



# Local Government and Housing Act 1989

## 1989 CHAPTER 42

### PART I

#### LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS, OFFICERS, STAFF AND COMMITTEES ETC.

##### *Political balance on committees etc.*

#### **15 Duty to allocate seats to political groups.**

- (1) It shall be the duty of a relevant authority having power from time to time to make appointments to a body to which this section applies to review the representation of different political groups on that body—
  - (a) where the members of the authority are divided into different political groups at the time when this section comes into force, as soon as practicable after that time;
  - (b) where the authority hold annual meetings in pursuance of paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12 to the <sup>M1</sup>Local Government Act 1972 (annual meeting of principal councils) and the members of the authority are divided into different political groups at the time of any such meeting, at or as soon as practicable after the meeting;
  - (c) where, at the time of the meeting required by paragraph 1 of Schedule 7 to the <sup>M2</sup>Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to be held in an election year within twenty-one days of the election, the members of the authority are divided into different political groups, at or as soon as practicable after the meeting;
  - (d) as soon as practicable after any such division as is mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) above occurs; and
  - (e) at such other times as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (2) Except in such cases as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State, it shall be the duty of every committee of a relevant authority which is a committee having power from time to time to make appointments to a body to which

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this section applies to review the representation of different political groups on that body—

- (a) where the members of the authority are divided into different political groups at the time when this section comes into force, as soon as practicable after that time; and
  - (b) as soon as practicable after any occasion on which the members of the committee are changed in consequence of a determination under this section.
- (3) Where at any time the representation of different political groups on a body to which this section applies falls to be reviewed under this section by any relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority, it shall be the duty of that authority or committee, as soon as practicable after the review, to determine the allocation to the different political groups into which the members of the authority are divided of all the seats which fall to be filled by appointments made from time to time by that authority or committee.
- (4) Subject to subsection (6) below, it shall be the duty of a relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority—
- (a) in performing their duty under subsection (3) above; and
  - (b) in exercising their power, at times not mentioned in subsection (3) above, to determine the allocation to different political groups of seats on a body to which this section applies,
- to make only such determinations as give effect, so far as reasonably practicable, to the principles specified in subsection (5) below.
- (5) The principles mentioned in subsection (4) above, in relation to the seats on any body which fall to be filled by appointments made by any relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority, are—
- (a) that not all the seats on the body are allocated to the same political group;
  - (b) that the majority of the seats on the body is allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
  - (c) subject to paragraphs (a) and (b) above, that the number of seats on the ordinary committees of a relevant authority which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the total of all the seats on the ordinary committees of that authority as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority; and
  - (d) subject to paragraphs (a) to (c) above, that the number of the seats on the body which are allocated to each political group bears the same proportion to the number of all the seats on that body as is borne by the number of members of that group to the membership of the authority.
- (6) Where any relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority are required, in determining the allocation to different political groups of seats on a body to which this section applies, to give effect to the principles specified in subsection (5) above—
- (a) any seats which, in accordance—
    - (i) with provision made by virtue of subsection (5) of section 13 above;
    - or
    - (ii) with subsection (6) of section 14 above,
 are to be or may be filled by the appointment of persons who are not members of the authority shall be taken into account for the purpose of determining how many seats constitute a majority of the seats on a body mentioned in either of those subsections; but

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(b) that authority or committee shall, in making that determination, disregard for all other purposes any seats which, in accordance with any such provision, the said subsection (6) or otherwise, are to be or may be so filled;

and for the purposes of this subsection a seat on an advisory committee of a relevant authority or on a sub-committee appointed by such an advisory committee shall not be treated as one which may be so filled unless the authority have determined that it must be so filled.

