ‘thematic’ committees to carry out these functions. This differed from the arrangement in existence during the course of the Third Assembly (2007-11), where five separate permanent Legislation Committees were established to consider and report on legislation introduced into the Assembly.

Standing Order 26 deals with the passage of legislation through the Assembly (Acts of the Assembly) and the relevant provisions relating to consideration of the principles and details are described below.

Stage 1 – Consideration of General Principles

- Once a Bill has been introduced, the Business Committee will decide if it should be referred to a responsible committee established under Standing Order 16. If it is referred, the Committee must consider and report on the general principles

¹⁰ National Assembly for Wales – Standing Orders (November 2011)
http://www.assemblywales.org/november_2011_branded_clean_sos-e.pdf

of the Bill subject to a deadline decided by the Business Committee. If it is not, it may go to the Assembly for agreement on general principles.

Stage 2 – Detailed Consideration by Committee

- Stage 2 starts on the first working day after Stage 1 is completed
- At least 15 working days must elapse between the start of Stage 2 and the date of the first meeting at which the responsible committee considers amendments to the proposed Measure
- Stage 2 may take place in committee or be undertaken by a Committee of the Whole House
- A Bill may be amended in Stage 2 proceedings
- Any Assembly Member may table amendments to the Bill and there is no limit to the number of amendments that can be tabled.
- Only a Member who is a member of the committee considering Stage 2 proceedings may participate in those proceedings for the purpose of: (i) moving or seeking agreement to withdraw an amendment; or (ii) voting.
- This stage ends when all the amendments have been considered.

6 Dáil Éireann

Standing Orders 126 to 132 of Dail Éireann detail the procedure for the committee stage of Bills¹¹. Bills in Dail Éireann may be introduced in one of two ways: presentation or introduction. In the Dáil, only the Government, and groups provided for in standing orders (seven or more deputies), may present Bills (one Bill at a time from each group). Leave of the House is sought for publication of Bill. In the Dáil any member may seek leave to introduce a bill. In the Seanad introduction requires three Senators to sponsor the bill. As a general rule, Bills may be initiated in either the Dáil or the Seanad.

Exceptions to general rule are:

- Money Bills (Dáil only)
- Bills to amend the Constitution (Dáil only)
- Private Bills (Seanad only)¹²

Standing Orders of the Dail do not specify timings between stages. However, Standing Order 139 states: “The making of an Order fixing the date for the next Stage of a Bill

¹¹ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann: http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/proceduraldocuments/Standorders2011_revised.pdf

¹² Website of the Houses of the Oireachtas: A Brief Guide to the Legislative Process, retrieved 12 August 2011

shall be decided without amendment: Provided that, in a case where the Order is not made, the Bill shall remain on the Order Paper”¹³.

Consideration of the general principle of a Bill, the second stage in the legislative process, is undertaken in plenary.

Standing Order 126 states that, following stage 2, a bill may be considered in a committee of the whole Dáil or referred to some other committee.¹⁴ Committees have “the power to seek submissions and take evidence on bills but rarely do so”¹⁵. Only members of the committee or their substitutes may table amendments, although only members of the government can table amendments that impose a charge on the revenue or on the people. Only amendments relevant to the provisions of the Bill and are not in conflict with the principle of the Bill may be made in committee.¹⁶ Other amendments, however, may be made if the House has given an appropriate instruction to the committee to do so.¹⁷ Members may speak twice in the report stage on each amendment with the proposer also having a right of reply.¹⁸

Previous research has highlighted perceived shortcomings in committees’ ability to influence legislation:

Oireachtas select committees play an important role in the legislative process...the third stage of that process is the committee stage. At this stage the bill is sent to the most relevant committee. Clearly then, committees have a critical role in the legislative process...at committee stage, it is possible for detailed amendments to be made and there are certainly examples over time of Irish governments allowing amendments to bills at committee stage...the clear pattern, however, is of government dominance of the legislative process at all stages. Once the cabinet has approved the contents of a bill, it is normally very unusual for the Oireachtas to have any substantive input into changing those contents...the dominance of political parties in the Irish parliamentary process and the unwillingness to accept opposition party amendments means that few bills fundamentally change...during the legislative process¹⁹.

