

WESTMINSTER SEMINAR 2020: PREPARING PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

23-25 November 2020



FINAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between 23 – 25 November 2020, CPA UK hosted the 69th edition of the Westminster Seminar. Although this flagship programme has been running for years, this was the first ever ‘virtual’ Westminster Seminar. Incidentally, this year’s theme was centred around Preparing Parliamentarians for a Changing World.

The programme invited parliamentarians and parliamentary officials to network and engage with counterparts; explore approaches to parliamentary systems from across the Commonwealth; and draw comparisons between different legislatures, with exercises to help develop their capacity and knowledge.

2020 as we know, has been an extremely eventful year with a global pandemic and continued protests for democracy, equality and security. These occurrences have strengthened the case for parliamentarians to be prepared for change and unpredictability. This seminar therefore also provided an opportunity for delegates to discuss how these monumental global events have fared in their own local contexts.

During the Seminar, sessions focussed on a range of topics including good ways for leaders to communicate in a virtual world and the evolution of parliamentary scrutiny tools. It also explored best practice for writing committee reports and recommendations. The programme provided participants with opportunities for networking, discussions and group work, alongside panel discussions and Q&A sessions with speakers.

We were honoured to be joined by 150 parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and officials from 30 countries across the Commonwealth.

OUTCOME AND OUTPUTS

OUTCOME:

Delegates enhanced their ability to effectively scrutinise, represent and deliver oversight in their respective parliaments with tools to better adapt a changing political and social landscape.

OUTPUTS:

1. Delegates had an opportunity to widen their networks, creating open communication lines to work collaboratively with their peers.
2. Delegates were introduced to effective knowledge, tools and skills to enhance their leadership and administrative role in their respective legislatures.
3. Delegates gained a deeper understanding of the components that make up an effective parliament within the Westminster context, using examples from the UK and across the Commonwealth.

WESTMINSTER SEMINAR IN NUMBERS

158 networking meetings

Average time spent on the event by delegates was **613** minutes

610 1-2-1 chats between delegates

1218 chat messages on the main stage and breakout groups

PARTICIPATING LEGISLATURES



SEMINAR SUMMARY

- WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION -

The programme was delivered across three days and was attended by presiding officers, parliamentarians, clerks and other parliamentary staff from every region in the Commonwealth. Where there was a possibility that some delegates from the Asia Pacific region were unable to attend due to the time zone limitation, we included a specific networking session on Day Two of the seminar which was early enough to accommodate participation from all regions. Day One started with an introduction from Jon Davies, CEO of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch and a welcome from the Speaker of the UK House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle.

- DAY ONE: ADAPTING PARLIAMENTS -

Day One started with an introduction from Jon Davies, CEO of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch and a welcome from the Speaker of the UK House of Commons, Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle. The day went on to explore the responsibilities of members, presiding officers and clerks, how methods of scrutiny have evolved over the years in parliament and how the pandemic has affected the concept of privilege and conduct in parliaments across the Commonwealth.

Key takeaways from Day One:

Parliamentarians began the seminar by unpacking the topic of Effective Parliaments and the Roles and Responsibilities of Members. There was a strong focus on the role parliamentarians have in upholding the principles of democracy. Delegates discussed the importance of ensuring there is a smooth transition of power after elections. They also spoke about the duty members have in ensuring wider participation from underrepresented groups such as women and the importance of increasing confidence in citizens by reducing partisanship and party politics.

A discussion on Effective Parliaments and the Roles and Responsibilities of the Presiding Officer delved into the difference between the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Lord Speaker. This session was specifically designed for the five presiding officers attending the Seminar. The current Lord Speaker, The Rt Hon. The Lord Fowler, explained how he oversees proceedings in the Lords Chamber and plays a vital role in the House of Lords administration. He is also seen as the representative for the Lords, both domestically and internationally, promoting the work of the UK House of Lords and its vital role in the UK's democratic system. The first deputy speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt Hon. Dame Eleanor Laing MP, then gave an overview of the role of the Speaker of the House of Commons, who is a Member of Parliament, elected to this office by other MPs. The Speaker chairs debates in the Commons Chamber, keeps order and calls MPs to speak. The Speaker is the chief officer and highest authority of the House of Commons and must always remain politically impartial. A key difference between the two Speakers is that the Commons Speaker regulates and controls debates, whereas the Lord Speaker guides and assists debates that are largely self-regulating. These discussions highlighted contrasts with countries that had different approaches. For instance, some legislatures have their Speaker appointed by the government and some have only one chamber and therefore only one Presiding Officer.

A third parallel session explored Effective Parliaments and the Roles and Responsibilities of Clerks. John Benger, the Clerk of the UK House of Commons, shared his journey into parliament and shed light on how the overarching theme of Adapting Parliaments relates to parliamentary staff and officials. John Benger discussed how committee work has been changed by the pandemic, with virtual proceedings increasing many committees' reach to witnesses. Sarah Davies, Assistant Clerk of the House of Commons, argued that virtual proceedings have proven successful for the UK Parliament and have dispelled myths that such an old institution would be unable to grapple with major changes.



