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Information on technical and ‘tidying-up’ amendments to legislation

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This information is provided to Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in support of their duties, and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as professional legal advice, or as a substitute for it.

1 Introduction

This briefing paper has been prepared following a request from the Committee on Procedures. The Committee asked for information on what are known as minor, corrective or ‘tidying up’ amendments to bills.

The research looked at the House of Commons, House of Lords, Scottish Parliament, Senedd and Dail Eireann. It focused on government bills and members’ bills, where such information was available.

Ultimately, it will be for the Speaker/Presiding Officer of a legislature to determine the admissibility of amendments, where such questions arise. [NIAR 264-2025](#) provides further information on this topic.

Annex 1 provides details of the stages of bills in the relevant legislatures.

2 Key points

- The research found limited information beyond that which is publicly available in standing orders and procedural guidance. Academic and think-tank literature is sparse, beyond the Institute for Government.
- Comparisons across legislatures are difficult. There is no direct read-across in relation to the passage of legislation and each legislature defines its own procedures and employs its own terminology.
- There is no single definition of a ‘tidying-up’ or minor amendment and the term tidying-up usually refers to the third reading of a bill in the House of Lords, although it also appears in a Northern Ireland Assembly Handbook.
- Amendments can range from minor, technical changes to more substantial and significant changes.
- Governments have what has been described as a ‘duty of care’ to the statute book and must ensure that legislation is workable and technically

correct. This might mean bringing technical amendments to bills that a Minister may not support, so that the bill, if passed, is fit for purpose.

3 Northern Ireland Assembly

The procedures governing the passage of public bills (including members' bills) through the Assembly are set out in Standing Orders 30 to 42. Other Standing Orders apply to Private Bills and Hybrid Bills.

Amendments may be taken at Consideration Stage, Further Consideration Stage and Exceptional Further Consideration Stage.

On 29th September the Minister for Education tabled 11 amendments at Further Consideration Stage. The Hansard provides useful examples of technical amendments at this stage:

I will speak to the amendments in this group, but let me briefly preface that with the context of why I have tabled the 11 technical amendments that we debate today. I have been clear about two points throughout the process. The first is that the reason for introducing this legislation is to address the affordability of school uniforms for parents and families who, I know, struggle with the cost of living. The Bill contains many more powers than those recognised by the media coverage reflecting some Members' comments following Consideration Stage. Let me be clear that the Bill has the power to make a difference.

The second point that I have consistently made is that the legislation that we make in the House needs to be excellent in how it is worded and structured to deliver the various intentions towards an overall resulting effect. As a Minister, I take seriously my duty to ensure that we make sound, accessible and workable legislation in all respects. Therefore, while I might have done things differently, I fully respect the decisions of the House in voting through 12 amendments at Consideration Stage. However, I considered it my duty to look at the provisions in the Bill as amended and have therefore taken a fresh look at how those amended provisions will be capable of being read and applied in practice. To make a difference for parents, the guidelines that will stem from the Bill must be

workable for our schools, so, today, I propose a number of technical amendments that ensure that the legislation is left in the best shape that it can be. As well as the technicalities of my amendments, they are designed to ensure that positive differences can be made for families. I am sure that Members will agree that sound and workable legislation is vital to supporting families, and I trust that Members will support the technical amendments that I have brought to the House at Further Consideration Stage on the advice of my officials, including those with expertise in legislative drafting.¹

Another relevant example comes from the Further Consideration Stage of the Defamation Bill, debated in March 2022. The member in charge of the Bill spoke to the amendments:

Mr. Nesbitt: I am glad to move amendment Nos 2, 3, 4 and 5. I note that all the amendments are in my name, but they are certainly not entirely of my making, and it is entirely appropriate to thank officials from the Bill Office, the Department of Finance and the Office of the Legislative Counsel (OLC), whose professionalism and engagement was invaluable to me in trying to tidy up the Bill, which is what the amendments are about...I will go out of sequence, if I may, because amendment No 2 is the one that needs a little bit of explanation. I will deal with amendment Nos 3 and 4. There are two references in the Bill, as currently constituted, to the Department of Finance making regulations. However, the only area where I envisaged the Department making regulations was with regard to the operators of websites, and that was in the old clause 5 at Consideration Stage. That clause did not survive Consideration Stage and no longer stands part of the Bill, and, therefore, I ask the House to join me in removing all references to regulations in order to restore some coherence to the Bill. We leave out line 11 in clause 12 and leave out the entire clause 14.

¹ NIA Official Report: Monday 29 September 2025:
<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2025/09/29&docID=450895#5138830>

Amendment No 5 is simply a matter of syntax. The OLC said that the preferred commencement phrasing is "This Act comes into operation". It currently states:

"The provisions of this Act (including this section) come into operation".

That is just a clean-up of the language.²

Figure 1 replicates Standing Order 37A, the Exceptional Further Consideration Stage.

- (1) If, after the Further Consideration Stage of a Bill, and prior to its Final Stage, the Minister or member of the Assembly in charge of the Bill submits a statement to the Speaker, in writing, asserting—
- (a) that, as a consequence of an amendment made to the Bill, either a provision of the Bill is outside the legislative competence of the Assembly, or the Bill has a serious technical defect, and
- (b) that the Assembly had not fully considered prior to making, or not making, any relevant amendment that the Bill might, as a result, be outside the legislative competence of the Assembly or have a serious technical defect, the Bill shall be set down on the list of pending future business until a date for Exceptional Further Consideration Stage is determined.
- (2) A statement submitted to the Speaker under paragraph (1) shall be circulated to all members of the Assembly, as soon as is practicable, and published in a manner determined by the Speaker.
- (3) An amendment proposed to a Bill at Exceptional Further Consideration Stage shall only be selected if the Speaker is satisfied—
- (a) that the amendment is intended either -
- (i) to bring the Bill within the legislative competence of the Assembly, or

² NIA Official Report: Monday 14 March 2022:
<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2022/03/14&docID=371482#4612068>

- (ii) to correct any serious technical defect;
- (b) that the proposed amendment deals with a matter specified in the statement under paragraph (1)(a) and which has arisen as a consequence of an amendment made to the Bill; and
- (c) that the Assembly had not fully considered prior to making, or not making, any relevant amendment that the Bill might, as a result, be outside the legislative competence of the Assembly or have a serious technical defect.

The Exceptional Further Consideration Stage is rarely used and, as noted above, Ministers and Members may use the Further Consideration Stage to bring forward 'technical' amendments.

