

70TH

WESTMINSTER

1952 - 2022

SEMINAR

14 March - 18 March 2022

FINAL REPORT



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Executive Summary



2022 Westminster Seminar Delegates

The Westminster Seminar is CPA UK's flagship peer-to-peer learning programme. Each year, the programme provides a unique platform for parliamentarians and clerks to explore approaches to parliamentary democracy, practice and procedure in the context of parliamentary systems from across the Commonwealth, by drawing comparisons between different legislatures.

2022 marked the Westminster Seminar's 70th year, with the first conference looking at parliamentary procedure held in 1952. This year's theme of Evolving Parliaments gave delegates the opportunity to assess how legislatures have adapted to change in recent years and take a look at how they can continue to ensure parliaments of the Commonwealth are effective.

Following the theme of Evolving Parliaments, this was CPA UK's first time hosting a hybrid Seminar, with delegates joining both in Westminster and online. This enabled those delegates, who were unable to travel to the UK due to the COVID-19 pandemic, to fully participate in the Seminar. Those able to attend in-person greatly valued the chance to meet their counterparts after the interruption of the pandemic, whilst the hybrid format also allowed for larger delegations from legislatures than in previous years.

The 2022 Westminster Seminar was designed to provide a balance between theoretical and practical sessions which allowed delegates to share their learning and best practice and gain new ideas which could be implemented within their own contexts. The Committee Hearing Workshop gave delegates the opportunity to put into practice the learning from earlier theoretical sessions. Split sessions for members and clerks allowed delegates space to discuss issues relevant to their specific roles.

In addition to sharing good practice and procedure, the week was also a celebration of the 70th Westminster Seminar. For 70 years, the Seminar has been a sought-after forum for peer-to-peer learning and the promotion of parliamentary democracy across the Commonwealth. The Seminar has evolved to address the new challenges facing parliamentarians and clerks. The 2022 Westminster Seminar included sessions on working remotely, using social media and ensuring representation and diversity.

This report aims to present the findings of the various sessions, the feedback delegates provided and how CPA UK plans to build on the Seminar in future.

About CPA UK

CPA UK supports and strengthens parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth



CPA UK focuses on priority themes which support and strengthen parliamentary democracy throughout the Commonwealth. These priority themes are: women in parliament, modern slavery, security, public accounts committees, and trade.

CPA UK brings together UK and Commonwealth parliamentarians and officials to share knowledge and experience through peer to peer learning. It aims to improve parliamentary oversight, scrutiny and representation and is located in, and funded by, the UK Parliament.

Building stronger parliaments and advancing democracy



CPA UK's core work is to build relationships with parliaments across the Commonwealth. This is achieved through a programme of parliamentary strengthening and capacity building activities.

CPA UK undertakes work at the request of other parliaments around the Commonwealth, and our tailored programmes include both individual country activities, and large scale projects and activities that bring together Commonwealth parliamentarians and clerks.

For more information about our work and activities, please visit our website:
uk-cpa.org



Outcomes



Delegates preparing for the Committee Hearing Workshop

Seminar Outcome

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



Output 1

Delegates will have an opportunity to widen their networks, creating open communication lines to work collaboratively with their peers.



