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Parliamentary Question/Ministerial Briefing

This procedure takes you through parliamentary contact with regards to ministerial briefings, parliamentary questions and adjournment debates.

This action is within MP Contact and is dealt with by a member of the Government Relations Unit.

Ministerial briefings, parliamentary questions and adjournment debates all fall within the same process, however their purpose is different.

Ministerial briefings are necessary when a minister has meetings to prepare for. The purpose is to brief the minister on the topic or case in question. Briefings are provided in written format with an accompanying face to face meeting between the minister, the manager of the Government Relations Unit and a subject matter expert on the topic being discussed.

Parliamentary questions are raised either verbally or in writing by the House of Commons. We will be provided with a list of any questions relating to the Child Maintenance Group (CMG) by the Ministers Office. Most parliamentary questions received are ordinary written questions. These have no official time limit, however, an answer is expected within seven days. This gives the CMG around four days to respond to the Minister. We receive Named Day questions also which have a deadline when a response is required. The minimum notice permitted is two days. The response should be sent to the office of the Minister who may then change the final response before submitting it.

Adjournment debates are half an hour at the end of every sitting of the House of Commons where a back bencher may raise a topic of their choosing with the appropriate minister. The schedule for these debates is voted for on Thursdays to decide what will be discussed the following week. This may only allow a few days to provide the Minister with the knowledge to respond accurately to the information presented by the backbencher. Adjournment debates are often case specific and are likely to have a long history of parliamentary contact. Information is provided in written format with an accompanying face to face meeting between the Minister, the manager of the Government Relations Unit and a subject matter expert on the topic being discussed.

Responses to these forms of parliamentary contact require team leader and director general authorisation and will be revised if necessary before submission.

To carry out this process you should receive the parliamentary contact, authenticate the contact, gather all necessary information, compile a report for director general review and then once approved issue the report to the Minister.

For more information refer to the Policy, Law and Decision Making Guidance.
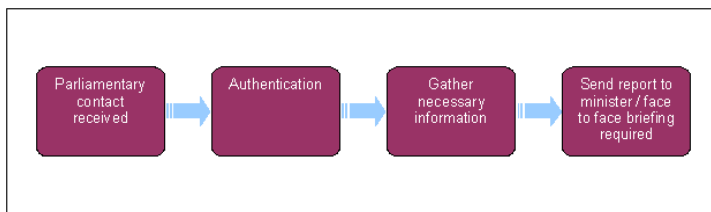
When speaking to clients always use the new terminology - for more information refer to the Terminology Changes.

Parliamentary Contact Received

1. Parliamentary contact is received, either via the MP Hotline or by written contact. Where contact has been made in writing go to **step 11**

2. Whilst on the phone you will need to collect the following details from the caller:

   - Last name

   - First name

   - If the MP isn't the person making contact, you will need to take the MP's name

   - MP's Constituentcy

   - You will also need to determine the purpose of the contact.

3. Once you have determined who is making contact and the purpose of the call, you will need to inform the caller that you will call them back on their published constituency office number, as recorded on the 2012 system.

(i) This is to ensure that the contact is being made by a valid parliamentary source.

4. Contact received via the MP Hotline will be passed to the Government Relations Unit via an **Escalated Enquiries** service request (SR) for Ministerial Briefings, Parliamentary Questions or Adjournment Debates.

5. Where contact is received via the MP Hotline and the enquiry is non case specific, you will need to create an SR via the contact rather than the third party account. Go to the **Contacts** screen and select the **Contacts Query View**.

6. Query on the MP's name. Select the appropriate last name hyperlink to go to the **Contacts Summary View**.

7. Where necessary, populate any fields associated with the inbound activity.

8. Confirm that the inbound call has come through to the correct geographical location. On the occasions where the call has come through to the wrong location, contact the correct geographical complaints team so they can continue from **step 9**.

9. Select the Type Call - Inbound hyperlink to go to the service request view. Create the following SR:

   - **Process = Escalated Enquiries**

   - **Area = Parliamentary Contact**

   - **Sub Area = Ministerial Briefing**, **Parliamentary Question** or **Adjournment Debate**

10. Select the **SR#** hyperlink to navigate to the **More Info** view, then select the **3rd Party Account** MVG button. Search for the account based on the Constituency.

11. Select **Add** and then **OK** to associate the SR and **Call - Inbound** to the third party account, then set the SR status to **In Progress** to generate the activity plan.

    (i) After completing the above actions, do not set the SR status to **Pending Assignment**, as this will prevent the SR from assigning to the Government Relations Unit.

12. Where written contact has been received you should create an **Escalated Enquiries** SR.

13. From the drop down select:

   - **Process = Escalated Enquiries**

   - **Area = Parliamentary Contact**

   - **Sub Area** = **Ministerial Briefing**, **Parliamentary Question**, **Adjournment Debate** or **Enquiry**

14. You must search for the parliamentary contact, go to **Contact** then search for the MP using their **Name** and **Contact type**, as provided on the SR.

    (i) MP records are available on the 2012 system and are updated following any election or by-election by the stakeholder relations team.