Members' Bills

The *Handbook for Members' Bills for the 2022 to 2027 Mandate* contains information on technical amendments to members' bills:

Where there are technical issues which relate to the proper functioning of the Bill, there is a convention that the relevant Minister has a role at Further Consideration Stage to address this (Further Consideration Stage is the final opportunity for amendment). As Executive Departments are responsible for implementing the laws made by the Assembly, there is an expectation that Ministers will table amendments at Further Consideration Stage to correct any deficiencies and to provide for a clear and certain statute book.

The Assembly will take decisions in relation to the policy content of a Bill. Once those decisions are made, Executive Departments have an interest in putting those in terms that are consistent with the existing statute book. Tabling what might be called "tidying-up amendments" does not require a Minister to endorse the policy of a Bill. Indeed, in such cases, a Minister fully reserves the right to seek to persuade the House to reject a Bill at its Final Stage. Whilst this is a convention rather than a legal requirement, the

Speaker is clear there is an expectation it will be observed and has written to the Executive on this point.³

Speaker Maskey stated in February 2022, at the Further Consideration Stage of the Integrated Education Bill, that:

There is, for good reason, a convention across these islands, that, as the custodians of Departments responsible for implementing the law, Ministers will table tidying-up amendments at Further Consideration Stage to provide for a clear and certain statute book. It is understood that the Assembly can pass amendments to deliver a particular policy objective but that Departments will want to put those in terms that are consistent with the existing statute book. Tabling what might be called "tidying-up amendments" does not require a Minister to endorse a Bill. Indeed, in such cases, a Minister fully reserves the right to seek to persuade the House to reject a Bill at its Final Stage. We have seen that happen in the Assembly before, and it is perfectly legitimate that that does happen and is provided for.

Regardless of a Minister's opinion on an individual Bill, there is an expectation that a Minister will respect the decisions that the Assembly has taken. That is an important aspect of our parliamentary culture, and it is concerning if it is not followed. So, although there is no requirement in law or in Standing Orders that a Minister should table amendments at Further Consideration Stage, it is disappointing if the convention is not observed. Ultimately, however, it is for a Minister to determine and defend what amendments he or she does or does not table. It is something then, ultimately, for Members to raise directly with a Minister.

There is no legal or Standing Order requirement for a Minister to do so, although it is preferable that tidying-up amendments be tabled at Further Consideration Stage, to ensure consistency in the future statute book, if a

³ NI Assembly Handbook on Members' Bills

Bill is passed and accepted by the House. As I said, that happens across these islands in all jurisdictions, so it is disappointing that that practice would not be followed here. However it is entirely a matter for a Minister to decide whether he or she wishes to table amendments.⁴

4 House of Commons and UK Government

Standing Orders of the House of Commons set out how bills will be progressed, including the selection of amendments. The Standing Orders do not provide a large amount of detail on amendments, although it does draw the distinction between the third reading in the Commons and the Lords:

77. Third reading

(1) No amendments, not being merely verbal, shall be made to any bill on the third reading.

(2) The third reading of a bill brought in upon a ways and means resolution may be taken at the same sitting of the House as its consideration on report.

This is in contrast to the tidying-up amendments that are permissible at third stage in the House of Lords.

The UK Government's guide to making legislation, published by the Cabinet Office, goes into considerable detail on the various stages of a bill.

The section on amendments begins by cautioning that:

Every amendment the Government makes to a bill delays its progress. Government amendments to bills after introduction must therefore be kept to a minimum and will only be agreed by the PBL (Parliamentary Business and Legislation) Committee if they are considered essential to ensure that

⁴ NIA Official Report: Thursday 24 February 2022:
<https://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2022/02/24&docID=369145#4023686>

the bill works properly. To avoid a government defeat or otherwise significantly ease handling in Parliament.⁵

All amendments must be agreed by the PBL Committee and, if necessary, the relevant policy Cabinet committee. Furthermore:

An exception may be made for minor and technical amendments, but these must first be discussed with the PBL Secretariat. Bill teams should alert the PBL Secretariat to any proposed amendments at the earliest possible stage and before the minister writes to the PBL Committee seeking clearance.⁶

The guidance sets out four categories of amendments, two of which are relevant to this paper:

Minor and technical - typographical corrections, drafting improvements, clarifications, renumbering or reordering, to ensure consistency with existing legislation or to update references, for example, to bodies that have changed name since the bill was introduced. Minor and technical amendments do not impact at all on the substance of the bill and should therefore not take up any time at all in debate. Departments should note that “minor and technical” is a category recognised by Government for the purpose of seeking collective agreement, but not by Parliament.

Essential – where there are unforeseen circumstances which have arisen since the introduction of the bill which have led to the pressing need for the amendment, e.g. correcting some major error in the bill or dealing with a situation which could cause major problems if the bill went on to the statute book. This also includes drafting and technical changes essential to deliver the policy in the bill.⁷

⁵ Cabinet Office, Guide to Making Legislation, 2025: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c14f2b7596dbfa052bfde2/2025_Guide_to_Making_Legislation_-_September.pdf#:~:text=The%20bill%20minister%20should%20only%20attend%20the,%E2%80%9Csubject%20to%20any%20minor%20or%20drafting%20amendments%E2%80%9D.

⁶ As above

⁷ Cabinet Office, Guide to Making Legislation, 2025

The guidance goes on to state:

Minor and technical amendments do not need formal PBL Committee clearance. However, departments should never assume that an amendment is minor and technical; bill teams should share details of all possible amendments with the PBL Secretariat who will make the final judgment. Where amendments are minor and technical (usually with advice of Parliamentary Counsel), the secretariat will confirm that these amendments do not require formal clearance. Under no circumstances should amendments be tabled where they do not have formal clearance or written confirmation from the secretariat.

Private Members' bills

The government will provide resources for a member's bill if it advances a policy area in line with the government's agenda. Members can also avail of a 'handout bill', whereby a member who is successful in the ballot is essentially given a government bill to take forward, should they wish.

Again, the UK Government guidance on legislation provides useful context to government support for members' bills:

- Where it is proposed that the Government supports a private member's bill or supports it subject to amendment, this must be cleared through the relevant policy committee of Cabinet as well as the PBL Committee...The department must also consider the extent to which the published version of the bill will need to be amended to ensure it is technically workable, as well as compatible with government policy.
- Where departments are sympathetic to the overall aims of the bill but could not accept a particular part of the bill, they are encouraged to discuss with the member the possibility of amending the bill to enable government to offer its full support.
- Members will frequently contact ministers with a view to reaching agreement on the contents of their proposed bill and obtaining

government support. The minister will often consent to officials in their department discussing the proposal with the member or their staff. Such co-operation can be helpful to both sides and can improve the chances of reaching an agreement to support the bill. Where government support is likely, the member should be encouraged to publish their bill in sufficient time before Second Reading, to allow the Government to reach an agreed position.