Output 2

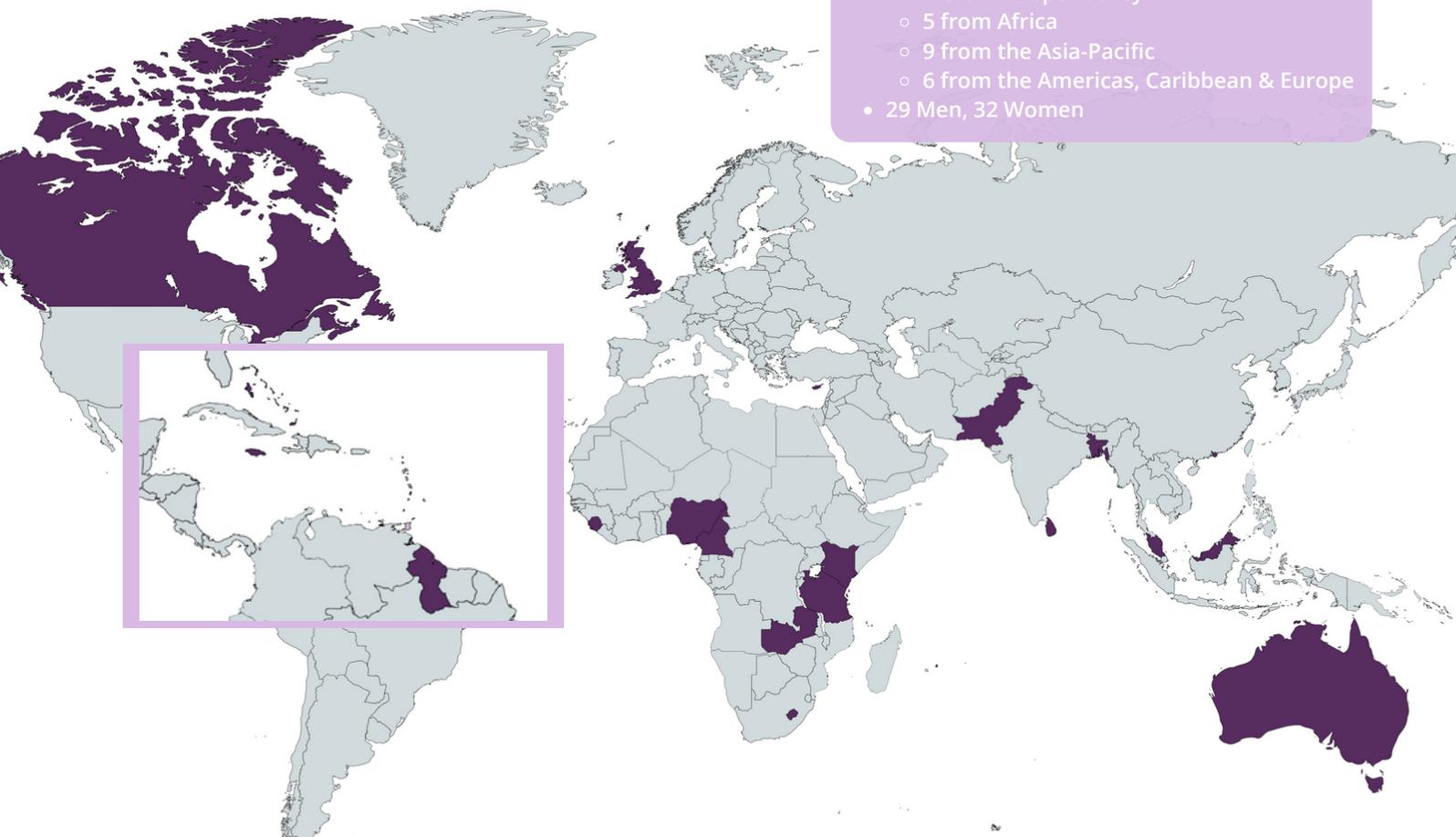
Delegates will be introduced to effective knowledge, tools and skills to enhance their leadership and administrative roles in their respective legislatures.



Output 3

Delegates will gain a deeper understanding of the components that make up an effective parliament within the Westminster context, as well as how process and procedure can evolve and adapt to changing times, using examples from the UK and across the Commonwealth.

Delegate Breakdown



- 61 Virtual Delegates**
- 36 Members, 25 Clerks
 - 23 legislatures
 - 2 UK Overseas Territories
 - 1 Crown Dependency
 - 5 from Africa
 - 9 from the Asia-Pacific
 - 6 from the Americas, Caribbean & Europe
 - 29 Men, 32 Women

- 56 In-Person Delegates**
- 39 Members, 17 Clerks
 - 25 legislatures
 - 6 UK Overseas Territories
 - 1 Crown Dependency
 - 5 from Africa
 - 6 from Asia-Pacific
 - 7 from the Americas, Caribbean & Europe
 - 35 Men, 21 Women

Day 1 - Monday 14 March 2022

Celebrating the Commonwealth

On 14 March 2022, CPA UK welcomed 56 in-person delegates who had travelled to the UK from 25 legislatures for the 70th Westminster Seminar. The first day of the programme fell on Commonwealth Day and was devoted to a celebration of the Commonwealth.

The delegates joined the Commonwealth Day flag-raising ceremony led by The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the UK House of Commons. Delegates Hon. Patricia Deveaux MP, Speaker of the House Assembly of the Bahamas and Hon. Claudius Francis, Speaker of the House of Assembly of St Lucia, gave a joint reading at the ceremony. The delegates then attended an exhibition of Parliaments across the Commonwealth. This was followed by the Commonwealth Service in Westminster Abbey, which was also attended by the Royal Family, High Commissioners, Ambassadors, faith leaders and honoured guests.

The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, Speaker of the House of Commons, commented that it was “a great day for the staff of the House of Commons, to put on the exhibition of the parliaments and flags of all the Commonwealth countries”. Sharing his thoughts on the first day of the Westminster Seminar, Hon. Francis said, “I have not seen my colleagues for two and a half years, so this one has even more significance”.



Day 2 - Tuesday 15 March 2022



Speaker of the House of Commons, The Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP

Effective Parliaments

On the second day of the Westminster Seminar, CPA UK welcomed an additional 61 delegates joining virtually from 23 legislatures across the Commonwealth. This was the first hybrid edition of the Westminster Seminar in its 70-year history. The second day introduced the key elements behind the effective running of parliaments, with a focus on the role of the Speaker, members and clerks.

