

Amending Standing Orders:

Committee chair job sharing

February 2026

In accordance with Standing Order 11.7(iv), the Business Committee is responsible for making recommendations on the general practice and procedures of the Senedd, including any proposals for the re-making or revision of Standing Orders.

This report recommends that a temporary Standing Order – Standing Order 17A – is agreed by the Senedd to make provision enabling committee chair roles to be held by two Members in a job share in certain circumstances and for a trial period.

If agreed, the proposed changes will come into effect at the beginning of the next Senedd in May 2026.

The Senedd is invited to approve the proposals to revise Standing Orders as outlined in the Annex.



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1. Background

Job sharing

1. Job shares typically involve at least two individuals sharing a full-time role, with pay distributed on a pro rata basis reflecting the division of labour agreed, but not exceeding the salary of one person in a full-time equivalent role.
2. Job sharing primarily aims to provide flexibility for workers, promoting improved work/life balance, easier management of caring responsibilities, and accommodation of health and well-being needs. Benefits associated with job sharing include potentially improving the accessibility of roles and the diversity of those who take them on. Challenges include the risk of the cumulative work done by the partners in the arrangement equating to more than 100 per cent of the time or the role, and the management of any differences of opinion or approach between the two partners in the arrangement.
3. Both partners hold equal status, share responsibilities, and follow an agreed arrangement or protocol reflecting their skills, preferences and needs (for example, working on different days or carrying out distinct duties).

Senedd consideration

4. In May 2022, the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform recommended that the Business Committee should consider: "the practical and procedural issues associated with...two Members job sharing a particular role (such as that of a Committee Chair)".¹ The Business Committee agreed to include this within its procedural work programme and considered the development of detailed proposals for committee chair job sharing on several occasions in 2024.
5. The Business Committee issued a call for evidence² on the principle of job sharing for committee chairs in summer 2024. This phase 1 consultation involved a limited and targeted call for evidence with identified stakeholders, including other parliaments and bodies, councils and other organisations with similar arrangements in place, interparliamentary bodies, academics and trade unions.

¹ Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform, [Reforming our Senedd: A stronger voice for the people of Wales](#), May 2022, recommendation 14

² Business Committee, [Committee Chair job sharing consultation page](#) [accessed 22 August 2025]

The Business Committee also sought the Chairs' Forum's views on the principles and practicalities of chair job sharing.

6. On 8 October 2024, the Business Committee considered the evidence gathered as part of the phase 1 consultation and agreed the fundamental principles that would form the basis of a proposal for a second phase of consultation.

7. In autumn 2024, the Business Committee undertook phase 2³ of its consultation, which focused on Senedd Members, political groups, the Independent Remuneration Board of the Senedd, the Standards Commissioner, the Senedd Commission and the Chairs' Forum. It asked for their views on proposals that reflected its consideration of the outcomes of the targeted call for evidence undertaken during phase 1.

8. On 19 June 2025, the Business Committee considered issues arising from the evidence it had gathered, and the majority of committee members agreed to propose a limited trial of committee chair job sharing.

9. On 18 September 2025, the Business Committee formally agreed to propose the temporary Standing Order in the Annex to take effect from the start of the next Senedd in May 2026.

2. Job sharing

Senedd roles

10. As committee chairs are non-statutory roles, legislative changes are not needed to enable such positions to be shared⁴ and the Senedd is free to agree its own procedures in this regard.

11. Job sharing in other Senedd-related roles would require legislative changes and broader consideration. Under section 7 of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act⁵, the Presiding Officer must, as soon as practicable after the first meeting of the Seventh Senedd (and no later than six months after that meeting), table a motion proposing the establishment of a committee to review job sharing for Members of the Senedd and relevant office holders (and

³ Business Committee, [Committee chair job sharing consultation page](#) [accessed 22 August 2025]

⁴ See Welsh Government, [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Election\) Bill – Explanatory Memorandum](#), September 2023, para 208.