- Clearance to support a private member's bill will often include PBL and policy committee clearance to work with the member to draft mutually-satisfactory first House amendments to ensure that:
 - the bill does what it is intended to do (members do not have the resources of Parliamentary Counsel at their disposal, so some technical amendments may be needed to tighten up the bill and make it technically correct); and,
 - the Government can fully support the bill, for example where it has agreed to support the bill on the condition that certain provisions are removed, amended or added.

- Amendments drafted by Parliamentary Counsel will sometimes be government amendments and will sometimes be put down in the name of a private member. If the amendments are to be put down in the name of a private member, the department will usually invite the member to put the amendment down him or herself. It is often more convenient if they are handed in by Parliamentary Counsel on behalf of the member; in which case the member in charge must either sign the amendments or give written authority to the Public Bill Office to accept the amendments from Parliamentary Counsel.⁸

⁸ Cabinet Office, Guide to Making Legislation, 2025

3 House of Lords

The third reading of a bill in the House of Lords is the final chance to make amendments, but it is essentially “A ‘tidying up’ stage, aiming to close any loopholes. A final chance for amendments and votes”.⁹

The *Guide to Public Bills in the House of Lords* provides further information on proceedings at third stage:

The third reading and passing of a bill are its final Lords stages. If the bill affects the interests or prerogative of the Crown, the King’s consent is signified by a Minister who is also a Privy Counsellor, before third reading. The third reading itself is moved, and is followed by consideration of any amendments, the procedure for which is the same as on report. The practice of the House is normally to resolve major points of difference by the end of report stage and to use third reading for tidying up the bill.

An amendment may not be tabled at third reading unless it fulfils one of three principal purposes: to clarify any remaining uncertainties, to improve the drafting, and to enable the Government or the member in charge to fulfil undertakings given at earlier stages of the bill or to enable others to test their willingness to do so. An issue which has been fully debated and voted on or negated at a previous stage of a bill may not be reopened by an amendment on third reading. Manuscript amendments (amendments tabled on the day of the debate) are not in order. The Public Bill Office draws the attention of the Usual Channels to breaches of the guidance on third reading amendments.¹⁰

Two examples of tidying up amendments in the House of Lords are included at figure 2 for illustrative purposes.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill 2025

⁹ <https://www.parliament.uk/business/lords/work-of-the-house-of-lords/making-laws/>

¹⁰ UK Parliament website, Making laws: House of Lords stages: <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/publications-records/house-of-lords-publications/rules-guides-for-business/guidance-members-hl/hl-guide-to-public-bills-november-2024.pdf>

Amendment 72 (Baroness Taylor of Stevenage) sought to “leave out lines 12 and 13” on page 22 of the Bill.

The amendment removed an unnecessary duplicate definition of “qualifying distribution agreement”, because the term was already defined elsewhere (Clause 13(8)).

The Minister described it as a “straightforward technical amendment” intended to “tidy up the drafting of the Bill” and ensure clarity and coherence.¹¹

Non-Domestic Rating (Multipliers and Private Schools) Bill 2025¹²

Three tidying up amendments were tabled by the Shadow Education Minister, Baroness Barron. They aimed to remove any reference to private schools following the removal of clause 5 from the bill at report stage. Lord Khan of Burnley, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, said that, as these simply refine amendments that have already been passed, the government were not opposing them.

3 Senedd and Welsh Government

Standing Order 26.61 of the Senedd sets out the admissibility criteria for amendments to bills:

- An amendment is not admissible if:
 - (i) it is not in its proper form in accordance with Standing Order 26.58;

¹¹ Hansard (Lords), 1 September 2025

¹² This summary is taken from the website of the Chartered Institute for Taxation: <https://www.tax.org.uk/business-rates-mps-and-peers-clash-over-amendments>

- (ii) it is not relevant to the Bill or the provisions of the Bill which it would amend;
- (iii) it is inconsistent with the general principles of the Bill as agreed by the Senedd; or
- (iv) it is inconsistent with a decision already taken at the Stage at which the amendment is proposed.

It is for the Presiding Officer to determine the proper form of amendments and guidance is available on the Senedd website.

The Welsh Government's publication *Legislation Handbook on Senedd Bills* contains information on proposed government amendments to bills. Relevant extracts are set out in figure 3:

Once the Bill has been introduced into the Senedd, it can only be amended with the agreement of the Senedd. This is usually done during Stages 2 and 3 of the Senedd's consideration; amendments can also be made at Further Stage 3 and Report Stage where undertaken.

The Government should seek to ensure the Bill delivers the intended policy effectively. In order, to do so, the Bill will need to work properly and communicate the policy clearly. The Government may need to table amendments to the Bill to achieve this result.

However, the tabling of Government amendments can create the impression a Bill has not been properly prepared and may also hinder the progress of a Bill, take up Committee and Plenary time and cause ill-feeling in the Senedd. Even if the individual amendments, in themselves, are small and uncontroversial and unlikely to take up much time, their cumulative impact can be more serious. Government amendments to Bills should, therefore, be kept to a minimum and sought only if necessary to ensure the Bill delivers its policy effectively, to avoid a Government defeat, or otherwise to support the effective handling of the Bill and other Government business in the Senedd.

There are a number of situations in which the Government may seek to amend a Bill:

b. Technical changes may need to be made to make the Bill work properly and communicate the policy clearly: for example, typographical corrections, changes to ensure the English and Welsh versions of the Bill convey the same meaning, the renumbering or reordering, changes to ensure there is consistency of expression within the Bill and/or with existing legislation, or changes to update references within the Bill (e.g. to bodies that have changed name since the Bill was introduced); (Renumbering as a consequence of amendments made to the Bill, and certain types of typographical corrections, will be made as part of the reprinting process on request to the Legislation Office by OLC, and do not require explicit amendments to the Bill.)

The Welsh Government guidance also sets out the following additional criteria, as reflected in Standing Orders:

In addition to what might be considered the ‘general rules’ for admissibility of amendments...there are further rules of admissibility with amending Stages, in particular:

At further Stage 3 or further Report Stage (but not at Stage 2, Stage 3 or Report Stage) an amendment is admissible if, in addition to the criteria in Standing Order 26.61, it is for the purpose of: clarifying a provision of a Bill (including ensuring consistency between the English and Welsh texts); or giving effect to commitments given at the earlier Stage 3 or Report Stage proceedings, as set out in Standing Order 26.41.