The Role of the Speaker

The session on the role of the Speaker demonstrated the ways in which Parliaments across the Commonwealth are evolving. Opening the session, Sir Lindsay said that he had sought to bring a more modern approach to the role. He had, for instance, brought in the first female Chief of Staff of the Speaker's office. Hon. Patricia Deveaux MP, Speaker of the House Assembly of the Bahamas, also described the changes that she is making to the role of Speaker. As only the second female Speaker in the Parliament of the Bahamas, she hopes that her impact will be such that the House will continue to appoint women to this position.

Our Parliamentary Systems

In-person and remote delegates from across the Commonwealth, including Cameroon,

Pakistan and Kenya, spoke about the need to ensure a peaceful transition of power as being the most important part of a parliamentary system. The delegates acknowledged that this is not always easy and highlighted the need for voters to see that the election process has been fair and for appropriate oversight mechanisms to be in place.

The Evolution of Parliamentary Scrutiny Tools

The different systems for carrying out parliamentary scrutiny in the House of Commons and House of Lords were analysed in this session. The legislative system in the Commons was described as highly adversarial. It was argued that this suits both the government which can get business through, and the opposition which has an opportunity to demonstrate how it would act differently in government. The Lords, by contrast, has the capacity to go through legislation line by line, looking for contradictions and inconsistencies.

Effective Committees – Insights from the UK Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

Dame Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the UK Public Accounts Committee, opened the session by discussing how the operation of the PAC has evolved under her leadership. She has introduced a deputy chair and a system through which members rotate to take the lead on a specific subject area. To encourage greater public and media engagement, Dame Meg has also started creating short videos ahead of each PAC hearing.



Dame Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the UK PAC, speaks during session on Effective Committees

Effective parliaments and the responsibilities of members and clerks

This was a split session with members and clerks in different groups. Members discussed the need to embrace all opportunities for training and personal development. They also looked at the challenges of maintaining a balance between work and family life. Clerks talked about the need to maintain positive relationships with members but also to push back when tasks are too demanding. The first split session of the programme had strong engagement from those joining virtually, with online questions from Canada, Hong Kong and Trinidad and Tobago.

Members' Session on Parliamentary Privilege, Standards and Ethics

Kathryn Stone OBE, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards of the UK House of Commons, made an important point in this session about the value of having an independent complaints body. Dr Stone said that since the UK Parliament made this change, it has been easier to respond robustly to claims of bullying or misconduct. There was also discussion in this session from delegates around the Commonwealth about parliamentary privilege and the degree of protection it should provide MPs.

Clerks' Session on Effective Management of Time and Resource

This session addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of clerks. In some jurisdictions, clerks were required to continue to work in person, while in others they could support virtually. In cases where clerks could work virtually, they had more time to consider requests that came in via email, than they would have had in person.



Jessica Mulley, Deputy Principal Clerk of the House of Commons and Hon. Nelly Mutti, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia

Day 3 - Wednesday 16 March 2022



Clerks in the CPA Room during a question and answer session

Adapting Parliaments

The third day of the Westminster Seminar considered the changes that parliaments across the Commonwealth have experienced in recent years. There was also the opportunity for delegates to attend Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs).

Hybrid Parliaments: How COVID-19 Changes Practice and Procedure

Justin Madders MP reflected on the impact of the pandemic on the UK Parliament's ability to scrutinise legislation. He recalled that reports were often only made available weeks after they were requested. Senator Lokorio Petronila Were, from the Parliament of Kenya, agreed that it was challenging to scrutinise documents when meeting virtually. She said that while all senators were provided with tablets, they were not given training on how to use them and some older senators had to rely on their grandchildren for technological assistance!

Holding the Executive to Account

Ahead of a live viewing of PMQs, Chris Elmore MP explained to delegates that this would be a slightly unusual PMQs. Firstly, the deputy Prime Minister and

deputy Leader of the Opposition were standing in because the Prime Minister was out of the country. Secondly, the tone of the questions would be much less adversarial than usual because of the situation in Ukraine. Delegates from around the Commonwealth explained their systems for holding the executive to account.

Representation and Diversity in our Parliaments

This session focused on how parliaments can become more inclusive, with a greater diversity of elected representatives. Hon. Jeremiah Norbert MP, Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly of St Lucia, spoke about his own experience of being a Member of Parliament with a disability. He argued for accessible routes in all parliaments so that everyone can fully participate. A delegate, joining virtually from Trinidad and Tobago, asked about the process of establishing a cross-party women’s caucus. Theo Clarke MP encouraged the delegate to establish such a network and highlighted the value she has found in engaging with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians network.

