



ACCA Guide to Parliament

Early Day Motions (EDMs)

Context

EDM is a colloquial term for a notice of motion given by a Member for which no date has been fixed for debate. EDMs exist to allow Members to put on record their opinion on a subject and canvass support for it from fellow Members. In effect, the primary function of an EDM is to form a kind of petition that MPs can sign.

Purpose and impact

There is very little prospect of these motions being debated on the floor of the House. Indeed, in parliamentary terms, the EDM virtually never has any direct consequence. Public interest in them, which is well known to MPs, perhaps in itself, demonstrates their purpose. Even if an EDM does not attract wide national press coverage it may well receive attention locally or regionally and getting an EDM tabled is therefore an integral part of any campaign.

In an average Session, only about six or seven EDMs reach over 200 signatures. Quite a number will attract only one or two signatures. There is no guarantee that an EDM that reaches a certain number of signatures will be debated on the floor of the House.

EDMs remain current for the rest of the Session (usually from early November one year to late October the next) in which they were put down and extra names can be added at any time.

At the end of the Session all EDMs fall, but can be introduced again in the new Session. They do not automatically carry forward the signatures appended to them in the previous Session. Some EDMs reappear Session after Session.

Drafting

Since they first appeared in the 1930s, the drafting rules for EDMs have not changed. EDMs have to begin with the word "That ..." because they must be expressed in the form of a resolution. Also, they must be in the form of a single sentence, which may, be broken up by use of brackets, semi-colons or colons; the maximum length of an EDM is 250 words.

Other rules in the drafting of EDMs are:

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- Motions should not be over 250 words
- Motions should not criticise other Members, Peers, judges or members of the royal family except as the main subject of the motion
- No reference should be made to matters before the courts
- No unparliamentary language or irony should be used
- Titles must be purely descriptive

ACCA's involvement

On occasion, we will ask an MP to table an EDM on our behalf, for example on the issue of legal protection for the term accountant, where Vince Cable MP tabled the following EDM:

“That this House notes that the term ‘accountant’ is not defined or protected by law and that thousands of small businesses and individuals, believing they have engaged qualified accountants, are at risk from harmful and costly business advice from unqualified, unregulated, possibly uninsured advisers; observes that although some unqualified accountants may do good work, an unqualified accountant is not answerable to any regulatory body and so cannot be disciplined; further notes that legal protection of title is viewed as essential in professions where there is a substantial degree of public interest, for example for doctors, barristers, solicitors and auditors; feels that greater accountability needs to be introduced; and urges the Government to consider introducing legal protection for the term ‘accountant’.”

The EDM was signed by 83 MPs – a full list of the MPs who signed can be found here:

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=36272&SESSION=891>

This serves to raise the profile of our campaigns or of issues of importance to ACCA and is a tool we can use to engage with MPs and to show our members that we are representing their interests at the highest levels.

PAMR

ACCA's Public Affairs and Media Relations (PAMR) department is based in the UK, co-ordinating with colleagues in local offices. We also have an office in Brussels and a permanent staff member in Ukraine, focussed on Central and Eastern Europe.

The PAMR team aims to ensure that the views of our global membership are reflected in the world's media, and that issues of concern to finance professionals and the wider business community are raised with governments and regulators in order to protect and enhance ACCA's reputation and to increase our influence.

The Public Affairs team exists to protect and enhance the reputation of ACCA with

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government, policy advisers, key civil servants and other political and business stakeholders. It aims to build positive relationships with key decision makers, and to influence and inform legislation and policy ensuring the best possible outcomes for ACCA's work. We lead on all engagement with Parliament, monitoring Parliamentary activity and providing advice to colleagues.

The Media Relations team works to provide timely and useful comment to the world's media on key issues affecting not only the accounting profession, but business and personal finances. Our global network of offices engaged in communications ensures that every day of the year ACCA is offering wide ranging responsible advice or commentary on key issues on every continent.

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