The next session, Evolution of Parliamentary Scrutiny Tools, included contributions from Liam Laurence Smyth, the Clerk of Legislation from the UK Parliament and Baroness Liz Barker, member of the UK House of Lords. They discussed an anticipated pressure to move back to 'business as usual' in the main chamber once restrictions are relaxed. However, the possibility of a hybrid system presents various opportunities for committees. For instance, witnesses can be brought in virtually from across the world. The discussion on Privilege & Conduct: Standards, Behaviour & Etiquette revealed stark differences between big and small legislatures. Eve Samson, Clerk of the Journals for the UK Parliament, spoke about the changes that have been brought about in the COVID19 context. Due to social distancing, proxy voting is now available for all members, to limit physical attendance in the lobby. In comparison, Dr Bernicia Nisbett, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of St. Kitts and Nevis, maintained the pandemic has not affected their parliament as severely due to their small membership size and their infrequent meetings in comparison to the UK parliament. However, in both contexts, elected officials must ensure they conduct themselves in a way that does not bring their parliament into disrepute.

At the end of the day, delegates reflected on and debated key topics through thematic discussions. This was a new inclusion to the Westminster Seminar to provide parliamentarians and parliamentary officials an opportunity to discuss pertinent global issues and their effects on their respective legislatures.

The first thematic discussion was on the State of Emergency and Democracy. The discussion was chaired by Dr Catherine Haddon, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Government. Dr Haddon highlighted that the pandemic has changed the way parliaments introduce emergency powers. She also stated that governments have been criticised for not allowing sufficient scrutiny by

parliament to new measures such as the lockdown. Delegates commented on the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between supporting urgent measures and questioning or scrutinising government decisions.

The same points were raised during a parallel thematic discussion on The Impact of COVID19 on Parliaments, chaired by Dr Hannah White, Deputy Director of the Institute of Government. She explained that several pieces of legislation have had to be amended over time to accommodate pressing needs and new developments during the pandemic. Dr White spoke about the difficulty of building relationships and comradery during this pandemic as many parliaments are working virtually. She stressed the importance for legislatures to constantly review how parliaments have changed and whether operating this way will be appropriate beyond the global health crisis.

- DAY TWO: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND PERSONAL IMPACT -

Public Engagement is usually associated with the role of parliamentarians. However, this day unpacked the important role that parliamentary staff also play when engaging with the public. The 'Personal Impact' element of the day developed the leadership and communication skills of delegates. There was also an opportunity for both parliamentarians and staff to speak honestly with each other about their unique pressures and how they deal with them.

Key takeaways from Day Two:

An interactive session on Leadership and Communications was led by communications expert Ginny Radmall. Delegates learnt how to be effective communicators as leaders, particularly in the virtual world. Below are some crucial pieces of advice shared during the session:

1. Looking at the camera during virtual meetings is important as it directly engages the audience and makes it feel as if you are looking at them.
2. Standing up allows you to command a certain level of authority when speaking to people who are not physically in the same room. It also gives the speaker additional energy which helps to effectively engage the audience.
3. Being concise - by eliminating the use of jargon and presenting your case in the format of a story - helps to avoid the common mistake of telling the whole movie when in fact the audience only wants the 'trailer'.
4. Drinking warm water helps to loosen up the vocal cords and helps the speaker to sound clear.

The session on Pressures on Parliamentary Staff revealed that managers find it complex to deliver challenging news with staff dispersed, working from home during the pandemic. Lynn Gardner, the Clerk of the overseas office in the UK Parliament, said that another major challenge for parliamentary staff has been the pressure of working outside of sociable hours. Staff have found it difficult to push back on tasks and workload has inevitably increased. To offer extra support to committee staff, a charter has been drawn up, detailing their tasks, outlining what is reasonable and at what time of the day. Fathimath Niusha, the Secretary General of the People's Majlis of Maldives, alluded to a similar process currently being planned by their legislature.

A parallel discussion on Pressures on Parliamentarians unsurprisingly revealed

that there has also been increased pressure on members of parliament as a result of the global pandemic, including more constituency work. Newly elected MP, Bell Ribeiro Addy, specifically detailed a surge in housing cases as people have lost their jobs and consequently lost their income. UK Members of Parliament have been given a higher allowance of staff to help manage increased workloads. However, Lord Davies of Gower explained that in the House of Lords, they do not have an allowance for members of staff. Members of the Lords therefore utilise the well-equipped library and their access to external organisations that work on specific policy areas.