Navigating the Digital Space

This was an opportunity for a discussion on the positive and negative impacts of engaging with digital space for elected representatives. There was a virtual question from the Parliament of Cameroon on the role of legislation to regulate the internet. In response, Hon. Vijay Daryanani from the Parliament of Gibraltar, said that while it is important to protect freedom of speech, there also needs to be regulation stopping individuals from publishing blatant lies.

Engaging with the Public

This split session for members and clerks explored ways to communicate with specific audiences. For members, the emphasis was on engaging with voters, while clerks focused on ways of publicising the work of parliament. The members' discussion touched on how social media platforms are particularly effective when members focus on a niche area. During the clerks' session, it was pointed out that public awareness of the work of committees can be significantly increased with high profile witnesses.



Carletta Charles, Parliamentary Executive Officer from the Parliament of Guyana and Hon. Jeremiah Norbert MP, Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly of St Lucia

Day 4 - Thursday 17 March 2022



Senator Natalie Campbell Rodriques, from the Parliament of Jamaica, chairing the Committee Hearing Workshop

Scrutiny in Practice

The fourth day of the Westminster Seminar provided an opportunity for delegates to put into practice what had been discussed in previous days on legislative scrutiny.

Session 12: Conducting an Inquiry – Committees of the UK Parliament

The focus for this session was on how to set up and run an inquiry, with the House of Lords' International Trade Committee as an example. Suggestions included not just focusing on what is in the news headlines but instead being more strategic and building a case for change using evidence and analysis. Another idea was to have a series of private briefings in advance of public hearings to allow members to feel confident with a topic and ask more effective questions.

Session 13: Observing a Committee Hearing

During this session, delegates watched clips of evidence hearings held by select committees of the House of Commons. There was then an opportunity for groups of delegates, both virtually and in person, to discuss what they had thought of the select committees. Some delegates said

that they were surprised at the combative nature of the questioning style. A delegate joining virtually from Australia pointed out that virtual committees during COVID-19 have been much more respectful, with fewer instances of people talking over each other.

Session 14: Committee Hearing Workshop

The purpose of the Committee Hearing exercise was to develop techniques of asking targeted questions. Delegates also had the opportunity to build knowledge on human trafficking through sport in the lead up to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, as this was the focus of the Hearing. Delegates volunteered to act as members of the committee and a 'freeze-frame' methodology was used to give them time to reflect on how the process was working. The participants discussed how the questions to the witnesses needed to be clear and concise and that follow-up questions can elicit further information if answers need developing. They also noted the importance of the chair's time-keeping role to enable members to ask their allocated questions and to receive adequate answers.



Delegates participating in a Committee Hearing Workshop on human trafficking through sport

Session 15: Committee Recommendations and Report Writing

This was a split session, with clerks and members focusing on their respective roles in the recommendations and report writing process. When drafting reports, clerks considered the need to work within time and resource constraints and the importance of the executive summary in capturing the key recommendations. In the members' session, the issue was raised that committees need to follow up more effectively to check whether their recommendations have been implemented. It was suggested that asking the Minister to appear again in front of the committee at regular intervals would give an opportunity to check on progress.

Day 5 - Friday 18 March 2022



Florence Eshalomi, MP for Vauxhall, speaks to delegates during her constituency visit

Parliaments and People

The final day of the Westminster Seminar focused on enhancing the connections between members of parliaments and clerks with their constituencies and the wider public.

Members - Constituency Visits

Members split into small groups and attended constituency visits. The groups were hosted by Florence Eshalomi, MP for Vauxhall; Virendra Sharma, MP for Ealing Southall; Bambos Charalambous, MP for Enfield Southgate and Bell Ribeiro-Addy, MP for Streatham. On all these visits members had a chance to observe MP's constituency surgeries and to discuss how this compared with the ways they support their own constituents. Delegates also joined the UK members on visits to local councils, businesses and schools.