Non-government bills

The Welsh Government monitors the ballot for the selection of private members’ bills and will advise the relevant policy Group if its subject area has been selected. Furthermore:

Following a ballot, and ahead of Cabinet consideration preceding the leave to introduce debate, it is recommended the relevant portfolio

Minister (with support from officials) meet with the Member successful in the ballot. This is to gain further information about the proposed Bill and to understand better its policy intent, and will help Cabinet to make an informed decision about the Bill.¹³

In addition, the Minister must be advised on:

...the impact on the Government of the Bill proceeding to introduction and Senedd consideration – such impacts will include staff resources for policy development, financial assessment, legal analysis, drafting of any Government amendments, and translation, as well as in supporting the Minister with the process of Senedd consideration. Experience has shown there is a significant amount of work required by officials if a Member Bill proceeds and this should be assessed as part of the advice to the Minister.

Despite the fact that the “The Senedd Commission prepare the Bill for the Member, not the Office of the Legislative Counsel...significant work will be required once the Bill has been introduced to assess whether or not proposals to amend the Bill should be made by the Government, and to prepare any Government amendments.”¹⁴

4 Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government

The Scottish Parliament’s Standing Orders set out the admissibility criteria for amendments and relevant extracts are reproduced below.

Rule 9.10 Amendments to Bills

5. An amendment is admissible unless—
 - (a) it is not in proper form;

¹³ Welsh Government, Legislation Handbook on Senedd Bills, September 2024: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-12/legislation-handbook-senedd-bills.pdf>

¹⁴ As above

(b) it is not relevant to the Bill or the provisions of the Bill which it would amend;

(c) it is inconsistent with the general principles of the Bill as agreed by the Parliament; or

(d) it is inconsistent with a decision already taken at the Stage at which the amendment is proposed.

Greater detail on amendments is to be found in the *Bill Handbook*¹⁵, published by the Scottish Government. This is written for Scottish Government staff but is a valuable source of information on proceedings relating to bills. It establishes how bill teams are required to approach the preparation and passage of legislation, including amendments. Relevant extracts are reproduced below.

Where Government amendments to a Bill are required these should, as far as possible, be made at Stage 2 rather than at Stage 3, in order to leave Stage 3 for tidying up and for delivering on any undertakings given at Stage 2.

When the need for Government amendments becomes clear, these will be instructed following the same process as for the original Bill. Bill Teams will prepare policy instructions, SGLD will develop legal instructions, and PCO will draft the amendments. The level of Ministerial clearance will depend on the significance of the amendment and involvement of Ministers, but all should be cleared at least in principle with the Minister in charge of the Bill and their general authority to lodge purely technical amendments should be obtained in such circumstances where that is necessary.

Certain changes to the Bill are made administratively rather than by amendment. Changes may be made to section, schedule, Part and Chapter titles and to italic cross-headings to ensure that they continue to

¹⁵ Scottish Government, Bill Handbook:
<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/foi-eir-release/2022/07-a/foi-202200306018/documents/foi-202200306018---information-released/foi-202200306018---information-released/govscot%3Adocument/FOI%2B202200306018%2B-%2BInformation%2Breleased.pdf>

accurately reflect the relevant provisions. The numbering (including numbers in cross-references) is corrected and punctuation changed where this is required in consequence of amendments made to the Bill (so long as the sense of the provision is not altered). The changes to a Bill that may be made administratively rather than by amendment are described as “printing points”...

It is unlikely that amendments lodged by individual Members will be drafted in precisely the same format as PCO would draft Government amendments. As a consequence, the Government may take the view that an amendment is technically deficient. The Minister can legitimately point out that fact during proceedings on amendments, but it should not be the sole or principal reason for why the Government chooses to resist an amendment. All non-Government amendments should be considered on their policy merits and, if the policy purpose is supportable, and the amendment is within legislative competence, the Minister may give an undertaking to return at Stage 3 with a redrafted amendment which addresses any technical concerns which the Government has.¹⁶

In relation to advice on Member’s Bills, the handbook states:

When a draft proposal is lodged, the lead policy officials should send a submission to the lead Minister, ideally within 2 weeks of lodging. The submission should provide an initial assessment of the proposal, Scottish Government considerations, and implications for government policy.

When a Member’s Bill is introduced the Government submits a Memorandum to the lead committee setting out the Government’s views on the Bill, addressing key issues such as the policy and financial implications. The Government will need to engage with a Member’s Bill throughout its parliamentary passage, and policy leads can anticipate that

¹⁶ Scottish Government, Bill Handbook

their Minister will need to participate in committee evidence sessions, plenary debates, and amendment sessions.¹⁷

An example of engagement between a member and the relevant Cabinet Secretary during Stage 3 is at figure 4:

Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 3

Monica Lennon (Central Scotland) (Lab)

I am pleased to speak to the first of my stage 3 amendments.

Amendment 1 and the other amendments in the group that are in my name relate to section 5, which deals with period product provision in education settings, and specifically to the number of locations on student campuses where products should be available. At stage 2, the cabinet secretary initially proposed a statutory minimum of only one location on each student campus, but, after further discussions, I lodged an amendment that provided for a stronger minimum requirement of one location in each building that is normally used by pupils or students. I was pleased that that amendment was agreed to at stage 2 and is now section 5(3) of the amended bill.

At stage 2, concerns were raised that the amendment could make it necessary to provide period products in inappropriate buildings, such as farm buildings in an agricultural college or buildings in rural areas that are not frequently used. I acknowledged those concerns and gave a commitment to lodge amendments at stage 3 to try to improve the drafting.

Amendments 1 to 3 are minor drafting amendments that adjust section 5(3) to make it clear that the requirement to provide period products in a building that is normally used by pupils or students applies even if that is the institution's only building.

The main amendment in the group is amendment 4, which makes it clear that products do not have to be provided in a building, even if it is normally used

¹⁷ Scottish Government, Bill Handbook

by pupils or students, if that building is not suitable. For example, that might be because there are no toilets or changing facilities in the building.

Amendment 4 also makes it clear that education providers must consult on the question of what makes a building suitable or unsuitable before a decision is taken, so that the views of students are paramount.

Amendments 5 and 6, which are in the name of the cabinet secretary and which I support, are consequential amendments to section 6D as a result of the consultation requirement in amendment 4.

The Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government (Aileen Campbell)

I would first like to say that it is testament to good and positive co-operation and the level of agreement that we have reached on the bill that there are so few amendments to consider today.

The amendments in the first group relate to section 5. Stage 3 gives us the chance to further fine tune provisions following amendment at stage 2. In order to create the best possible legislation, further improvement to drafting is sometimes required, even when the original intent is agreed. That is why the Scottish Government agrees with and supports amendments 1 to 3, in the name of Monica Lennon, which make the provision in section 5(3) clearer and simpler. As Monica Lennon said, the wording of section 5(3) was debated during stage 2, as concerns had been raised by stakeholders that, as drafted, the requirement was too restrictive. During stage 2, Ms Lennon and I committed to considering that further. Our teams have worked together to better understand stakeholders' concerns, and I believe that amendment 4 addresses them proportionately.