After this session, delegates were split between parliamentarians and parliamentary staff to discuss Public Engagement. Hon. Andleeb Abbass from the National Assembly of Pakistan likened the importance of public engagement to oxygen, claiming that without it, democracies would not be able to function. This was echoed by The Rt Hon. the Baroness D'Souza CMG, who stated that public engagement has always been a priority for the House of Lords, including facilitating school visits onto the estate and publicising sessions through social media. Both speakers agreed that the pandemic has broadened the scope for public engagement because of virtual proceedings. However, to effectively reach the public, virtual outreach should complement, rather than replace, physical engagement.

The discussion on public engagement with parliamentary staff and clerks complemented the parliamentarian session. Tara Jane Kerpens Lee, Select Committee Engagement Manager for the UK Parliament, and Tracy Cohen, Assistant to the House of Representatives and the Senate in Jamaica, agreed that the 2020 pandemic has enabled parliaments to broaden their reach to wider audiences using digital technology. Tracy Cohen highlighted the use of social media as an area of development for their parliament. The day closed with two thematic discussions; one on National Security and another one on Racial Disparity. The discussion on Racial Disparity revealed

that the killing of George Floyd in the USA has shed light on the continued global prevalence of racism. It placed pressure on parliamentarians to address issues of racism within their own legislatures. Delegates shared views regarding the perceptions held by other Commonwealth countries towards how the UK has historically dealt with racism. There is a perception that a colonial mindset still exists in the UK. Elorm Haligah, CPA UK Programmes and Project Manager, informed the audience that CPA UK is championing the fight against racial disparity. In 2020, the organisation ran a Black History Month campaign to highlight Black role models within the UK parliament. The session ended with an open invitation to Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials to work hand in hand to address racial disparity.

Lord Sarfraz spoke about the most relevant case study regarding National Security in the UK: The National Security and Investment Bill (currently being passed through the House of Commons and is due to come to the House of Lords). He explained that it aims to introduce a new regime for intervening in certain business transactions that might raise security concerns. Delegates debated on whether it should be in the hands of politicians to determine what is a national security issue. On the converse, others felt this should be decided by an independent body, as some politicians may have personal interests. Delegates also discussed views on the difference between national security and protectionism.

**- DAY THREE: OVERSIGHT & SCRUTINY:
THEORY & PRACTICE -**

Day three focussed on both the theoretical and practical elements of oversight and scrutiny. The bulk of the discussions concentrated on committees: comparing and contrasting committee systems across the Commonwealth; conducting committee inquiries; and key tips on committee recommendations and report writing for both Clerks and Members. Delegates also explored the merit in using Prime Ministers Questions in the UK to hold the executive to account - something that was referred to by Lord Paul Boateng as 'theatre'.

Key takeaways from Day Three:

The first session of the day compared how Committees work across the Commonwealth. Meg Hillier MP, chair of the UK Public Account Committee (PAC), spoke about the process of election for the PAC. The Chair of the PAC is chosen by Members of Parliament but has to be an opposition member to allow balance. Committee members on the contrary are voted in by members of their own political group. The use of the 'Lead Member' system in the UK PAC was discussed. This often comprises of one government member and one opposition member in taking charge for questioning throughout an inquiry. Lead members also take on a role after the inquiry and feed into the report. In the Chair's absence, the Lead Member is responsible for handling media inquiries. This system allows for a fair distribution of workload across the committee to enable members, regardless of their party, to work collaboratively in accomplishing a successful inquiry.

Hon. Akierra Missick MP, Chair of the Turks and Caicos Islands PAC, spoke about the value in training opportunities through CPA UK and advocated involvement in committee hearing exercises as a means of capacity development. In a small parliament such as the

Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), she stressed how much of a vital role committees play in holding the government to account. The deputy clerk of the TCI Parliament is the Clerk for the PAC, and also has the responsibility of four other committees in parliament, portraying their stretch on personnel. This provided a clear contrast between their committee and the equivalent in a different sized legislature.

Richard Cooke, the Clerk of the UK PAC, shared some key points about his role. He highlighted that he is less involved in the content of the committee and more involved in stakeholder engagement, as well as ensuring a smooth running of the committee. His role is mainly administrative; in addition to giving procedural advice to members, his work is linked to debates in the chamber and other select committees.