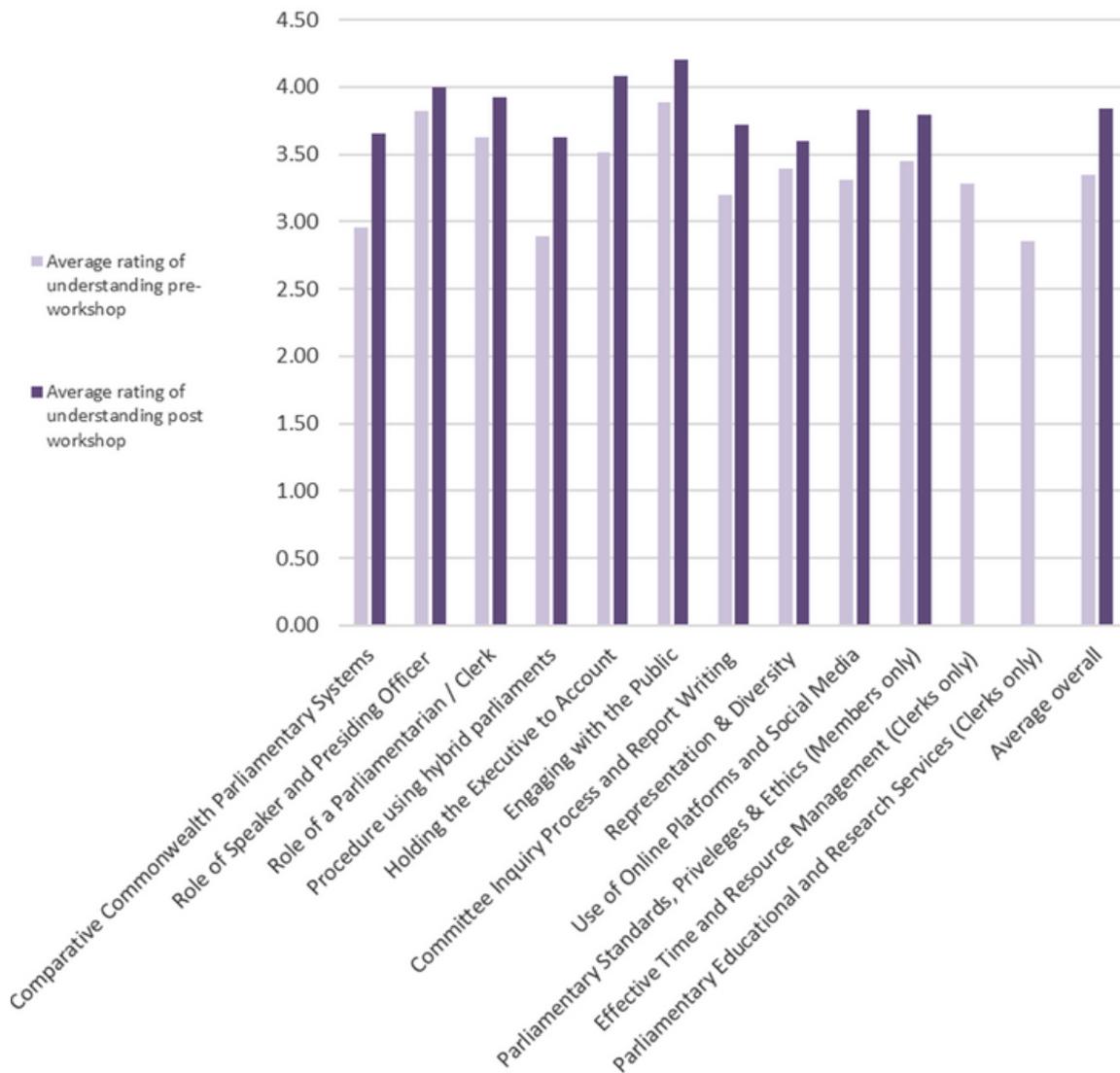
Clerks - Educational and Research Visits

Clerks had the chance to see how the UK Parliament shares its history and current work with the public. They viewed the Education Centre and learned about the process for setting up similar facilities to engage young people in their own countries. The clerks also had a unique opportunity to see items in the UK Parliamentary Archives relating to the Commonwealth, including a document signed by all attendees of the 1954 Westminster Seminar. Delegates then decided to create a similar document for the historic 70th year anniversary Westminster Seminar, to preserve for future generations.

Feedback

As part of the seminar’s monitoring and evaluation process, delegates were asked to complete pre and post Seminar assessment forms to measure how effective the seminar had been in raising their level of understanding on the sessions covered. The graphs below show the average understanding of both in-person and virtual delegates substantially increased across the board as a result of the seminar.

Feedback on sessions from in-person delegates



Ratings: 1= No understanding; 2 = Basic understanding; 3= Moderate understanding; 4= Good understanding; 5= Very good understanding