⁵ [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Act 2024](#)

temporary office holders).⁶ The Business Committee therefore agreed to propose the sharing of committee chair roles only at this stage.

12. There are practical and procedural implications associated with any proposal to enable the role of committee chair to be shared by two Members in a job share. On that basis, the Business Committee's view is that a temporary Standing Order enabling committee chair job sharing in certain circumstances for a trial period is the appropriate way forward at this point.

Detailed proposals

13. The Business Committee considered a number of elements underpinning how a committee chair role could be held in a job share and has agreed to put forward the following proposals:

The number of Members involved in a job share

14. The Business Committee proposes that the Standing Orders should specify that a committee chair may be held by two Members in a job share, but by no more than two Members.

Political group membership

15. The Senedd's committee chairing arrangements are predicated on:

- a. chairs being allocated to political groups in order to determine which Members may be eligible for election to the role (SO17.2A, and SO17.2F which provides that only a member of the specified political group may be nominated for the role), and
- b. the balance of chairs across committees reflecting the political groups to which Members belong (SO17.2B).

16. To avoid fundamental changes to these underpinning principles, the Business Committee proposes that any two Members who wish to share the position of committee chair must belong to the same political group (whether elected or appointed).

⁶ These offices include: Member of the Senedd, Presiding and Deputy Presiding Officers, Senedd Commissioners, Welsh and Deputy Welsh Ministers, and the Counsel General, all of which would require legislative changes.

Election and appointment

17. To retain consistency with existing procedures for single-Member chairs, the Standing Orders would need to provide for both the election (SO17.2E – 17.2KA) and appointment (SO17.2T) of job-sharing chairs.

18. The Business Committee proposes that job-sharing chairs would be elected or appointed in accordance with procedures set out for single-Member chairs. In the case of elected chairs, this would include:

- a. the two Members who wish to share the position of committee chair being named in a single nomination;
- b. neither of the two Members who wish to share the position of committee chair being able to nominate or second the other;
- c. neither of the two Members who wish to share the position of committee chair being able to stand as both a job-sharing candidate and a single candidate for the same committee chair;
- d. where nominations for the chairs of more than one committee are being taken at the same meeting of the Senedd, no Member being able to be nominated for more than one of those chairs, either as an individual candidate or as part of a job-sharing candidate.

19. Under such arrangements, if there were to be a contested election, there would be a secret ballot. The job-sharing candidates would have a vote each in such an election, as in all other elections.

20. In the case of the appointment of chairs, the two Members who are proposed to share the position of committee chair would be named in the motion tabled by the Business Committee proposing the membership of a committee.

Exclusions

21. The Business Committee noted that it and the Llywydd's Committee must be chaired by the Llywydd (or Deputy Presiding Officer), and must therefore be excluded from job-sharing provisions.

22. A number of consultation respondents also proposed the exclusion of the Standards of Conduct Committee due to the need for continuity and the sensitive nature of its work. The Business Committee agrees and proposes that

the provisions of SO 17A should not apply to the committee with responsibility for the functions specified in SO22 (Standards of Conduct).

Limiting the number of job-sharing committee chairs during the trial period

23. Given the novelty of Members sharing the position of committee chair in a parliamentary context, the Business Committee proposes that a limit should be applied to the total number of committees which could be held in a job-share during the trial period. Doing so would enable an assessment to be made of the success, or otherwise, of the arrangements whilst restricting them to a limited number of committees.

24. Limiting the trial to a single committee could be too restrictive, given that the success or failure of job-sharing could be directly related to the specific make-up of a particular partnership. The Business Committee proposes that a limit of no more than **three** committees would be appropriate. However there would be no requirement for the Senedd to elect or appoint a specific number of committee chairs on a job-sharing basis.

Restricting to specific committees

25. Having agreed to propose that a limit should be applied to the number of job-sharing committee chairs that could be nominated and elected, or appointed, during a trial, the Business Committee considered how such a limit could be applied in practice. The Business Committee proposes that restricting job-sharing committee chairs to specific committees is the most effective means of limiting the overall number, while minimising the impact on the committee chair election process.