The next part of the seminar looked at Holding the Prime Minister to Account, which was led by The Rt Hon. Lord Boateng. He described this method of scrutinising the executive as 'gladiatorial combat'. He felt that the pandemic has somewhat diminished parliament in this respect. This is due to the view held that it is more effective to have people in the same room as it adds something to the atmosphere. The hybrid system has detracted from the element of spontaneity that can only be brought about through physical interaction. He made reference to the strategy of the opposition in dividing the governing party and seeing the effect of this through people's faces on camera - consequently being able to follow up. Although a lot of emphasis is placed on the Prime Minister and the Leader of The Opposition, Lord Boateng said that it is even more of an important platform for backbench MPs to rise to the occasion and bring their constituents' issues to the forefront. Delegates praised this contribution as an open and honest insight into how Prime Minister's Questions operates. Darren Jones MP started the third segment of the day by providing a good overview on how inquiries are conducted. Inquiries do not have the time to look at everything, so prioritisation is key. The ideal approach is to select a topical/ political issue to bring ministers to account on a cross party basis. Select committees exist to serve parliament and consequently



the British people – not party interests. There was consensus during this session that it is important to decide an issue and gather evidence soon after. Darren Jones explained that bringing panellists that disagree together is an effective way of exposing an issue and effectively delving into it. The UK Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee have had more of a focus on the topic of COVID19. Like other discussions, he praised the fact that the pandemic has lent itself to more digital participation which makes it easier to bring witnesses together. However, a setback has been the difficulty in conducting more sessions because of the limit on broadcasting time. Darren Jones MP advised delegates to direct open questions to ministers and closed questions to witnesses when questioning during inquiries.

Stephen Aldhouse, Committee Specialist on the UK Business Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, shared that their role involves synthesising evidence and briefing the committee on what evidence to use. Committee specialists make suggestions to committee members on who to receive oral evidence from, to drive a policy issue forward. These processes are very central to ensuring committee inquiries work effectively. A key difference between Clerks and Committee specialists is that the former oversees inquiry strands and ensures strategic approach. Specialists, on the other hand, support members in understanding how they can most utilise the powers they have as a committee.

A committee exercise was held looking at COVID19 and the Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment. Although the topic was

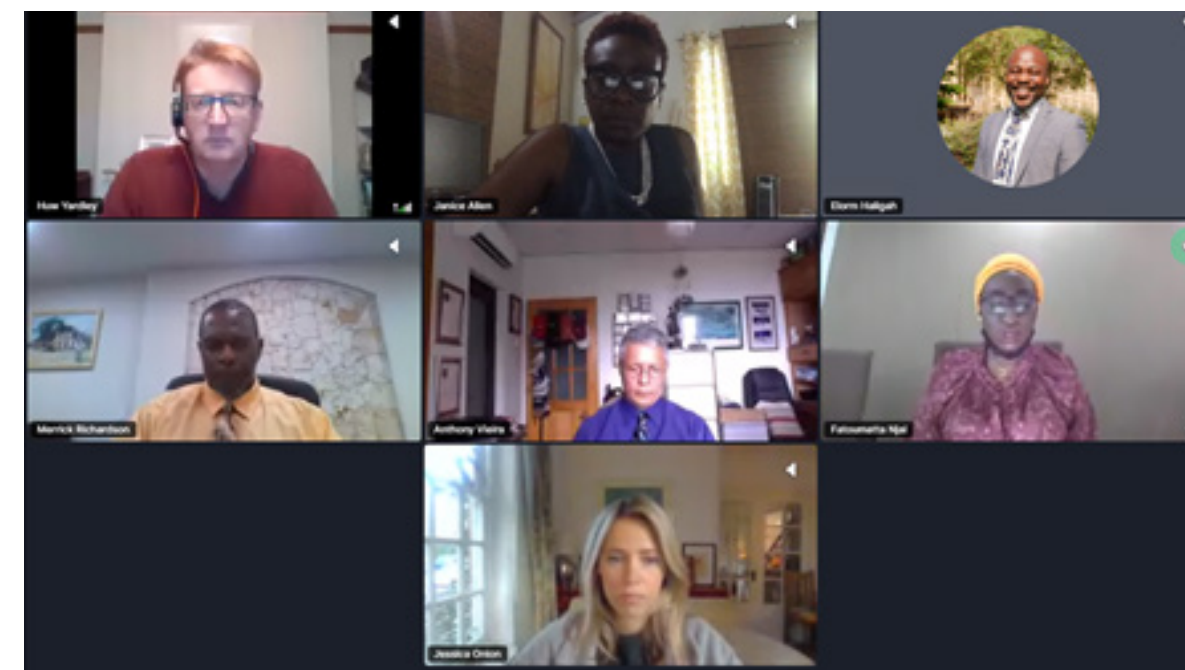
relevant due to the global health crisis in 2020, the actual focus was to help delegates develop their skills when questioning witnesses and secondly, discuss strategies about how to effectively using committee hearings to scrutinise legislation. The exercise was facilitated through the freeze-frame method: after every 3-4 questions, the facilitator paused the session. When doing this, he commented on what was executed very well and facilitated discussions around what could have been developed on even further. The three following key points were stated:

1. When questioning witnesses, it is important to ask them questions only they know the answer to, to remain relevant.
2. To get the most out of difficult witnesses, it is imperative to ask them specific targeted questions that are harder to evade. Moreover, parliamentarians should push for promises to follow up separately after the hearing.

of drawing out key information.