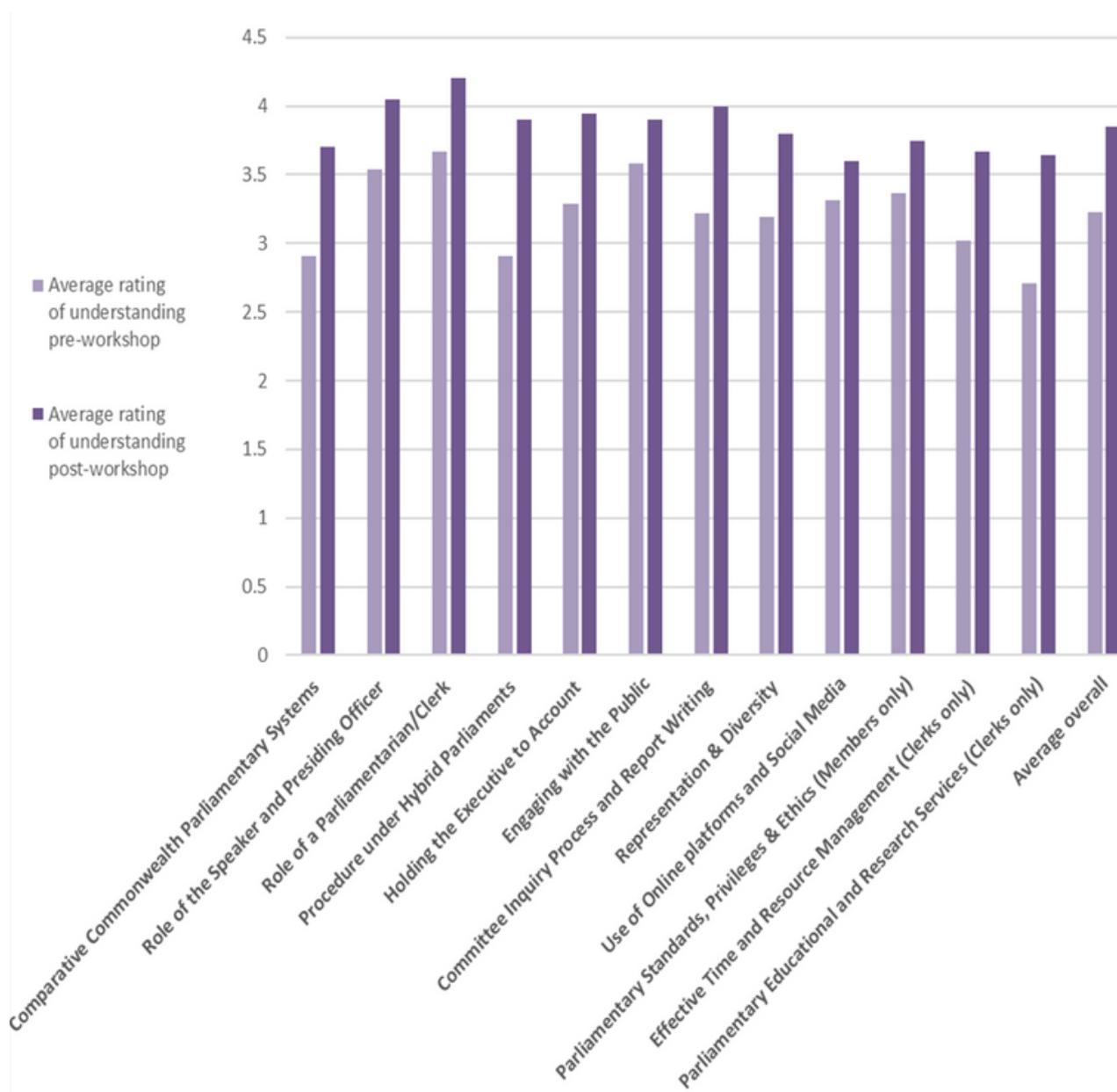
Reflections from in-person delegates

“The network which I have charted through this seminar has been priceless. I have been able to compare other jurisdictions against my own.”

“The Westminster Seminar helped me understand what my role as a parliamentarian should be and also how to be more effective, which will surely be a benefit to myself and my constituents.”

“I am now in a position to better scrutinise, answer questions and understanding committee workings. Meeting Florence Eshalomi MP and seeing her function in her constituency was the icing on the cake.”

Feedback on sessions from virtual delegates



Ratings: 1= No understanding; 2 = Basic understanding; 3= Moderate understanding; 4= Good understanding; 5= Very good understanding

Reflections from virtual delegates

"I am part of several committees including scrutiny of delegated legislation. It was very interesting to hear the different processes and the commonalities. The case study committee hearing and the "freeze frame" questioning suggestions was very good and gave me some good tips to take home".

"I will make sure to share what I learned with the rest of my team, and that good ideas are noted by our Parliamentary Reform Team".

"It was interesting to see that legislatures across the Commonwealth are facing the same challenges, especially since the beginning of the pandemic. I plan to bring to my legislature the idea of creating a standards of practice document to manage expectations".



In-person and virtual delegates and speakers participating in the 2022 Westminster Seminar

Conclusion

The 2022 Westminster Seminar on Evolving Parliaments was welcomed as an opportunity for colleagues to meet for the first time or reconnect after the interruption to international travel caused by COVID-19. It provided a space for peer-to-peer learning to enhance their roles and further build on their understanding of the Westminster parliamentary system.

This year's programme was the first in the Westminster Seminar's 70-year history to be held as a hybrid event. This allowed delegates who were not able to travel to Westminster to participate in the conference and included speakers from a wider range of Commonwealth countries. The hybrid event allowed for interaction between virtual and in-person delegates and speakers, and this is something CPA UK will seek to bring to future events.