7 Northern Ireland Assembly

As with the Scottish Parliament and National Assembly for Wales, the legislative process for the Northern Ireland Assembly is set out in the first instance in primary legislation. The Northern Ireland Act 1998 states:

¹³ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann: http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/proceduraldocuments/Standorders2011_revised.pdf

¹⁴ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann:

¹⁵ Conan McKenna, *Parliamentary scrutiny by committee: Ireland in context. A comparative study on issues and effectiveness in parliamentary committees*, Queen’s University Belfast, 2011

¹⁶ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann No 131 (1)

¹⁷ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann No 131 (2)

¹⁸ Standing Orders of Dail Éireann 133 (3)

¹⁹ MacCarthaigh & Manning (eds) *The Houses of the Oireachtas: Parliament in Ireland*, Institute of Public Administration 2010

Section 13 – Stages of Bills

Standing orders shall include provision—

- (a) for general debate on a Bill with an opportunity for members to vote on its general principles;
- (b) for the consideration of, and an opportunity for members to vote on, the details of a Bill; and
- (c) for a final stage at which a Bill can be passed or rejected but not amended²⁰.

Standing Orders²¹ 30 to 43 of the Assembly detail the process for public legislation. A key difference between the Assembly and the other devolved legislatures in Scotland and Wales is that in Northern Ireland the process is more closely modelled on that in the House of Commons and Dail Éireann. Rather than referring a Bill to a Committee after its introduction, a Bill will not go the relevant committee until after the second stage.

At the Second Stage of a Bill being agreed, the Bill is referred to the appropriate statutory committee, unless the Assembly orders otherwise. The relevant statutory committee, may, within the period of 30 working days from date of referral, consider and take evidence on the provisions of the Bill, and report its findings to the Assembly.

A report made to the Assembly may include proposals for amendments to the Bill that may be proposed at Consideration Stage, but the committee cannot vote on amendments. Due to the legislative drafting resources available to the Departments, the committee normally persuades the relevant Minister and department officials to draft and table the amendments sought by it. However, where the department won't draft the amendment, the committee can and will table its own amendments.

In a 2002 report on the legislative process, the Committee on Procedures considered whether committees should be given the power to amend Bills. The Committee concluded that there would need to be an extensive period of consultation, particularly with the Executive, before any such change was introduced²².

Of 69 Bills receiving Royal Assent during the 2007-11 mandate, 47 had a Committee Stage of which 43 were extended (91%). The other 22 Bills progressed by Accelerated Passage (no Committee Stage)²³.

²⁰ Northern Ireland Act 1998, as amended: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/contents>

²¹ Northern Ireland Assembly - Standing Orders as amended 24 January 2012

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/Assembly-Business/Standing-Orders/Standing-Orders/>

²² Committee on Procedures: Review of the Legislative Process in the Northern Ireland Assembly, January 2002