26. If Business Committee decides which committees are eligible when it decides on the committee structure and allocation of chairs to groups, this will minimise the impact on the nomination and election processes as it will be clear in advance of nomination which committees are eligible. The motion to allocate committees to groups under SO17.2A will also indicate which committees could receive nominations for candidates who wished to share the position of committee chair. A minor consequential change will also be required to Standing Order 12.16(iv), as proposed in Annex A.

27. There will be no requirement for job-sharing candidates to be nominated and/or elected to those committees determined as being eligible for job-sharing chairs and individual candidates will still be able to be nominated. It will continue to be a matter for Members to decide whether to put themselves forward (as

individual or job sharing candidates, subject to the nomination and seconding requirements), and for the Senedd to decide which of the nominated candidates to vote for.

The status of the two Members who share the position of committee chair

28. The Business Committee proposes that where two Members share the position of committee chair:

- a. this should count as one committee place for the purposes of Standing Order 17 and its Annex (e.g. for the purpose of calculating whether the allocation of chairs/committee membership reflects the balance of the political groups to which Members belong);
- b. either of the two Members should be permitted to act on behalf of both in relation to the functions of a committee chair (subject to any protocol the Business Committee may wish to require the two Members to produce – as outlined in paragraphs 39 to 41).

Attendance at meetings

29. As two Members who share the position of committee chair may choose, for example, to divide their responsibilities by topic within the committee's remit, there may be occasions when it would be beneficial for the committee for both to attend a meeting (e.g. if cross-cutting matters were being discussed in a draft budget scrutiny session).

30. As such, the Business Committee considers that both Members should be able to attend a committee meeting at the same time, but with only one of them (the "active chair") able to act at any given time for the purposes of exercising the functions of a chair during meetings (e.g. maintaining order, managing matters that may be sub judice, managing quorum, conducting and grouping votes, adjournment, or requiring a witness to take an oath). As the job-sharing chairs will be sharing one committee place, the non-active chair would be attending in accordance with SO 17.49, so would not be able to vote.

31. In such circumstances, it would be a matter for the active chair to ensure that opportunities to participate in proceedings would be shared proportionately between all Members in attendance. Arrangements would also be made to ensure the minutes clearly indicated which Member had been the active chair, and which had attended under SO 17.49.

Quorum

32. As noted above, where two Members job-share the position of committee chair, the chair counts as one committee place for the purposes of Standing Order 17 and its Annex. In line with this principle, and the usual application of quorum rules when any Member is attending a committee meeting under SO 17.49, if both Members who share the role of chair are in attendance, only the Member acting as chair of the meeting would count for the purpose of quorum.

Voting

33. SO 17.37 states that chairs of committees may vote and that if there is an equality of votes, the chair must exercise a casting vote in accordance with Standing Order 6.20.

34. If both Members who share the role of chair are in attendance, only the “active chair” of the meeting may vote and exercise any casting vote required. This is consistent with the other Member’s attendance being in accordance with SO 17.49.

Substitutions

35. As part of the phase 2 consultation, there was widespread, though not unanimous, agreement among consultees that the non-chairing Member should not be prevented from acting as a substitute for another committee member from the same group in accordance with SO 17.48.

36. The Business Committee therefore proposes that a Member who is sharing the position of committee chair, but who is not acting as the chair for the relevant meeting or items of business, should be able to act as a substitute for another member of that committee from the same political group under SO 17.48. A Member attending as a substitute is entitled to participate in the meeting (including voting) in all respects as if they were a member of the committee.

Temporary chair

37. Standing Order 17.22 provides that each committee has the power to appoint a temporary chair in the absence of its chair.

38. Although it may be less likely that a committee that has two Members sharing the position of chair will need to appoint a temporary chair, the Business

Committee proposes that Standing Orders should make provision for a temporary chair to be appointed in the absence of both Members who share the role of committee chair.