The Scottish Government strongly agrees that any exception to section 5(3) must be acceptable to pupils and students rather than education providers being able to unilaterally decide that the building is not suitable for the provision of free products. I am pleased that amendment 4 ensures that that is the case, and so we support it...

Amendment 5 is a technical amendment that amends section 6D(3)(b), which will now refer to the new subsection 6D(3A) that will be inserted by amendment 6. The new subsection contains all the provisions relating to consultation about which premises and where in those premises period products should be obtainable. Amendment 6 sets out revised consultation requirements in relation to buildings that are normally used by pupils or students, mandating that consultation covers the locations within those buildings where free period products should be provided.

The Scottish Parliament also publishes its own guidance on bills aimed at assisting MSPs in understanding and navigating the process.

It states, in relation to amendments:

If the debate on the motion to pass the Bill is scheduled to take place later on the same day as the day on which Stage 3 amendments are disposed of, the member in charge (or, in the case of a non-Government Bill, the member in charge or a Minister, if any, with general responsibility for the subject matter of the Bill) may move a motion, “That further Stage 3 consideration of the [short title] Bill be adjourned to [date]/a later day”.

If the motion is agreed to, no further proceedings take place on the Bill until the day named in the motion (or until the day subsequently appointed by the Bureau as the “later day”) (Rule 9.8.5C). In the interim, further amendments may be lodged, but only by the member in charge (or, in the case of a non-Government Bill, the member in charge or a Minister, if any, with general responsibility for the subject matter of the Bill). Such amendments may be lodged only for the purpose of “clarifying uncertainties” or “giving effect to commitments given at the earlier proceedings at Stage 3”.

These two categories of permissible additional amendments correspond to possible reasons the member in charge may have for moving to adjourn to a later day. The first reason is to gain an opportunity to consider the implications of any unexpected or unwelcome decision to agree to Stage 3

amendments. In particular, any substantial new material inserted into a Government Bill by a non- Government amendment may require some adjustment to its drafting, and further changes elsewhere in the Bill may also be necessary before the Bill is, once again, fit to be enacted...

The second reason for moving to adjourn Stage 3 proceedings is where the member in charge (or relevant Scottish Government Minister) has promised, earlier in the Stage, to make some concession on a controversial issue, to meet concerns expressed by members in debate or in response to amendments already proposed. In such a case, the Parliament may feel able to support the motion to adjourn Stage 3 proceedings, on the ground that this will allow time for a mutually satisfactory compromise to be reached and appropriate amendments to be lodged. These amendments can then be moved by the member in charge (or relevant Scottish Government Minister) at the resumed Stage 3 proceedings.

It goes on to say:

It is quite normal for many of the amendments to a Bill to be lodged by the member in charge of the Bill (e.g. by the Minister in charge of a Government Bill). Some of these may give effect to concessions made during earlier Stages, or may be intended simply to improve the drafting or correct errors that have come to light since the Bill was introduced.¹⁸

6 Dail Eireann

Standing Orders of Dail Eireann provide the procedural basis for amendments to bills. There is no specific reference to minor or technical amendments in Standing Orders, although Standing Order 203 states:

203. Corrections in Bills

¹⁸ Scottish Parliament, Guidance on Public Bills: <https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/parliamentary-guidance/guidance-on-public-bills-session-6-version-2.pdf>

During the progress of a Bill, corrections of a verbal or formal nature may at any time be made in a Bill by the Clerk, under the direction of the Ceann Comhairle. Versional, and all other corrections, shall be made by way of motion, and dealt with as any other amendment.¹⁹

Two other sources provide additional information relating to amendments, although their relevance is somewhat limited. The first is the Oireachtas' *Procedure Guide*, which states:

Amendments may vary in complexity from minor editorial changes to the text of a Bill to the insertion of new Parts or Schedules.²⁰

The *Introduction to the Legislative Process*, also published by the Oireachtas, addresses the issue of minor and technical amendments. It also touches on the importance of proof-reading bills, as these can impact on the amendment process:

Proof reading in the Bills Office focuses on misspellings and mistakes in grammar and punctuation, but substantive changes to the text of a Bill cannot be made once it has been presented or introduced to the Houses. The importance of the proof-reading exercise cannot be over-emphasised. Errors that are not picked up and corrected in the proof reading of the bill before publication will have to be put right by way of official amendments moved by the Minister at the Committee and/or Report Stage of the bill.²¹

7 Conclusion

Across the legislatures examined, there is no single definition of what might be classed as a tidying-up or corrective amendment. However, while each legislature has its own procedural framework, all provide mechanisms for

¹⁹ Dail Eireann, Standing Orders: https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/parliamentaryBusiness/standingOrders/dail/2025/2025-04-07_consolidated-dail-eireann-standing-orders-april-2025_en.pdf

²⁰ Dail Eireann, Procedure Guide, Amendments to Bills: <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/procedure-guide-dail/legislation/amendments-to-bills/>

²¹ Houses of the Oireachtas, Introduction to the Legislative Process: https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/corporate/other/2022/2022-06-24_introduction-to-the-legislative-process_en.pdf

amendments to be brought forward to correct errors and ensure that the statute book is robust Whether labelled as ‘technical’, tidying-up’, ‘minor’ or ‘corrective’, the purpose of amendments may range from clarifying text to more significant changes, for example to ensure a bill remains within legislative competence.

Ultimately, it will be for the Speaker, with the advice of officials, to select amendments.

Finally, the Northern Ireland Assembly appears to be largely in line with other legislatures in its approach to these types of amendments. However, there will be an ongoing need for members and ministers to refer to internal guidance and standing orders to ensure best practice is maintained.

Annex 1 – stages of bills in the relevant legislatures

Northern Ireland Assembly

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| First Stage | A Minister or Member introduces the Bill to the Assembly. The Bill's Long Title is read out but there is no debate or vote. This stage is formal and enables the Bill to be printed and published. Bills are usually available to the public on the Internet on the day of Introduction. Explanatory notes to accompany the Bill are usually available at the same time. |
| Second Stage | <p>This is the first opportunity for all MLAs to debate the general principles of the Bill. Members may indicate the issues they are likely to want to debate in more detail at later stages.</p> <p>The Minister or Member in charge of the Bill begins the debate by outlining the Bill's objectives. Other Members, including the Chairperson of the relevant Committee, give their opinion. The Minister or Member in charge speaks last in the debate, in order to respond to questions and comments about the Bill. At the end of the debate, MLAs vote to decide whether to agree to the Bill's Second Stage, meaning it can proceed to the next stage. The Assembly may reject the Bill if it disagrees with the general principles. If approved, the Bill is referred to the appropriate statutory Committee.</p> |
| Committee Stage | This involves detailed consideration of the Bill. The Committee normally takes evidence from interested bodies (including the Government Department) and individuals. Committee |