Authentication

15. Once the MP has been found, if the original contact was made via telephone you can call the MPs office back, if the original contact was made by written correspondence you should compare the provided contact details to those held on the system.

16. (icon) If the original contact was made by phone, using the published constituency contact number, call the MPs office to check the parliamentary contact is authentic.

17. (icon) When the contact has been authenticated, update:

   - **Parliamentary Contact Authenticated = Y**

   - **Letter = Outbound**, if required, (CMSL5600 MP General Enquiry)

    (i) An outbound acknowledgement letter is required when the original contact was made via letter and the enquiry cannot be answered immediately.

    You need to ensure that;

   - The content of the drafted letter is appropriate as a response to the original enquiry. Refer to the Style Guide for help with this.

   - The action taken is correct.

   - Grammar and spelling, including the client's name and address is correct.

18. If the MPs office has no knowledge of the contact or the contact details on the correspondence do not match those held on the MPs record then the authentication has failed. Update:

- **Resolution Code = Authentication Failed**

Then close the SR by setting the following values:

- **Status = Closed**

- **Sub Status = Complete**

19. When the contact has been validated, open the SR and update the fields:

- **Last name** = Last name of person making contact

- **First name** = First name of person making contact

- **Type** = Select the most relevant from the drop down:

  - Debt

  - Constituency Cases

  - Organisation

  - Enforcement

  - Policy

  - Consolatory Payment

  - Parentage

  - Telephony

  - Options

  - HR

  - IT

  - Migration & Conversion

  - Running Costs

  - Complaints

  - Arrears Action

  - Errors

  - Statistics

  - Shared Care

  - Staffing

  - Targets/Performance

  - Advertising

  - Data Protection

  - HMRC

  - Benefits

  - Financial Redress

  - Refunds

  - Operational Procedure

- **Addressee** = Director general, Minister or business in general

- **Question/Enquiry** = details of the contact

Once these fields are updated change the **Status** of the SR to **In Progress**. This generate an activity plan for you to follow.

Gather Necessary Information

20. Once authentication is complete you will proceed in gathering the relevant information regarding the briefing. When requesting information from a department, direct requests to the director responsible for that department.

21. Update the **Notes** on the SR with whom you are requesting information from. Update the **Sub Status** to **Wait**.

22. Once a response has been received, check to ensure that it is relevant. Update the **Answer** field on the SR with the details.

23. The SR should be sent for team leader (TL) review. Update the SR **Sub Status** to **Pending Approval – TL**

24. Once reviewed the TL will approve or reject the comments.

25. In the event the TL rejects this, they should update the **Notes** with the reasons for the rejection. You need to act upon the comments and gather any required additional information before sending the SR back for approval.

26. Once approval has been received from the TL you should issue all the details of the parliamentary contact including the answer to the director general of review.

    In Northern Ireland, director general reviews are completed by the head of division for the Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Service (NICMS).

27. Update the SR **Status** to **Wait** and the **Sub Status** to **Commissioner Review**.

28. Once reviewed, any comments made by the director general will need reviewing and updating on the report.

Send Report to Minister

29. Once updates are made and the report has had TL and director general approval, you can issue the report to the Minister. This must include a named contact for the Minister to contact for any clarification required. CMSL5600 MP general enquiry letter issued.

Face to Face Briefing Required

30. Contact the Minister to arrange a face to face briefing so the report can be discussed.

    The face to face briefing should be attended by the manager of the Government Relations Unit and a subject matter expert on the topic of the briefing.

31. Once conducted, the minutes of the briefing will need to be captured on the SR. Complete the fields **Briefing Date** and **Notes**.

32. A copy of the minutes will then need issuing to the Minister using letter CMSL5600 MP general enquiry.

33. Comments to be discussed in the House of Commons (Parliamentary questions and adjournment debates) will be published on Hansard. Once published you will need to update the field **Date Published in Hansard** and **Hansard Column** with any information associated with the topic.

    Hansard is a web based publication responsible for producing reports of the proceedings of the main Chamber of the House of Commons, of Westminster Hall and of Standing Committees. It also reports certain Select Committees.

34. Once all actions are completed update the **Sub Status** on the SR to **Complete** this will close the SR.

For further information on letters to clients refer to Letters (Outbound) - Send to Clients

CMSL5600 To MP in answer to general enquiry

Basic template to respond to an enquiry from an MP
- If the enquiry was a request for information, use paragraph code **TM_01378_E** "Thank you for your information request" and insert the date of the MP request into the freetext date field
- If the enquiry was a general enquiry, insert the paragraph **TM_01379_E** "Thank you for your enquiry" and insert the date of the MP enquiry into the freetext date field
- If the enquiry was a complaint, insert the paragraph **TM_01380_E** "Thank you for your complaint" and insert the date of the MP complaint into the freetext date field

Use the freetext response field to answer the MP's enquiry.

Insert your telephone number into the freetext telephone number field at the end of the "If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me on" paragraph.

Letters (Outbound) - Send to Clients

MP Enquiries

Terminology Changes