The Westminster Seminar was an opportunity for not just Commonwealth members and clerks to learn about Westminster, but an opportunity for UK members and clerks to learn about how effective parliaments are run across the Commonwealth and to promote cross-Commonwealth dialogue.

The programme, with some combined and some split sessions for members and clerks, gave an opportunity for collaborative discussions, whilst ensuring that content was relevant to each role. In the split sessions, we saw particularly strong virtual engagement from both members and clerks.

We are keen to strengthen this programme for the benefit of our participants from across the Commonwealth and are working with past delegates to identify what works well for them and their colleagues. We will also be drawing on advice from Westminster Seminar alumni to find ways in which we can ensure the network is active and people can stay in touch.



Delegates participating in the Committee Hearing Workshop

Delegate List



In-person Delegates

Australia, Northern Territory: Mr. Mark Monaghan

Australia, New South Wales: Mr. Lee Evans; Mr. Ron Hoenig; Ms. Carly Maxwell

Bahamas: Hon. J. LaShell Adderley; Hon. Patricia Ann Deveaux; Mr. Rashad Ramon Flowers

Bermuda: Hon. Vance Campbell

Canada, Alberta: Mr. Dan Williams

Cayman Islands: Hon. Joseph Hew; Mrs. Patricia Priestley; Mr. Isaac Rankine

Cyprus: Hon. Aristos Damianou

Gibraltar: Hon. Vijay Daryanani

Guyana: Ms. Carlleta Charles; Hon. Alister Charlie; Hon. Amanza Walton-Desir

Falklands Islands: Hon. Pete Biggs

Jamaica: Hon. Phillip Cohen Henriques; Mr. Jermaine Terrence von Luton; Hon. Phillip Paulwell; Sen. Natalie Campbell Rodrigues

Jersey: Ms. Katie Griffiths

Kenya: Hon. Limo Joseph Kirui; Ms. Karanu Perpetual Wambui Muiga; Sen. Lokorio Petronila Were

Malaysia: Mrs. Rozana Abdullah

Maldives: Hon. Ahmed Usham; Hon. Abdulla Waheed

Montserrat: Hon. Samuel Joseph

Pakistan: Hon. Shahid Ahmad; Mr Muhammad Asim; Hon. Shagufta Jumani

Sierra Leone: Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma; Hon. Hajaratu Faith Samura; Mr. Paran Umar Tarawally

Sri Lanka: Mr. Waruna Bandara Dhammika Dasanayake; Hon. Kokila Harshani Gunawardhana; Hon. Hewa Gajaman Pattinige Kins Kumar Nelson

St Helena: Cllr. Gillian Ann Brooks; Ms. Shanice Phillips; Cllr. Andrew Turner

Tanzania: Hon. Pius Stephen Chaya; Ms. Katherine Kaihula; Hon. Anatrophia Theonest

St Lucia: Hon. Stanley Felix; Hon. Claudius J. Francis; Hon. Jeremiah Norbert

Wales: Ms. Natasha Asghar; Mr. Sam Rowlands

Zambia: Hon. Christopher Kalila; Hon. Tasila Lungu; Mr. Temwa Nyirenda



Virtual Delegates

Australia: Sen. Perin Davey

Australia, New South Wales: Mr. Jonathan Elliott; Mr. Simon Johnston; Ms. Helen Minnican

Australia, Northern Territory: Mr. Mark Turner

Bangladesh: Hon. Khaleda Khanom; Hon. Samil Uddin Ahmed Shimul

Cameroon: Hon. Agho Oliver Bamenju

Canada: Ms. Leela Aheer; Hon. Larry Brock; Hon. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau; Ms. Joëlle Nadeau; Hon. Randy Weekes

Canada, Alberta: Hon. Jackie Armstrong; Hon. Richard Gotfried

Canada, Quebec: Mr. Andrée-Ann Bolduc; Mr. Dominic Garant; Hon. Greg Kelley; Mr. Vincent Roy

Cayman Islands: Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks

Guyana: Ms. Kiana Benjamin; Ms. Sereeta Bethune; Ms. Christina Ramroop

Hong Kong: Hon. Tang Fei; Hon. Nixie Lam; Ms. Lilian Mok

Jamaica: Hon. Robert Chin; Hon. Tova Hamilton; Hon. Krystal Lee; Ms. Grace-Ann Morrison; Hon. Dwight Sibblies

Jersey: Ms. Katherine de Carteret

Kenya: Ms. Carolyne Cherop; Ms. Anna Musandu

Kiribati: Mr. Tengata Iteraera; Hon. Terieta Mwemwenikarawa; Hon. Vincent Tong

Malaysia: Hon. Simon Sinang Bada; Hon. See Chee How; Hon. John Ilus; Hon. Yap Yau Sin