Protocol

39. The Business Committee proposes that Standing Orders should require the two Members, once elected or appointed as a job-sharing chair, to agree and publish a protocol that outlines how they will approach the sharing of their procedural and operational functions in practice.

40. The purpose of a protocol is to set out how the two Members intend to approach their shared role, and to provide a level of transparency in relation to those arrangements. Given that job-sharing will be a novel arrangement for Senedd committees, a protocol will help to provide clarity regarding the job-sharing chairs' intended ways of working, and be of benefit to committee members and staff, the wider Senedd, stakeholders and the public.

41. The Business Committee does not propose that the new Standing Order requires job-sharing chairs to consult with the committee that they will chair on the protocol nor to invite the committee to agree its content. However, the job-sharing chairs may choose to share the protocol with the committee, for example for discussion or noting at an early meeting.

Resignation, removal and vacancy

42. Standing Order 17 allows for a committee chair to resign (SO17.2L) or be removed (SO17.2M-17.2O). It also outlines the circumstances in which a chair becomes vacant (SO17.2P and 17.2Q) and how such vacancies can be filled (SO17.2R and 17.2S).

43. To retain consistency between procedures for single-Member chairs and job-sharing chairs, the Business Committee proposes that Standing Orders should provide that either one, or both, of the two Members who share the position of committee chair may resign or be removed in accordance with procedures set out for single-Member chairs.

44. Also, in keeping with the notion that a job share is sharing a role and because the Members would have been elected or appointed by the Senedd on that basis, the Business Committee proposes that the two job-sharing chairs stand and fall together. Therefore, in the event that one of the two job-sharing Members resigns, is removed from office, is elected chair of another committee

(individually or as part of a job share), ceases to be a Member, or joins or leaves a political group, both Members would cease to be chairs and the chair of the committee would become vacant.

Sub-committees

45. Any committee may resolve to establish one or more sub-committees. A resolution to establish a sub-committee must set out its members, chair, remit and duration (SO17.17).

46. The Business Committee agreed that two Members sharing the role of committee chair would also be able to chair a sub-committee of that committee. However, a committee establishing a sub-committee would not be able to create a new job-sharing arrangement for the purpose of chairing that sub-committee.

The nature and length of a review period

47. Views received as part of the phase 2 consultation⁷ supported job-sharing being introduced on a trial basis. This approach was widely seen as a way to address practical challenges and build confidence in the concept before consideration is given to whether or not to establish it as a permanent option.

48. The Business Committee proposes that the temporary Standing Order should expire at the end of the Seventh Senedd and that a review should be conducted prior to this.

49. It is also noted that under section 7 of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act⁸, the Presiding Officer, as soon as practicable after the first meeting of the Seventh Senedd (and no later than six months after that meeting), must table a motion proposing the establishment of a committee to review job sharing for Members of the Senedd and relevant office holders (and temporary office holders). While committee chairs are not among the offices named in the Act, the work of any committee established by the Senedd in accordance with the motion required by section 7 could take account of, or have implications for, the committee chair job sharing trial.

Declaring Members' interests

⁷ Committee chair job sharing: Phase 2 consultation responses, Business Committee, Senedd Cymru

⁸ Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024

50. In response to an invitation to comment upon the Business Committee's proposal for the introduction of job-sharing, the Commissioner for Standards suggested that the Business Committee may wish to consider introducing a duty for the Member chairing proceedings to declare known interests of the other job-sharing partner in their absence. The Commissioner suggested that that this would not be unlike the current duty to declare the known relevant interests that family members have ("to their knowledge") under Standing Order 13.8A.⁹

51. Currently, a duty to declare on behalf of another Member does not exist in the Standing Orders or guidance on declaration of interests, and therefore a change to both would be required. The Business Committee agreed to further consult with the Standards of Conduct Committee on this point.