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| | <p>members then scrutinise each clause and schedule of the Bill and discuss possible amendments (proposals for change) to it.</p> <p>Committees have no power to amend a Bill but they prepare a report for the Assembly, including any proposals for amendments to the bill.</p> |
| Consideration Stage | <p>The Bill is debated by the whole Assembly. MLAs vote on each clause, schedule and proposed amendment to the Bill.</p> <p>Proposed amendments to a Bill at Consideration Stage are submitted to the Bill Office in time for publication in advance of the debate. On each day that amendments are tabled, they are published on a Notice of Amendments. Then after the deadline for tabling has passed, all amendments selected by the Speaker are published on a Marshalled List of Amendments.</p> <p>There is no opening speech by the Minister or sponsoring Member at the start of Consideration Stage, but they will be called to “move” (formally propose) and speak about any amendments in their name, or to respond to amendments proposed or queries raised by other Members.</p> <p>Amendments about related issues or parts of a Bill are usually grouped with each other so that they can be debated together. This means that a Consideration Stage debate usually involves several mini-debates about related amendments. But when it comes to voting, each amendment is voted on in strict numerical sequence, according to the order in which they</p> |

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| | <p>impact on the Bill. There is one exception to this rule: the Bill's Long Title and any amendments to it are always voted on last.</p> <p>After the debate, the Marshalled List is updated to show the results of votes on each amendment.</p> |
| Further Consideration Stage | <p>This is the final opportunity to amend the Bill. The amendments procedure is similar to that for Consideration Stage, but this time the debate is limited solely to new amendments. If there are no amendments, there is no debate.</p> |
| Exceptional Further Consideration Stage | <p>This is an opportunity to correct serious technical defects or address any previous amendments that could potentially take a bill outside the legislative competence of the Assembly.</p> |
| Final Stage | <p>No date can be set for the Final Stage of a bill until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Speaker has considered the Bill and signified to the Minister or Member in charge that it may properly proceed to Final Stage; or • Where the Speaker refers the Bill to the Secretary of State, consent has been given for the Bill to proceed. <p>No amendments are debated at this stage. Members debate and vote on whether to pass the Bill.</p> |

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| | <p>After Final Stage, further checks must be carried out before the Bill can receive Royal Assent and become law, as detailed below.</p> |
| <p>Consideration by Attorney-General and Advocate-General</p> | <p>Any Bill passed by the Assembly is referred to the Attorney General for Northern Ireland and the Advocate General. This allows the Attorney General and the Advocate General to determine whether to refer to the Supreme Court the question of whether a provision of the Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Assembly.</p> <p>The ordinary procedure is that, once it is confirmed by them that they do not intend to refer the Bill to the Supreme Court, the Speaker writes to the Secretary of State to request him to seek Royal Assent.</p> |
| <p>Reconsideration Stage</p> | <p>This stage takes place only in exceptional circumstances, where the Supreme Court decides that a provision of the Bill is not within the legislative competence of the Assembly. Members consider only the amendments proposed to be made to the Bill. If amendments are agreed to, a vote is taken on whether to approve the Bill as amended</p> |

House of Commons

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| <p>Formal introduction – no debate on the Bill</p> | <p>First reading is the first stage of a Bill's passage through the House of Commons - usually a formality, it takes place without debate.</p> <p>First reading of a Bill can take place at any time in a parliamentary session.</p> <p>The short title of the Bill is read out and is followed by an order for the Bill to be printed.</p> |
| <p>Second reading</p> <p>Debate on general principles of the Bill</p> | <p>Second reading is the first opportunity for MPs to debate the main principles of the Bill.</p> <p>It usually takes place no sooner than two weekends after first reading.</p> <p>The Government minister, spokesperson or MP responsible for the Bill opens the second reading debate.</p> |

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| | <p>The official Opposition spokesperson responds with their views on the Bill.</p> <p>The debate continues with other Opposition parties and backbench MPs giving their opinions.</p> <p>At the end of the debate, the Commons decides whether the Bill should be given its second reading by voting, meaning it can proceed to the next stage.</p> <p>It is possible for a Bill to have a second reading with no debate - as long as MPs agree to its progress.</p> |
| <p>Committee stage</p> <p>Line by line examination of the Bill</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>Government Bills are usually formally timetabled after they have received a second reading.</p> <p>Most Bills are dealt with in a Public Bill Committee.</p> <p>If the Bill starts in the Commons the committee is able to take evidence from experts and interest groups from outside Parliament.</p> <p>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.</p> |

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| | <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. The selection and grouping of amendments in a Committee of the whole House is decided by the Chairman of Ways and Means (Deputy Speaker).</p> <p>Bills fast tracked through the House of Commons will receive less consideration. Consolidated Fund Bills do not have a committee stage at all.</p> |
| <p>Report Stage</p> <p>Chance for the whole House to discuss and amend the Bill</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>There is no set time period between the end of committee stage and the start of the report stage.</p> <p>All MPs may speak and vote - for lengthy or complex Bills the debates may be spread over several days.</p> <p>All MPs can suggest amendments to the Bill or new clauses (parts) they think should be added.</p> |

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| <p>Third reading</p> <p>Opportunity for final debate on the Bill</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>Debate on the Bill is usually short, and limited to what is actually in the Bill, rather than, as at second reading, what might have been included.</p> <p>Amendments (proposals for change) cannot be made to a Bill at third reading in the Commons.</p> <p>At the end of the debate, the House decides (votes on) whether to approve the third reading of the Bill.</p> |
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House of Lords

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| <p>First reading (Lords) Formal introduction - no debate on the bill</p> | <p>First reading is the first stage of a bill's passage through the House of Lords - usually a formality, it takes place without debate.</p> <p>First reading of a bill can take place at any time in a parliamentary session.</p> <p>The long title (indicating the content of the bill) is read out by the member of the Lords in charge of the bill.</p> <p>Once formally introduced, the bill is printed.</p> <p>The next stage is second reading - the first opportunity for members of the Lords to debate the main principles and purpose of the bill.</p> |
| <p>Second reading (Lords)</p> | <p>Second reading is the first opportunity for members of the Lords to debate the key principles and main purpose of a bill and to flag up any concerns or specific areas where they think amendments (changes) are needed.</p> <p>Before a second reading debate takes place, members who would like to speak add their name to a list – the ‘speakers list’.</p> <p>The government minister, spokesperson or a member of the Lords responsible for the bill opens the second reading debate.</p> |