Mauritius: Hon. Karen Foo Kune

Nigeria: Mr. Bello Yunusa Avidime; Mr. Idris Oladokun

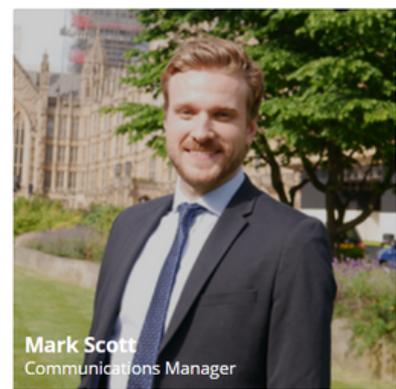
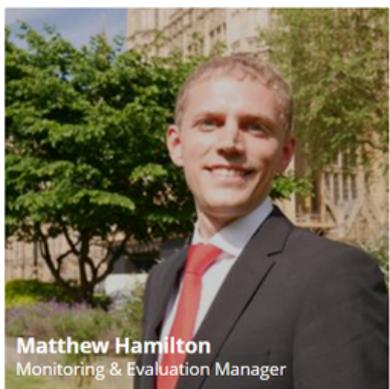
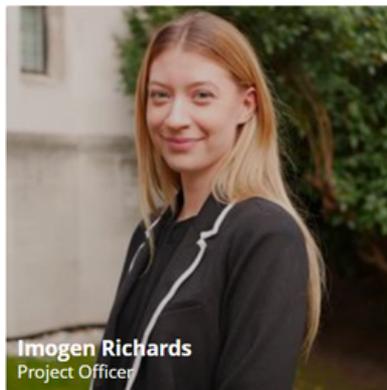
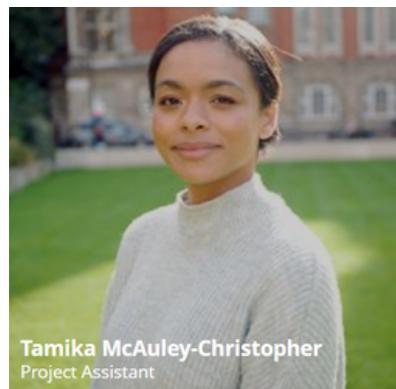
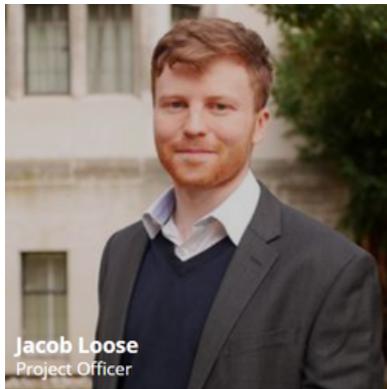
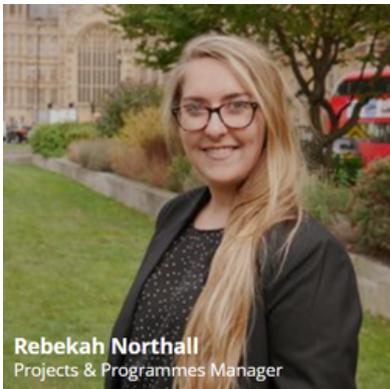
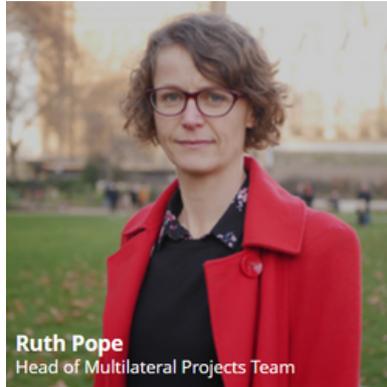
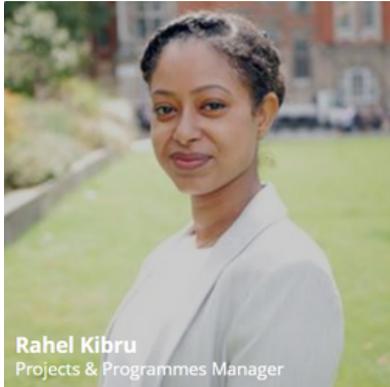
Sri Lanka: Ms. Hewagamage Kalani Buddhika; Ms. R. Chandima Kulathilake; Hon. Anura Priyadarshana; Ms. Deva Isuri Theja Sarathchandra

St Helena: Cllr. Rosemary Bargo; Ms. Anita Legg; Cllr. Robert Midwinter

Trinidad & Tobago: Ms. Sharla Elock; Hon. Marvin Gonzales; Hon. Saddam Hosein; Sen. Muhammad Yunus Ibrahim; Hon. Lisa Morris Julian; Mr. Brian Lucio; Ms. Angelique Massiah; Hon. Barry Padarath; Hon. Charisse Seepersad

Zambia: Hon. Chrizoster Halwiindi

Westminster Seminar Team



Report written by Jacob Loose, Project Officer at CPA UK

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