52. In its response, the Standards of Conduct Committee indicated that it was "uncertain about the practicality of taking on responsibility for declaring another Member's interests in terms of ensuring information was up to date and matters of personal responsibility when deciding to make a declaration and would recommend this was considered further". However, the Committee did "not form a specific view on the desirability of the suggestion from the Commissioner for Standards given a number of questions remain about the practicality of it."

53. In considering the views of the Commissioner for Standards and the Standards of Conduct Committee, the Business Committee also noted:

- a. the impact such a change could have on the principle that the responsibility for ensuring compliance with Standing Orders 2 to 5 rests with individual Members of the Senedd alone;
- b. whether it is reasonable to expect job-sharing chairing partners to have intimate knowledge of each other's respective declarable interests;
- c. where accountability would lie were such a duty introduced (that is, would it rest with the job-sharing chair who failed to declare an interest on their job-sharing partner's behalf, the job-sharing chair whose interest was not declared by their job-sharing partner, or both);
- d. uncertainty around who would be liable for a failure to declare a registrable interest if a particular decision in those proceedings might result in a direct financial advantage to the Member (or, to the

⁹ Letter from the Standards Commissioner to Business Committee on Committee Chair Job Sharing, 6 November 2024

Member's knowledge, the Member's partner or any dependent child of the Member) greater than that which might accrue to the electorate generally), given that this could constitute a criminal offence.

54. Given the issues outlined above, the Business Committee agreed not to propose changes to the approach to declaring interests – that is, there should be no expectation that Members (be they job-sharing chairs or otherwise) should declare interests on behalf of any other Member. As with all aspects of the proposal, the Business Committee agreed that this would be kept under review for the duration of the trial.

3. Decision

On 18 September 2025, the majority of Business Committee members formally agreed to propose the changes to Standing Order outlined in this report. The Senedd is invited to approve the proposed new Standing Order in the Annex.

Annex A: Proposed change to Standing Orders and explanatory notes

| STANDING ORDER 12 – Business in Plenary Meetings | |
|--|---|
| 12.16. The categories of business that may be taken at a plenary meeting without notice, with the agreement of the Presiding Officer, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) statements by the Presiding Officer, by a member of the government or by the Commission about any matter within its responsibility;(ii) introduction of new Members;(iii) obituary tributes to former Members and others;(iv) elections, nominations or appointments by the Senedd, including motions under Standing Order 17.2A <u>and 17A.6</u>;(v) personal statements;(vi) any urgent debate proposed by a Member under Standing Order 12.69;(vii) procedural motions under Standing Order 12.31;(viii) points of order relating to the conduct of business; and(ix) any other matters as the Presiding Officer considers appropriate. | <p>Amend Standing Order</p> <p>The proposed consequential change is required to expand the categories of business that may be taken at a plenary meeting without notice to include motions relating to the nomination of job-sharing committee chairs.</p> |



Annex B: Standing Orders, as amended

STANDING ORDER 12 – Business in Plenary Meetings

12.16. The categories of business that may be taken at a plenary meeting without notice, with the agreement of the Presiding Officer, include:

- (i) statements by the Presiding Officer, by a member of the government or by the Commission about any matter within its responsibility;
- (ii) introduction of new Members;
- (iii) obituary tributes to former Members and others;
- (iv) elections, nominations or appointments by the Senedd, including motions under Standing Order 17.2A and 17A.6;
- (v) personal statements;
- (vi) any urgent debate proposed by a Member under Standing Order 12.69;
- (vii) procedural motions under Standing Order 12.31;
- (viii) points of order relating to the conduct of business; and
- (ix) any other matters as the Presiding Officer considers appropriate.

STANDING ORDER 17A – Committee chair job sharing

General

17A.1. Standing Order 17A makes temporary provision for committee chair job sharing. Standing Order 17A will cease to have effect on 30 April 2030 or when the Senedd so resolves, whichever is sooner. Where provisions contained in Standing Order 17A are in conflict with other Standing Order provisions, those in Standing Order 17A must have precedence.