²³ Information provided by the Bill Office

House of Commons	National Assembly for Wales	Scottish Parliament	Dail Éireann	NIA
Formal introduction – no debate on the Bill	Introduction - Bills must be available in English and Welsh and the Presiding Officer must publish a statement that the Assembly has the power to make the Bill. Each Bill must also be accompanied by an Explanatory Memorandum that will set out its policy objectives, details of any consultation already undertaken on the Bill, estimates of the costs of implementing the Bill and any other relevant information	Introduction – certain accompanying documents are required: explanatory notes, financial memorandum, Executive statement on legislative competence and policy memorandum	Legislation can be introduced by one of two methods: presentation (government and recognized groups) or introduction (any Member may seek leave to introduce a Bill).	Bill text, Explanatory Memorandum, Statement on legislative competence and Secretary of State's consent, if required, submitted to the Speaker by Minister/Member in charge of the Bill. Statement on legislative competence is published with the Bill. Bill ordered to be printed and set down in the list of pending future business for Second Stage Bill copied to Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
Debate on general principles of the Bill in plenary	This stage involves the consideration of the general principles of a Bill by a committee (or committees), followed by the agreement of the general principles by the Assembly.	Bill referred to appropriate Committee, known as the 'lead Committee'. Committee produces a report on the general principles of the Bill. General principles are then debated by Parliament	Debate on general principles of the Bill in plenary	Debate on general principles in Assembly Plenary. Bill may be referred by the Speaker, on a motion being agreed at any stage, to either the NIHRC or the Special Committee on Conformity with Equality Requirements for advice and, if agreed on a vote, the Equality Committee may take the Committee Stage.
Detailed consideration by Committee - When a public bill (other than a Consolidated Fund or an Appropriation Bill, or a tax law rewrite bill, or a bill for confirming a provisional order) has been read a second time, it shall stand committed to a public bill committee unless the House otherwise orders.	Detailed consideration by Committee - A Bill may be amended in Stage 2 proceedings Amendments to be considered at Stage 2 proceedings may be tabled by any Member, from the first day on which Stage 2 starts Amendments are to be disposed of in the	Detailed consideration by Committee - At Stage 2, each section and schedule and the long title of the Bill shall be considered separately and the committee shall decide whether to agree to them. Unless the Parliament has decided, on a motion of the Parliamentary Bureau, the order in which the sections and schedules	Detailed consideration by Committee - In Committee, a Bill must be considered section by section. It shall be in order, however, before consideration of a section or sections is entered upon, to move the postponement of the section or sections until another section, other sections or schedules have been disposed of. Any section of a Bill may be	Detailed consideration by Committee - On the Second Stage of a Bill being agreed, the Bill shall stand referred to the appropriate statutory committee, unless the Assembly shall order otherwise. A statutory committee to which a Bill stands referred under this Standing Order, may, within the period of 30 working days from date of referral,

