

## **Order in Plenary Meetings**

### **Rules of Debate**

- 7.1 Members called by the Presiding Officer to speak must address the chair.
- 7.2 Members may speak in English or Welsh and simultaneous interpretation facilities must be provided for speeches made in Welsh.
- 7.3 The Secretary of State for Wales is entitled to participate in proceedings of the Assembly but not to vote. The Presiding Officer may call the Secretary of State to speak in any debate in which the Secretary of State is participating.
- 7.4 Speeches must be relevant to the business before the Assembly, and avoid tedious repetition.
- 7.5 The Presiding Officer may announce a time limit on Members' speeches, and may direct a Member who has spoken for too long to stop speaking.
- 7.6 A Member, other than the proposer of a motion or an amendment who is exercising a right of reply, may not speak more than once on any matter except, with leave of the Presiding Officer, for the purpose of briefly explaining some material point of his or her original speech.
- 7.7 A Member who is speaking may allow other Members to intervene for the purposes of clarification before resuming a speech.
- 7.8 A Member may not speak after the proposer of a motion has exercised a right of reply.

### **Maintenance of Order**

- 7.9 The Presiding Officer is to maintain order in plenary meetings and must call to order any Assembly Member who:
- (i) is engaging in conduct which would, in the opinion of the Presiding Officer, constitute a criminal offence or contempt of court;
  - (ii) is obstructing the business of the Assembly;
  - (iii) seeks to raise a matter outside the scope of the debate or motion;
  - (iv) is guilty of discourteous or unbecoming conduct;
  - (v) is using disorderly, discriminatory or offensive language or language which detracts from the dignity of the Assembly;
  - (vi) refuses to conform to any Standing Order or other requirement for the conduct of Members; or

(vii) disregards the authority of the chair.

7.10 A Member must comply with any directions given by the Presiding Officer about any conduct for which he or she has been called to order.

7.11 A Member may be required by the Presiding Officer to withdraw from Assembly proceedings for the remainder of the day if the Presiding Officer considers the conduct such as to warrant withdrawal.

7.12 When the Presiding Officer has required a Member to withdraw from Assembly proceedings and the Member has not done so, a motion to exclude the Member from Assembly proceedings must be proposed by the Presiding Officer and must be voted on immediately.

7.13 The exclusion of a Member under Standing Order 7.12 has immediate effect;  
(i) on the first occasion it must be until the end of the working day immediately following the day of exclusion;

(ii) on a second occasion during the same 12 month period for five working days immediately following the day of exclusion, and

(iii) on a third or any subsequent occasion during the same 12 month period, for 20 working days immediately following the day of exclusion.

7.14 During the period of a Member's exclusion under Standing Order 7.13 he or she is not entitled to receive any salary from the Assembly and is not permitted to attend any Assembly proceedings.

7.15 In case of grave disorder arising in plenary meetings or in any other circumstance where he or she thinks it appropriate to do so, the Presiding Officer may adjourn proceedings without putting any proposition to the vote, or may suspend proceedings for a specified time.

### **Sub judice**

7.16 Subject to the right of the Assembly to legislate on any matter or to discuss subordinate legislation, a Member must not raise or pursue in plenary meetings any matter where court proceedings have been initiated or where notice of appeal has been given in the United Kingdom, or where the Children's Commissioner for Wales or the Commissioner for Older People in Wales has decided to conduct an examination of a case, until the time when judgement has been given or a report has been made by either Commissioner, unless the Presiding Officer is satisfied that:

(i) the matter is clearly related to a matter of general public importance;

(ii) the matter does not relate to a case which is to be heard, or is being heard, before a criminal court or before a jury or to a case which is to be heard, or is being heard, in family proceedings; and

(iii) the Member does not, in his or her comments, create a real and substantial risk of prejudice to the proceedings of a court either generally or in respect of a particular case.

### **Relations with the Judiciary**

7.17. Unless the matter is the subject of a substantive motion, Members must not in plenary meetings make criticisms of the conduct of judges of the courts of the United Kingdom in the discharge of their judicial office; and in this Standing Order “judge” includes persons holding the position of judge, whether full-time or part-time.

7.18 The Assembly shall not discuss individual judicial appointments.

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