17A.2. Where two Members share the position of committee chair, they are to be regarded as one chair (constituting a single committee place) for the purposes of Standing Order 17 and its Annex.



17A.3 Where two Members share the position of committee chair, either of the two Members is permitted to act on behalf of both in relation to the functions of a committee chair, subject to the protocol required under Standing Order 17A.18.

17A.4 Where two Members share the position of committee chair, references in Standing Orders to a chair of a committee are to be interpreted as meaning either or both Members who share the position, as the case may be.

17A.5 In this Standing Order, “job-sharing chairs” means two Members who share the position of committee chair.

Election or appointment of job-sharing committee chairs

17A.6 For any committee established by a resolution of the Senedd and for which a motion under Standing Order 17.2T has not been agreed, the Business Committee may by motion propose that the chair of that committee be eligible for the nomination of two Members (and no more than two Members) to be elected to share the position of committee chair on a job-sharing basis.

17A.7 Standing Order 17A.6 does not apply to the Business Committee, the Llywydd's Committee or the committee with responsibility for the functions specified in Standing Order 22 (Standards of Conduct).

17A.8 The agreement of a motion under 17A.6 in relation to a specific committee does not prevent the nomination of individual Members for election as chair of that committee.

17A.9 In tabling a motion under Standing Order 17A.6 or Standing Order 17.3, the Business Committee must ensure that no more than three committees are eligible for two Members to be nominated or appointed as job-sharing chairs at any one time.

17A.10 Two Members may be nominated in accordance with Standing Order 17.2F (and seconded in accordance with Standing Order 17.2G where it applies) to share the position of committee chair only if:

- (i) the two Members are named in a single nomination; and
- (ii) neither of the two Members is nominated as an individual Member for the same committee chair, or as an individual or joint candidate for any other committee chair for which nominations are being taken at the same meeting.

17A.11 Where the Senedd has agreed to a motion under Standing Order 17.2T, the relevant motion under Standing Order 17.3 may propose

two Members of the same political group to share the position of committee chair.

Job-sharing committee chairs: resignation, removal and vacancy

17A.12. Standing Orders 17.2L to 17.2S apply in relation to job-sharing committee chairs (other than those appointed under Standing Order 17A.11), with the following modifications:

- (i) any resolution under Standing Order 17.2M must propose the removal of both Members who share the position of committee chair and, in accordance with Standing Order 17.2N, neither may participate in a vote that is required under Standing Order 17.2M;
- (ii) the position becomes vacant if any of the circumstances listed in Standing Order 17.2P occur in relation to either, or both, of the two Members concerned.

Temporary chair

17A.13. Where two Members share the position of committee chair, Standing Order 17.22 only applies in the absence of both Members.

Attendance at meetings

17A.14. Both Members who share the position of committee chair may attend a committee meeting at the same time.

17A.15. Only one of the job-sharing chairs may act at any given time as chair of a meeting, or part of the meeting, for the purposes of functions listed in Standing Orders 17.23, 17.25 to 17.28, 17.33, 17.34, 17.36, 17.37, 17.39, 17.47, 17.52, and 32.3.

17A.16. Subject to Standing Order 17A.14, where both Members who share the position of committee chair attend a committee meeting at the same time, the Member who is not acting as chair at any given time is deemed to be attending in accordance with SO 17.49.

17A.17. A job-sharing chair is eligible to act as a substitute for a committee member from the same political group in accordance with Standing Order 17.48 for any meeting, or part of a meeting, during which they are not acting as chair.

Protocol

17A.18. Two Members who share the position of committee chair must agree and publish a protocol setting out their ways of working within four sitting weeks of being elected or appointed.

Sub-committees

17A.19. A committee establishing a sub-committee in accordance with Standing Order 17.17 may not create a new job-sharing arrangement for the purpose of chairing that sub-committee.