This exercise also gave the delegates an opportunity to put into practice some of the points explored during their previous session on Leadership and Communication session. After the committee exercise, the last plenary session looked at best practice when writing reports and recommendations, both from a clerk perspective and a parliamentarian's point of view.

The seminar culminated with a message from the Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon. Jacob Rees Mogg. He praised delegates for their participation and their leadership, and reminded them that the best thing they can do with the knowledge acquired during the seminar is to use it to better represent their constituents.



3. Using information from one witness to cross-examine another is also a very effective means

Day 1 – Monday 23 November 2020
Adapting Parliaments

TIME (GMT)	SESSION		
1130 - 1200	Sign in Participants sign in and explore the seminar platform and optional networking opportunities.		
1200	Mainstage: Welcome Important information on the logistics of the seminar including briefings on the committee inquiry exercise taking place on Wednesday. Welcome message from Jon Davies , Chief Executive, CPA UK Housekeeping facilitated by Elorm Haligah , Projects & Programmes Manager, CPA UK		
1215	Mainstage: Welcome Keynote from Mr. Speaker		
1220 -1315	Session 1a: Effective Parliaments and the Responsibilities of Members In an environment where society is always evolving, how do parliaments ensure they are effective and what does effective mean to those within, and external to, parliaments? This session aims to open the discussion on what contributes to effective parliaments, and what is the role of parliamentarians in ensuring its functionality. Rushanara Ali MP , UK Parliament Sir David Amess MP , UK Parliament The Rt Hon. The Lord Haselhurst , UK House of Lords Hon. Fatoumatta Njai MP , Member of the National Assembly of the Gambia	Session 1b: Effective Parliaments and the Responsibilities of Presiding Officers The Speaker is the chief officer and the highest authority of the house and must always remain politically impartial. During debates the Speaker keeps order and calls MPs to speak. This session aims to explore the historical background of the Speaker of the house, the importance of impartiality, and how a new understanding of a modern Speaker has taken form in parliament. This will be open to Presiding Officers only. Rt Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP , Speaker, House of Commons, UK Parliament The Rt Hon. Dame Eleanor Laing MP , Chair of Ways and Means, The First Deputy Speaker of The House of Commons, UK Parliament The Rt Hon. the Lord Fowler , Lord Speaker, UK House of Lords	Session 1c: Effective Parliaments and the Responsibilities of Clerks Clerks are central to the running of any parliament. From offering procedural advice in a neutral capacity to recording decisions in the house, their role is crucial. This session will explore how clerks have a responsibility to ensure the effective running of their legislatures. John Benger , Clerk, UK Parliament Sarah Davies , Clerk Assistant, UK Parliament

1315 – 1340	Break with optional networking	
1340 – 1430	Mainstage: The Evolution of Parliamentary Scrutiny Tools One of parliament's main roles is to examine and challenge the work of the government. The House of Commons and the House of Lords use similar methods of scrutiny, although the procedures vary. This session will explore these avenues but also examine more recent methods adapted in light of the 2020 global pandemic. Baroness Barker , UK House of Lords Liam Laurence Smyth , Clerk of Legislation	
1430 – 1440	Break	
1440 – 1530	Mainstage: Privilege & Conduct: Standards, Behaviour & Etiquette Parliamentary Privilege has been a historical safeguard for parliamentarians to perform their duties without interference from outside of the House. However, with an increasing shift in the political landscape, how does parliament ensure that there is a balance between the respect of privilege whilst maintaining the standards of behaviour? This session aims to open the conversation on privilege and behaviour both in parliament and when working virtually. Eve Samson , Clerk of Journals Hon. Dr Bernicia Nisbett , Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of St. Kitts and Nevis Hon. Mohammad Zahid Nazurally , Deputy Speaker and Member of the National Assembly of Mauritius	
1530 – 1540	Break	
1540 – 1610	Thematic Discussion 1a: State of Emergency and Democracy The COVID19 pandemic set the conditions for some political leaders to use expansive powers by declaring a state of emergency. It was a test of governments' commitment to human rights and civil liberties with parliamentary accountability being at considerable risk. This discussion will explore the approaches to legislation taken by nations in response to COVID19 and what best safeguards democracy. Chair: Dr. Catherine Haddon , Senior Fellow, Institute for Government	Thematic Discussion 1b: The Impact of COVID19 on Parliaments COVID19 has impacted parliaments across the world who have found that they have had to adapt to new ways of working to allow them to continue functioning and deliver their responsibilities. This discussion will explore the impact of the pandemic across Commonwealth parliaments as well as the approach taken to respond to challenges. Chair: Dr. Hannah White , Deputy Director, Institute for Government
1610 – 1640	Speed Networking Session This will be an opportunity for delegates to connect with others who share the same areas of interest from across the Commonwealth.	
1640 – 1645	Closing Day 1 This will be an opportunity for delegates to share with colleagues what they have learnt from today's sessions and what they are looking forward to learning about from Day 2 of the Seminar.	