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| | <p>Any member can speak during second reading – this stage can indicate those members particularly interested in a bill, or a specific aspect of it, and those who are most likely to be involved in suggesting changes at later stages.</p> <p>Second reading debates usually last for a few hours but can sometimes stretch over a couple of days.</p> <p>After second reading the bill goes to committee stage – where detailed line by line examination and discussion of amendments takes place.</p> |
| <p>Committee stage (Lords)</p> | <p>Committee stage involves detailed line by line examination of the separate parts (clauses and schedules) of a bill. Starting from the front of the bill, members work through to the end.</p> <p>Any member of the Lords can take part because the Lords meet as a whole House for committee stage, either in the main chamber or as a Grand Committee in a separate chamber.</p> <p>Proceedings in Grand Committees are the same as Committees of the whole House with an important exception: motions must be passed unanimously, so a dissenting voice from one Member could block an amendment to a Bill.</p> |

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| | <p>Usually starting about two weeks after the second reading debate, committee stage generally lasts for up to eight days, but can go on for longer.</p> <p>Before committee stage begins, amendments (changes) are gathered together and placed in order, then published in the 'marshalled list'. Updated lists are produced before the start of each day of committee stage.</p> <p>During committee stage every clause of the bill has to be agreed to and votes on any amendments can take place. All suggested amendments have to be considered, if a member wishes, and members can discuss an issue for as long as they want. The government cannot restrict the subjects under discussion or impose a time limit. This is a key point of difference with procedure in the House of Commons.</p> <p>If the bill has been amended it is reprinted with all the agreed amendments. At the end of committee stage, the bill moves to report stage for further scrutiny.</p> |
| <p>Report stage (Lords)</p> | <p>Report stage gives all members of the Lords a further opportunity to examine and make amendments (changes) to a bill.</p> <p>It usually starts 14 days after committee stage has concluded and can be spread over several days (but is generally shorter than committee stage).</p> |

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| | <p>Before report stage begins, amendments are gathered together and placed in order, then published in the 'marshalled list'. Updated lists are produced before the start of each day of committee stage.</p> <p>During report stage detailed examination of the bill continues. Any member of the Lords can take part and votes on any amendments may take place.</p> <p>After report stage, the bill is reprinted to include all the agreed amendments. The bill then moves to third reading, a further chance for the Lords to discuss and amend the bill as it nears conclusion.</p> <p>If the bill is amended it is reprinted to include all the agreed amendments. The bill moves to third reading – the final chance for the Lords to amend the bill.</p> |
| <p>Third reading (Lords)</p> | <p>Third reading in the Lords is the chance for members to 'tidy up' a bill, concentrating on making sure the eventual law is effective and workable – without loopholes.</p> <p>Before third reading, amendments (changes) are gathered together and placed in order, then published in the 'marshalled list'.</p> <p>Unlike the House of Commons, amendments can be made at third reading in the House of Lords, provided the issue has not been fully considered and voted on during either committee or report stage.</p> |

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| | <p>Amendments at third reading are often used to clarify specific parts of the bill and to allow the government to make good any promises of changes they made at earlier stages of the passage of a bill.</p> <p>If the bill started in the Lords, it goes to the House of Commons for its first reading. The Commons reprints the bill with the Lords amendments.</p> <p>If the bill began in the Commons, it is sent back after third reading in the Lords for consideration of Lords amendments, or, if there have been no amendments in the Lords, is sent to the monarch for royal assent.</p> |
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Senedd

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| <p>Stage 1:</p> <p>A decision on whether the Senedd agrees with the general principles of the Bill</p> | <p>Stage 1 begins with a Bill being laid with the Senedd's Table Office by the Member in charge. This is called 'introduction.'</p> <p>The Senedd's Business Committee decides whether to refer the Bill to a responsible committee (and set a deadline for the Committee to report by). Then:</p> <p>If the Bill is referred to a responsible committee, the committee consults and takes evidence on the Bill's general principles. It will then publish a 'Stage 1 report' on the Bill. Other committees may also produce reports on the Bill. A Plenary debate (meeting of the whole Senedd) will then take place on the general principles of the Bill, informed by these reports; or</p> <p>If the Bill is not referred to a responsible committee, the Senedd will move straight away to a Plenary debate on the general principles of the Bill.</p> <p>Following the Plenary debate on the Bill's general principles, Members will be asked to agree the general principles:</p> <p>If Members agree the general principles of the Bill, it progresses to Stage 2; or</p> <p>If Members do not agree the general principles of the Bill, it falls.</p> |
| <p>Stage 2:</p> | <p>Members of the Senedd can begin tabling amendments (proposing changes) to the Bill as soon as Stage 2 starts (the first working day after Stage 1 is completed).</p> |

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| <p>An amending stage</p> | <p>Before a committee can consider the amendments, the Senedd must agree a financial resolution on the Bill. If a financial resolution is not agreed within 6 months of the stage 1 vote, the Bill will fall. Financial resolutions are often agreed on the same day as the stage 1 vote.</p> <p>The amendments are debated and voted on by a committee. Only members of the responsible committee can vote on amendments.</p> <p>Once the last amendment has been voted on, the Bill moves to Stage 3.</p> |
| <p>Stage 3:</p> <p>An amending stage</p> | <p>Stage 3</p> <p>Members of the Senedd can begin tabling amendments (propose changes) to the Bill as soon as stage 3 starts (the first working day after Stage 2 is completed).</p> <p>The amendments are debated and voted on in Plenary (a meeting of the whole Senedd).</p> <p>Once the last amendment at Stage 3 has been voted on, most Bills move onto Stage 4.</p> <p>However, additional amending stages are also possible, and at this point the Bill can move to Further Stage 3 or Report Stage.</p> <p>Further Stage 3: an optional amendment stage</p> <p>When all the amendments at Stage 3 have been considered, the Member in charge of the Bill, or any member of the government, can propose that the Senedd considers further amendments at a Further Stage 3. Then:</p> |

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| | <p>If the Senedd agrees to this proposal, a Further Stage 3 takes place; or</p> <p>If the Senedd does not agree, the Bill will move to Stage 4 or Report Stage</p> <p>Only the Member in charge of the Bill, or a member of the government, can table amendments to the Bill at a Further Stage 3. Such amendments have to be for the purpose of clarifying a provision in the Bill, (including ensuring consistency between the English and Welsh texts), or giving effect to commitments made during Stage 3.</p> <p>The amendments are debated and voted on in Plenary (a meeting of the whole Senedd).</p> <p>Once the last amendment has been voted on, the Bill will:</p> <p>move onto Stage 4; or</p> <p>move onto Report Stage.</p> <p>Report Stage: an optional amendment stage</p> <p>When Stage 3 (or Further Stage 3) has been completed, the Member in charge of the Bill can propose that the Senedd considers further amendments at a Report Stage. Then:</p> <p>If the Senedd agrees to this proposal, a Report Stage takes place; or</p> <p>If the Senedd does not agree, the Bill will move to Stage 4.</p> |
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Any Member can table amendments to the Bill at a Report Stage. Such amendments have to be for the purpose of clarifying a provision in the Bill, or giving effect to commitments made during Stage 3. Such commitments may be substantial or significant.