<p>A motion—to commit a bill to a committee of the whole House or to a select committee, or a motion that it is expedient that a bill be committed to a joint committee of Lords and Commons; or to give a public bill committee to which a bill has been committed under this order power to send for persons, papers and records, may be made by any Member and if made immediately after the bill has been read a second time shall not require notice, and, though opposed, may be decided after the expiration of the time for opposed business, and the question thereon shall be put forthwith</p> <p>A motion to commit a bill to a public bill committee in respect of some of its provisions and to a committee of the whole House in respect of other provisions may be made by the Member in charge of the bill and, if made immediately after the bill has been read a second time, shall not require notice, and may, though opposed, be</p>	<p>order in which the sections and schedules to which they relate arise in the Bill, unless the committee considering Stage 2 proceedings has decided otherwise</p> <p>Only a Member who is a member of the committee considering Stage 2 proceedings may participate in those proceedings for the purpose of:</p> <p>(i) moving or seeking agreement to withdraw an amendment;</p> <p>or</p> <p>(ii) voting</p> <p>An amendment tabled by a Member who is not a member of a the committee considering Stage 2 proceedings, may be moved by a member of the committee</p>	<p>of the Bill are to be considered at Stage 2, the committee may decide the order. If neither decides, the sections shall be taken in the order in which they arise in the Bill, with each schedule taken immediately after the section which introduces it.</p> <p>A Bill may be amended at Stage 2. Notice of an amendment may be given by any member after the completion of Stage 1</p> <p>At Stage 2, amendments to any section or schedule or to the long title shall be disposed of before the committee considers whether to agree to the provision in question. Where no amendments are proposed to a section, a schedule or the long title, the committee shall proceed immediately to decide the question whether that provision be agreed to. If an amendment to leave out a section or schedule is disagreed to, that section or schedule shall be treated as agreed to</p> <p>A member who is not a member of a committee taking Stage 2 of a Bill, or part of it, is entitled to participate in the proceedings for the purpose of moving, debating or seeking agreement to withdraw an</p>	<p>amended in Committee, and new sections may be inserted.</p> <p>In Committee, when an amendment is offered proposing to insert a new section in a Bill, such amendment may be moved when the number of the section, before which it is proposed to insert the new section, is read from the Chair, and the question on such amendment shall be first decided</p> <p>When the amendments (if any) offered to a section have been disposed of, the question shall be proposed, "That such section (or such section as amended) stand part of the Bill".</p> <p>The consideration of the preamble and title of a Bill in Committee shall be deferred until the sections and schedules (if any) have been considered.</p> <p>It shall be an instruction to all Committees to which Bills may be committed that they have power to make such amendments therein as they shall think fit, provided that such amendments be relevant to the provisions of the Bill and are not in conflict with the principle of the Bill as read a second time.</p>	<p>consider and take evidence on the provisions of the Bill, and report its opinion thereon to the Assembly.</p> <p>A report made to the Assembly under paragraph (2) may include proposals for amendments to the Bill that may be proposed at Consideration Stage.</p> <p>Before the conclusion of the period specified in paragraph (2), a motion may be moved in the Assembly by -</p> <p>(a) a Minister; or</p> <p>(b) the chairperson of the relevant statutory committee (or deputy chairperson acting in the chairperson's stead) to extend the period until a date specified in the motion. The question on any such motion may be decided after the expiration of the time for opposed business.</p> <p>On a report being made to the Assembly under paragraph (2), or on the conclusion of any period specified in this order or extended by the Assembly under this order, the Bill shall be set down on the list of pending future business until a date for its Consideration Stage is determined.</p>
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<p>decided after the expiration of the time for opposed business. If such a motion is opposed, the Speaker after permitting, if he thinks fit, a brief explanatory statement from the Member who makes and from a Member who opposes the motion shall, without permitting any further debate, put the question thereon</p> <p>If the question on a motion made under paragraph (2) or paragraph (3) of this order is negatived, the Speaker shall forthwith declare that the bill stands committed to a public bill committee</p> <p>All committees to which bills may be committed or referred for consideration on report shall have power to make such amendments therein as they shall think fit, provided they be relevant to the subject matter of the bill: but if any such amendments shall not be within the long title of the bill, they shall amend the long title accordingly, and report the same specially to the House</p>		<p>amendment in that member's name but shall not vote</p> <p>If the Bill has been amended at Stage 2 so as to insert or substantially alter provisions conferring powers to make subordinate legislation, the Subordinate Legislation Committee shall consider and report to the Parliament on those provisions. The Committee may also consider and report on any new or substantially altered provisions conferring other delegated powers</p>	<p>The Dáil may, following debate of not less than 60 minutes as the House may order on motion made by the member in charge of a Bill, give an instruction to a Committee to which a Bill has been committed empowering it to make amendments, the nature of which shall be specified, provided that the amendments be relevant to the general subject matter and not in conflict with the principle of the Bill</p>	
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Save as provided in Standing Order No. 92 (Consideration on report of certain bills by a general committee) every bill committed to and reported from a public bill committee, whether amended or not, shall be considered on report by the House				
Report stage - gives MPs an opportunity, on the floor of the House, to consider further amendments (proposals for change) to a Bill which has been examined in committee	Detailed consideration, by the Assembly, of the Bill and any amendments proposed by Assembly Members	Consideration by Parliament	Consideration in Plenary of amendments arising from Committee stage	Committee reports its findings and proposed amendments to Assembly Plenary. All amendments and the clauses and Schedules of the Bill voted on at this stage. Bill reprinted if necessary.
Third reading is the final chance for the Commons to debate the contents of a Bill. It usually takes place immediately after report stage as the next item of business on the same day	This is the last stage of the process and follows the completion of stage 3. At this stage, there is a vote by the Assembly to pass the final text of the Bill.	Reconsideration stage – this only occurs where a Law Officer or the Secretary of State considers the Bill to be incompatible with legal obligations	General debate on the Bill	A second opportunity for the Bill to be amended in the Assembly Plenary. All amendments proposed voted on at this stage. Bill reprinted if necessary
Consideration of amendments – Commons and Lords have to agree final text of Bill	Bill becomes Act	Bill becomes Act	Bill sent to Seanad for further scrutiny	Bill referred to the Speaker to confirm that it may proceed to Final Stage
Bill becomes Act			Bill becomes Act	Bill becomes Act