Day 2 – Tuesday 24 November 2020

Public Engagement and Personal Impact

TIME (GMT)	SESSION	
0800 – 0900	Connecting with Asia Pacific A networking session open to all at a convenient time for the Asia Pacific region.	
1200 – 1400	Mainstage: Leadership and Communication Skills Leading during a pandemic is not something most people could say they were 'prepared' for, but COVID19 has demanded that we adapt quickly and find ways to lead teams well in the virtual world. That said, some conversations are harder to have online such as giving a colleague constructive criticism, or even encouraging them. Research from the last few months suggests that the technical challenges of video calls mean that listening well and collaborating with others over a video call is also more complicated. In this session you will learn some practical tools for: navigating tricky conversations well over video call; how to give feedback well; deep level listening technique. This workshop will be interactive, so come ready to get involved to share and learn some insights. Facilitator: Ginny Radmall , Director, The Ivy Way, Director	
1400 – 1430	Break with Optional Networking	
1430 – 1510	Session 4a: Pressures on Parliamentarians How can parliamentarians balance various commitments and prioritise their time between their constituencies, their legislature, special interests and many other political and personal pressures? How do parliamentarians ensure they work with their political parties, caucuses or political alliances whilst ensuring the best interests of their constituents? This session will help participants identify positive ways to manage different pressures and expectations. Lord Davies of Gower , UK Houe of Lords Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP , Shadow Minister for Immigration, UK Parliament	Session 4b: Pressures on Parliamentary Staff How do parliamentary staff ensure they give parliamentarians the adequate support they need with their varying tasks? How do parliamentary staff make sure their political views do not influence their ability to work effectively? This session will help participants identify positive ways to manage different pressures and expectations. Lynn Gardner , Clerk of the Overseas Office, UK Parliament Fathimath Niusha , Secretary General of The People's Majlis of Maldives
1510 – 1520	Break	

1520 – 1610	Session 5a: Public Engagement (Members) To reach less engaged stakeholders, the UK Parliament and its committees have developed a range of outreach and engagement strategies, using various means of communication. The COVID19 pandemic has meant that some of these strategies have had to adapt. This session will help delegates consider how previous and new strategies could expand the reach of their engagement with constituents and the wider public based on examples from across the Commonwealth. The Rt Hon. the Baroness D'Souza CMG , UK House of Lords Hon. Andleeb Abbas MNA , Member of the National Assembly, Islamic Republic of Pakistan Hon. John King MP , Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Culture, Barbados	Session 5b: Public Engagement (Clerks) Parliamentary staff often need to engage with the public on behalf of parliamentarians or parliamentary committees. This session will help delegates consider how different strategies could expand the reach of committees and broader parliamentary engagement with the wider public on examples from across the Commonwealth. Tara Jane Kerpens Lee , Select Committee Engagement Manager, UK Parliament Tracy Cohen , Assistant to the House of Representatives and the Senate, Parliament of Jamaica
1610 – 1620	Break	
1620 – 1650	Thematic Discussion 2a: National Security Scrutiny On the back of rising geopolitical tensions and security concerns, the UK government set out plans in January 2020 to legislate for a new National Security and Investment Bill. The purpose of the bill is to “strengthen the Government’s powers to scrutinise and intervene in business transactions (takeovers and mergers) to protect national security”. This discussion will give participants an opportunity to discuss whether scrutiny of overseas takeovers is an issue of security or protectionism. Chair: The Lord Sarfraz , UK House of Lords	Thematic Discussion 2b: Racial Disparity and the Role of Parliamentarians Racial disparity is an issue that has existed for years but has been brought to the forefront in 2020 through various protests in different countries. This discussion will give participants an opportunity to share experiences in their own contexts and what they can do to combat the issue. Chair: Elorm Haligah , Projects and Programmes Manager, CPA UK
1650 – 1655	Closing Day 2 This will be an opportunity for delegates to share with colleagues what they have learnt from today's programme and what they are looking forward to learning from Day 3 of the Seminar.	

Day 3 – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Oversight and Scrutiny: Theory & Practice