The amendments are debated and voted on in Plenary (a meeting of the whole Senedd).

Once the last amendment has been voted on, the Bill will:

move onto Stage 4; or

move onto a Further Report Stage.

Further Report Stage: an optional amendment stage

When all the amendments at Report Stage have been considered, the Member in charge of the Bill, or any member of the government, can propose that the Senedd considers further amendments at a Further Report Stage. Then:

If the Senedd agrees to this proposal, a Further Report Stage takes place; or

If the Senedd does not agree, the Bill will move to Stage 4.

Only the Member in charge of the Bill, or a member of the government, can table amendments to the Bill at a Further Report Stage. Such amendments have to be for the purpose of clarifying a provision in the Bill, or giving effect to commitments made during Report Stage.

The amendments are debated and voted on in Plenary (a meeting of the whole Senedd).

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| | Once the last amendment has been voted on, the Bill will move onto Stage 4. |
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Scottish Parliament

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| Introduction | Bill and accompanying documents are sent by the clerks for publication. |
| Stage 1 | <p>Stage 1 is the stage where members can debate and vote on the general principles of a Bill.</p> <p>Once a Bill has been introduced, the Parliamentary Bureau refers it to the committee within whose remit the subject matter of the Bill falls. For the purposes of Stage 1, this committee is known as the “lead committee”. If there is more than one committee to which the Bill is relevant, the Parliament may designate which is to be the lead committee. In that case, the other committees, known as “secondary committees” may (but need not) consider and report on the general principles of the Bill to the lead committee.</p> <p>At Stage 1, the lead committee’s role is to consider and 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.</p> <p>The Parliament is then required to consider the general principles of the Bill and decide whether to agree to them.</p> |

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| <p>Stage 2</p> | <p>If the Bill proceeds to Stage 2, 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.</p> <p>As soon as a decision has been taken at Stage 1 to approve the general principles of the Bill, any member may lodge amendments to the Bill. Any member of the Parliament (not just members of the Stage 2 committee) may lodge amendments at Stage 2, and there is no limit on the number of amendments that may be lodged. There is no selection of amendments at Stage 2, so all admissible amendments may be moved.</p> <p>The principal role of the Stage 2 committee is to consider and dispose of amendments.</p> |
| <p>After Stage 2 – the bill as amended</p> | <p>if any amendment (however small) is agreed to, the Bill is re-published in amended form. The re-published Bill indicates all amendments agreed to by side-lining in the right margin. Provisions in the Bill as introduced are not re-numbered as a result of amendments being agreed to. So, for example, a new section inserted by amendment between sections 1 and 2 will appear as 1A, and the removal by amendment of section 3 will not cause section 4 to be re-numbered. This is intended to assist members and others to see clearly where amendments have been made during the parliamentary scrutiny of a Bill. All numbering is corrected for the Act if the Bill is passed.</p> |

Stage 3

Stage 3 takes place at a meeting of the whole Parliament. Stage 3 is in two parts: proceedings to debate and dispose of those amendments (if any) selected for debate; and a debate on a motion by the member in charge that the Bill be passed. The two parts of Stage 3 are often scheduled to take place on the same day, but need not be.

After proceedings on amendments at Stage 3 are concluded (including any adjourned proceedings under Rule 9.8.5C, and any further Stage 3 proceedings after referral back for further Stage 2 consideration), the Parliament must decide whether to pass the Bill. The debate takes place on a motion by the member in charge of the Bill that the Parliament agrees that the Bill be passed.

If the debate on the motion to pass the Bill is scheduled to take place later on the same day as the day on which Stage 3 amendments are disposed of, the member in charge (or, in the case of a non-Government Bill, the member in charge or a Minister, if any, with general responsibility for the subject matter of the Bill) may move a motion, “That further Stage 3 consideration of the [short title] Bill be adjourned to [date]/a later day”.

If the motion is agreed to, no further proceedings take place on the Bill until the day named in the motion (or until the day subsequently appointed by the Bureau as the “later day”). In the interim, further amendments may be lodged, but only by the member in charge (or, in the case of a non-Government Bill, the member in charge or a Minister, if any, with general responsibility for the subject matter of the Bill). Such amendments may be lodged only for the

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| | purpose of “clarifying uncertainties” or “giving effect to commitments given at the earlier proceedings at Stage 3” |
| Reconsideration Stage | <p>Section 32 of the 1998 Act provides that a Bill, once passed, may be submitted for Royal Assent by the Presiding Officer after the expiry of a four-week period. During that period, the Bill is subject to legal challenge by the Advocate General for Scotland, the Lord Advocate or the Attorney General, and may also be subject to an order made by the Secretary of State. The Presiding Officer may, however, submit the Bill for Royal Assent after less than four weeks if notified by all three law officers and the Secretary of State that they do not intend to exercise those powers.</p> |

Dail Eireann

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| <p>First Stage</p> | <p>On First Stage the Bill is initiated. There are two methods of initiating a Bill, introduction and presentation.</p> <p>"Introduction" is the method used to initiate Private Members' Bills. Government Bills are initiated by way of presentation; this means a Bill can be published without the prior permission of the Houses.</p> |
| <p>Second Stage</p> | <p>On Second Stage, the general principles of the Bill are debated. Second Stage of a Bill is a debate on the motion "That the Bill be now read a Second Time" and provides Members with an opportunity to discuss the general principles of the Bill, what the Bill contains and what might be included in a relevant way.</p> |
| <p>Third (Committee) Stage</p> | <p>Third Stage, which is also called Committee Stage, involves detailed consideration of the Bill, with separate decisions on each section and each amendment.</p> <p>Committee Stage is usually taken in a select committee of the Dáil and a committee of the whole Seanad. Some Bills, generally urgent Bills or those affecting a number of Departments, may be examined in a committee of the whole Dáil.</p> |
| <p>Fourth (Report) Stage</p> | <p>On Fourth Stage, which is also called Report Stage, amendments arising out of or dealing with issues discussed on Committee Stage are considered.</p> |

Fifth (Final) Stage

On Fifth Stage, the Bill is passed by the House. It is a relatively short stage when the House reviews and accepts the Bill, and there is usually little general contribution.

When the Bill passes all Stages in one House it is then sent to the other House for the same process to be repeated. The House in which a Bill is initiated is known as the "First House", with the other House being known as the "Second House". Where the Second House makes amendments to a Bill, the amendments are returned to the First House for its agreement.