



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

INFORMATION FOR OBJECTORS TO PRIVATE BILLS

Information for those wishing to object to a Private Bill introduced in the Scottish Parliament.

What is a Private Bill?

A Private Bill is introduced by a promoter (who may be an individual, a company or a group of people), for the purpose of obtaining particular powers or benefits in addition to, or in conflict with, the general law. A Private Bill may, for example, enable changes to the constitution of a trust or organisation or give authority for a construction project (although most major infrastructure projects are dealt with through a separate process, managed by the Scottish Government).

Prior to introduction, the promoter must consult on the purposes of the Bill, and must individually notify anyone considered to be directly affected by the Bill of the Bill's purposes, its date of introduction, and where to seek further information. Advertisements must be placed in newspapers and notices must be displayed in libraries or other premises.

When the Bill is introduced, the promoter must lodge accompanying documents explaining the background to the Bill and how it will work.

Once introduced, the Bill and all or most of the accompanying documents are available on the Parliament's website. Copies are also available in libraries or other premises.

Who can object?

It is open to any individual, company or group of people who consider that their interests would be adversely affected by the Bill to object. Where two or more objectors have similar concerns, they may wish to consider lodging a joint objection rather than objecting individually. Where individual objections are lodged, they may be "grouped" by the Private Bill Committee and so considered together.

Is there a time limit?

Objections must be lodged with the clerks no later than 60 days after the introduction of the Bill. This is known as the “objection period”. The closing date for objections will be advertised on the Parliament’s website. Late objections can sometimes be accepted if they are lodged with a statement explaining the delay.

What do I need to do?

An objection must:

- be signed (by or on behalf of the objector) and dated
- be in English or Gaelic
- be printed, typed or clearly hand-written
- set out the objector’s name, address and other contact details
- set out the nature of the objection
- explain whether the objection is against the whole Bill or only certain provisions
- specify how the objector’s interests would be adversely affected by the Bill.

If all these criteria are met, the objection is “admissible” and will be considered by the Private Bill Committee.

How do I lodge an objection?

Objections can be e-mailed, sent by post or delivered in person to the Non-Government Bills Unit (NGBU). Please include confirmation that you have read and understood the [Privacy Notice](#). Contact details for NGBU are given at the end.

What happens next?

NGBU will notify each objector whether their objection is admissible. In the case of an objection signed by more than one individual, NGBU will correspond with the principal signatory on the objection (and that signatory should be clearly identified). It is the responsibility of that person to liaise with the other signatories.

At the end of the objection period a list of the names of those who have lodged admissible objections is published in the Parliament’s Business Bulletin.

What is the role of MSPs in considering objections?

Each Private Bill is considered by a Committee of between three and five MSPs established for the purpose. The Committee, at Preliminary Stage, must consider all admissible objections lodged and must reject any where the objector’s interests are not (in the Committee’s opinion) clearly adversely affected by the Bill. The

Committee conducts detailed scrutiny of the remaining objections at Consideration Stage, including by hearing directly from objectors and the promoter.

What if I change my mind?

An objector may withdraw an objection at any time after it is lodged, by notifying NGBU.

What happens in the Parliament?

There is a 3-stage Parliamentary process comprising:

- Preliminary Stage – preliminary consideration of objections by the Private Bill Committee, scrutiny by that committee and preparation of a Stage 1 report, followed by a debate in the Parliament and a decision whether to agree the general principles of the Bill and whether it should proceed as a Private Bill
- Consideration Stage – detailed consideration of objections and consideration by the Committee of any amendments lodged (by members of the Committee only)
- Final Stage – consideration by the whole Parliament of any further amendments lodged (by any MSP), followed by a debate and decision on whether to pass the Bill.

Additional information about the process is available in the Guidance on Private Bills.

Where can I find out more?

Further information can be found on the Scottish Parliament website:

<http://www.parliament.scot/>

The **Standing Orders** relevant to Private Bills can be found under Parliamentary Business / Parliamentary Procedure / Standing Orders of the Scottish Parliament / Chapter 9A:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/26513.aspx>

The **Guidance on Private Bills** can be found under Parliamentary Business / Bills / Bills Explained / Public, Private & Hybrid Bills Guidance / Guidance on Private Bills

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/79081.aspx>

Once the Private Bill has been introduced:

The **Bill and accompanying documents** can be found under Parliamentary Business / Bills / Current Bills:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/576.aspx>

Information about **Private Bill Committees** (once established) can be found under Parliamentary Business / Committees:

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/committees.aspx>

The **Business Bulletin** can be found under Parliamentary Business / Business Bulletin: <https://bb.parliament.scot>

The **Privacy Notice** for Private Bill Objections can be found here:

[https://www.parliament.scot/Privacy-Notice/Objections to Private Bills or to amendments of Private Bills Privacy Notice.pdf](https://www.parliament.scot/Privacy-Notice/Objections%20to%20Private%20Bills%20or%20to%20amendments%20of%20Private%20Bills%20Privacy%20Notice.pdf)

Non-Government Bills Unit

Address Non-Government Bills Unit
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Textphone users can contact us on **0800 092 7100**. We also welcome calls using the Text Relay service.

Text **07786 209 888**
Email private.bills@parliament.scot
Website www.parliament.scot