TIME (GMT)	SESSION
1200 – 1250	<p>Mainstage: Committee Systems Across the Commonwealth</p> <p>Committees aim to scrutinise governments on various topics which reflect the needs of the legislature, whilst also providing an opportunity to gather insight into trends within specific regions. This session aims to showcase committees within the Commonwealth and explore the impact they make on social issues across various regions.</p> <p>Hon. Akierra Missick MP, Chair of Public Accounts Committee, House of Assembly, Turks and Caicos Islands & Meg Hillier MP, UK Parliament</p>
1250 – 1315	<p>Break with Optional Networking</p>
1315 – 1355	<p>Mainstage: Holding the Prime Minister to Account</p> <p>Like some other parliaments in the Commonwealth, the British Prime Minister appears once a week to answer questions tabled by Members of Parliament aiming to hold the government to account. This session will discuss the purpose and procedure of Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) and explore other ways the Prime Minister is held to account. Following this discussion, delegates will have the opportunity to view a previous recording of a PMQs session and hold a discussion during key points.</p> <p>The Rt Hon. Lord Paul Boateng of Akyem and Wembley, UK House of Lords</p>
1355 – 1405	<p>Break</p>
1405 – 1445	<p>Mainstage: Conducting an Inquiry</p> <p>Committees consider policy issues, scrutinise the work and expenditure of the government, and examine proposals for primary and secondary legislation. Select committees operate largely by an investigative process, while legislative committees operate mainly by debate. This session will cover elements such as how to pick a topic, select witnesses and neutrality. Following the presentations by the panel, this session will break out into two groups - parliamentarians and clerks - to allow a focussed discussion relevant to their roles.</p> <p>Darren Jones MP, Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy Committee Chair, UK Parliament</p>
1445 – 1455	<p>Break</p>
1455 – 1520	<p>Exercise: Virtual Committee Hearing Brief</p> <p>The aim of this exercise is to explore techniques of scrutiny and effective questioning practices using a real-life case study. Participants will have the opportunity to experience how a virtual committee hearing works. They will also discuss and share good practice for an effective committee hearing. During this briefing session, questions will be distributed between parliamentarians to ask in the hearing to follow.</p> <p>Facilitated by Huw Yardley, Former Clerk, Health and Social Care Select Committee, UK Parliament</p>

1520 – 1615	<p>Exercise: Virtual Committee Hearing on COVID-19</p> <p>This session will be a practical exercise, where delegates will role play a virtual committee with witnesses looking at a specific topic. This will be a chance for participants to put into practice the knowledge and skills developed prior to this. It will be 'freeze-frame' facilitated, giving participants in the inquiry exercise an opportunity to pause and think about how certain aspects could have been done differently, or compare how it usually would be conducted during a committee hearing in their own legislatures.</p> <p>Facilitated by Huw Yardley, Former Clerk, Health and Social Care Select Committee, UK Parliament</p>	
1615 – 1625	<p>Break</p>	
1625 – 1705	<p>Exercise: Committee Recommendations and Report Writing (Members)</p> <p>Committee reports are often aimed at government, recommending changes in policy and practice, based on the evidence gathered during an inquiry. This session brings parliamentarians together to share examples of good practice from their own jurisdictions and discuss some of the challenges associated with committee inquiries, including how these may have changed during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Facilitated by Dr Sarah Wollaston, Former Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee, UK Parliament</p>	<p>Exercise: Committee Recommendations and Report Writing (Clerks)</p> <p>Choosing recommendations and how a report is presented are essential skills for clerks. Following the virtual committee hearing, this session will be a practical exercise that will strengthen the skills required in identifying recommendations and writing reports. Clerks will put their skills into practice by identifying recommendations based on the committee hearing and discuss what an effective committee report looks like.</p> <p>Facilitated by Huw Yardley, Former Clerk, Health and Social Care Select Committee</p>
1705 – 1720	<p>Mainstage: Interactive Feedback Session - Facilitated by CPA UK</p> <p>This will be an opportunity for delegates to share with colleagues what they have learnt from the seminar and what they intend to do as a result in their own legislatures.</p>	
1720 – 1730	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Keynote Speech from Rt Hon Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, The Leader of the House, UK Parliament</p>	
1730 – 1735	<p>Vote of Thanks</p> <p>Led by Elorm Haligah, Projects and Programmes Manager, CPA UK</p>	

————— END OF SEMINAR —————

DELEGATE FEEDBACK

CPA UK recognises that time is limited for our delegates and therefore we seek to make our programmes as tailored and relevant as possible to their needs. We do this through consultation with our key stakeholders and continuous learning from previous activities.

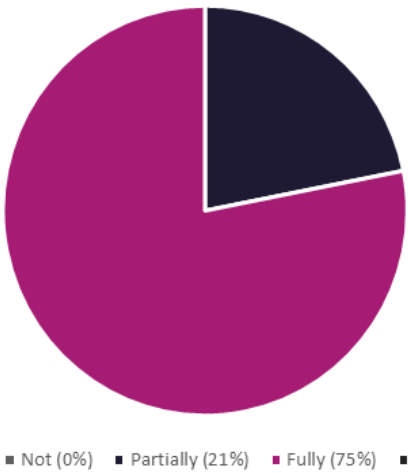
CPA UK asks delegates to complete Pre- and Post- Seminar Assessments where they rate their own levels of understanding against key areas covered during the workshop on a scale from expert to basic knowledge.

- On average, we saw a 9% increase in knowledge with the highest increases including:
- The Different Approaches Commonwealth Parliaments have taken during the Pandemic (35% increase),
 - Comparative Commonwealth Parliamentary Systems (24% increase)
 - Westminster Parliamentary System & UK Political Landscape (10% increase)

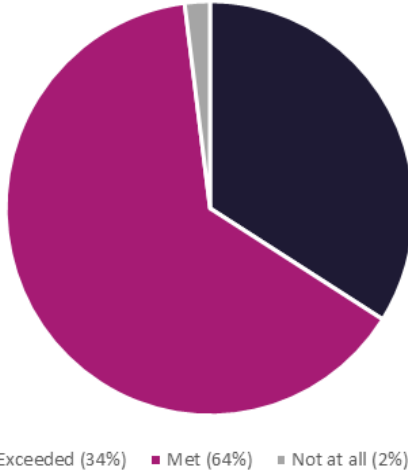
	Average rating of understanding pre-workshop	Average rating of understanding post workshop	Differential	% change in the average level of understanding before and after the workshop
Legislative Process	3.54	3.80	0.27	7.49
Parliamentarian/Clerk relations	3.56	3.67	0.11	3.02
Role of a Parliamentarian/Clerk	3.73	3.95	0.22	5.81
Parliamentary Standards, Privileges & Ethics	3.43	3.62	0.19	5.46
Role of Committees	3.69	4.02	0.33	8.94
Engaging with Constituents	3.49	3.50	0.01	0.25
Engaging with the Media	3.30	3.38	0.09	2.59
Westminster Parliamentary System & UK Political Landscape	2.75	3.02	0.27	9.90
Parliamentary Procedures	3.41	3.60	0.19	5.49
Comparative Commonwealth Parliamentary Systems	2.59	3.21	0.62	24.06
Diversity & Inclusion	3.12	3.29	0.16	5.26
The Different approaches Commonwealth Parliaments have taken during the Pandemic	2.55	3.45	0.90	35.36
Average overall	3.26	3.54	0.28	9.47

When delegates were asked how relevant the Seminar was to their role, around three-quarters said it was fully relevant to their role, the remainder stated it was partially and no one responded that it was not relevant to their role. When it came to meeting delegates expectations, a third said we exceeded expectations with over 60% saying we met them.

Was the Seminar relevant to your role?



Did the Seminar meet your expectations?



MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

The Westminster Seminar received positive media coverage in Bermuda, Jamaica, Rwanda and Guyana, with an emphasis on the theme of the Seminar which was to assist parliamentarians to adapt to challenging global trends.

See the articles below:

- 'Commonwealth Parliamentarians Come Together To Reflect On Global Challenges & Changing Political Landscape', *Bermuda Real*, <https://www.bermudareal.com/commonwealth-parliamentarians-come-together-to-reflect-on-global-challenges-changing-political-landscape/>
- 'Commonwealth parliamentarians to reflect on global challenges, changing political landscape', *Jamaica Observer*, http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/latestnews/Commonwealth_parliamentarians_to_reflect_on_global_challenges
- 'Commonwealth parliamentarians meet to reflect on global challenges', *The New Times, Rwanda*, <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/commonwealth-parliamentarians-meet-reflect-global-challenges>
- 'Parliament of Guyana participates in CPA UK 2020 Westminster Seminar', *Parliament of Guyana*, <https://parliament.gov.gy/media-centre/press-releases/parliament-of-guyana-participates-in-cpa-uk-2020-westminster-seminar>

Through CPA UK's social media channels, the Seminar received over 65,000 impressions and individuals engaged with social media posts more than 1,300 times.

CONCLUSION

2020 has undoubtedly been a defining year for parliaments across the Commonwealth. This year's seminar highlighted the reality of that. Despite the geographical spread of the Commonwealth, virtual connectivity enabled 150 parliamentarians and officials from 30 countries to attend the seminar. Similarities were brought to the fore in that the coronavirus pandemic has presented legislators and parliamentary staff with various challenges. These include the necessity to adapt to technological developments; increased workload due to emergency legislation; and managing all of this in conjunction with their usual responsibilities. Nonetheless, challenges always present opportunities. There has been great optimism especially from those working on committees, as virtual operation has granted access to a wider pool of resource personnel. Delegates enjoyed sharing good practice with peers on how to use the tools at their disposal to better adapt to the current changing political and social landscape.

As this was the first virtual Westminster Seminar, there were parallels drawn between how parliaments have been operating in the pandemic and the effectiveness of holding such a forum on a virtual platform. Delegates and speakers alike commented on the benefits of holding meetings in the chamber through online platforms but stressed that the value in physical meetings cannot be understated. As such, beyond the pandemic there was a consensus for parliamentary business to operate in a hybrid fashion at the very least, with more people leaning towards a complete return to physical meetings. Similarly, CPA UK will also consider adopting this approach when delivering multilateral meetings of this nature as the combination of both methods invites engagement from as many parts of the Commonwealth as possible, in a very cost-effective way.

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