(7) Schedule 1 to this Act shall have effect for determining the bodies to which this section applies and for the construction of this section and sections 16 and 17 below.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 15-17 applied (with modifications) by S.I. 1990/1553, **regs. 21, 22**
- C2** Ss. 15, 16 modified by S.I. 1990/1553, **reg. 16(1)(2)**
- C3** S. 15 excluded (3.4.1995) by 1994 c. 19, **ss. 30(11), 31(9)** (with **ss. 54(7), 55(7), Sch. 17 paras. 22(1), 23(2)**); S.I. 1995/852, **art. 5**
- S. 15 applied (with modifications) (8.5.2000) by 1999 c. 29, **s. 57(1)** (with **Sch. 12 para. 9(1)**); S.I. 2000/801, **art. 2(2)(b), Sch. Pt. 2**
- S. 15 extended (E.W.) (26.11.2000 for E. and 28.7.2001 for W.) by 2000 c. 22 ss. 21(11)(b), 108(4); S.I. 2000/2849, **art. 2(a)**
- S. 15 excluded (E.W.) (19.12.2000 for E. and police authorities in Wales otherwise 28.7.2001) by 2000 c. 22, **ss. 53(10), 108(4)**; S.I. 2000/3335, **art. 2**
- S. 15 applied (E.) (2.4.2001) by S.I. 2001/1299, **reg. 6(10)(b)**
- S. 15 excluded (W.) (28.7.2001) by S.I. 2001/2283, **reg. 12**
- S. 15 applied (W.) (28.7.2001) by S.I. 2001/2284, **reg. 5(1)(b)**
- C4** S. 15 applied in part (with modifications) (E.W.) (7.7.2005) by **The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/1552), arts. 1(2), 5(3)**
- C5** S. 15 applied (W.) (16.2.2007) by **The Local Authorities (Alternative Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/397), regs. 1(1), 9(2)**
- C6** S. 15 excluded (E.W.) (28.11.2008) by **The Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No.2) Regulations 2008 (S.I. 2008/2867), regs. 1(1), 17 (with reg. 1(2))**
- C7** S. 15 modified (3.12.2011 for specified purposes, 4.5.2012 in so far as not already in force) by 2000 c. 22, **s. 9FA(6)(b)** (as inserted by **Localism Act 2011 (c. 20), s. 240(2), Sch. 2 para. 1**; S.I. 2011/2896, **art. 2(e)**; S.I. 2012/1008, **art. 4(b)**)
- C8** S. 15 excluded (3.12.2011 for specified purposes, 4.5.2012 in so far as not already in force) by 2000 c. 22, **s. 9GC** (as inserted by **Localism Act 2011 (c. 20), s. 240(2), Sch. 2 para. 1**; S.I. 2011/2896, **art. 2(e)**; S.I. 2012/1008, **art. 4(b)**)
- C9** S. 15 excluded (E.W.) (1.4.2013) by **The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/218), regs. 1(2), 7(a)**
- C10** S. 15 excluded (W.) (24.5.2013) by **The Local Authorities (Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/1050), regs. 1(2), 5(3)**
- C11** S. 15 excluded (W.) (1.5.2014) by S.I. 1990/1553 **reg. 16AA** (as inserted by **The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/476), regs. 1(1), 2(4)**)
- C12** Ss. 15-17: power to apply (with or without modifications) conferred (28.1.2016 for specified purposes, 28.3.2016 in so far as not already in force) by 2009 c. 20, **s. 107D(4)(f)** (as inserted (E.W.) by **Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 (c. 1), ss. 4(1), 25(2)**)
- C13** Ss. 15-17: power to exclude conferred (28.1.2016 for specified purposes, 28.3.2016 in so far as not already in force) by 2009 c. 20, **s. 107E(4)** (as inserted (E.W.) by **Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 (c. 1), ss. 4(1), 25(2)**)

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- C14** Ss. 15-17: power to exclude conferred (26.12.2023) by [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) (c. 55), **ss. 32(4), 255(2)(c)** (with s. 247)
- C15** S. 15(2)(3)(5) modified by [S.I. 1990/1553](#), **reg. 23** (as added by [S.I. 1991/1398](#), **reg. 8**)

#### Marginal Citations

- M1** 1972 c. 70.  
**M2** 1973 c. 65.

## 16 Duty to give effect to allocations.

- (1) Where any relevant authority or any committee of a relevant authority have determined the allocation to different political groups of the seats on a body to which section 15 above applies, it shall be the duty of that authority or committee so to exercise their power to make appointments to that body as to give effect—
- (a) as soon as practicable after the determination; and
  - (b) if a vacancy subsequently occurs on that body, as soon as practicable after the occurrence of the vacancy,
- to such wishes about who is to be appointed to the seats on that body which are allocated to a particular political group as are expressed by that group.
- (2) Where—
- (a) any person has been appointed, otherwise than for a fixed term, to a body to which section 15 above applies; and
  - (b) that appointment was made, in pursuance of subsection (1) above, in accordance with the wishes of a political group,
- then, so long as that person's seat continues to be allocated to that group, the authority or committee which made the appointment shall act in accordance with the wishes of that group in determining whether and when to terminate the appointment.
- (3) The proceedings of a body to which section 15 above applies shall not be invalidated by any defect by virtue of this section or that section in the appointment of any person to that body.
- (4) This section applies in relation to an allocation of seats to different political groups whether or not that allocation is made in pursuance of any duty under section 15 above.

#### Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C12** Ss. 15-17: power to apply (with or without modifications) conferred (28.1.2016 for specified purposes, 28.3.2016 in so far as not already in force) by [2009 c. 20](#), **s. 107D(4)(f)** (as inserted (E.W.) by [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016](#) (c. 1), **ss. 4(1), 25(2)**)
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- C14** Ss. 15-17: power to exclude conferred (26.12.2023) by [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) (c. 55), **ss. 32(4), 255(2)(c)** (with s. 247)
- C16** Ss. 15-17 applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 1990/1553](#), **regs. 21, 22**
- C17** Ss. 15, 16 modified by [S.I. 1990/1553](#), **reg. 16(1)(2)**
- C18** S. 16 applied (with modifications) (8.5.2000) by [1999 c. 29](#), **s. 57(1)** (with [Sch. 12 para. 9\(1\)](#)); [S.I. 2000/801](#), art. 2(2)(b), **Sch. Pt. 2**
- C19** S. 16 applied (with modifications) (E.W.) (7.7.2005) by [The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee Order 2005](#) (S.I. 2005/1552), arts. 1(2), **5(3)**

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**C20** S. 16 excluded (E.W.) (1.4.2013) by [The Local Authority \(Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny\) Regulations 2013 \(S.I. 2013/218\)](#), regs. 1(2), **7(b)**

## 17 Exceptions to and extensions of political balance requirements.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, sections 15 and 16 above shall not apply in relation to appointments by a relevant authority or committee of a relevant authority to any body in so far as different provision is made by arrangements approved by the authority or committee—
  - (a) in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State; and
  - (b) without any member of the authority or committee voting against them.
- (2) Arrangements approved under subsection (1) above in relation to any body shall not affect any duty imposed by virtue of section 15(1)(c), (d) or (e) or (2) above on a relevant authority or committee to review the representation of different political groups on that body; and, accordingly, such arrangements shall cease to have effect when any such duty arises.
- (3) The Secretary of State may, for the purpose of securing what appears to him to be the appropriate representation of different political groups on any sub-committee falling within subsection (4) below, by regulations make such provision as he thinks fit.
- (4) The sub-committees that fall within this subsection are those to which appointments may be made by bodies to which section 15 above applies but which are not themselves such bodies.
- (5) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (3) above, regulations under that subsection may contain provision applying, with or without modifications, any provision made by or under section 15 or 16 above, subsections (1) and (2) above or Schedule 1 to this Act.

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- C13** Ss. 15-17: power to exclude conferred (28.1.2016 for specified purposes, 28.3.2016 in so far as not already in force) by [2009 c. 20, s. 107E\(4\)](#) (as inserted (E.W.) by [Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 \(c. 1\)](#), **ss. 4(1), 25(2)**)
- C14** Ss. 15-17: power to exclude conferred (26.12.2023) by [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(c. 55\)](#), **ss. 32(4), 255(2)(c)** (with s. 247)
- C21** Ss. 15-17 applied (with modifications) by [S.I. 1990/1553](#), **regs. 21, 22**
- C22** S. 17 applied (with modifications) (8.5.2000) by [1999 c. 29, s. 57\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 12 para. 9\(1\)](#)); [S.I. 2000/801](#), art. 2(2)(b), **Sch. Pt. 2**

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 65(2)(b)(ii) inserted by [2004 c. 23 Sch. 2 para. 11](#) (Pt. IV repealed (18.11.2003 for E. for the repeal of ss. 45, 53, 27.11.2003 for W. for the purpose of and in relation to financial years beginning on or after 1st April 2004, and 1.4.2004 for E. in so far as not already in force) by Local Government Act 2003 (c. 26), s. 128(6), Sch. 7 para. 29; S.I. 2003/2938, arts. 3(h), 7(b) (with art. 8, Sch.); S.I. 2003/3034, art. 2, Sch. 1 Pt. I (with Sch. 2 para. 2))
- s. 76A76B inserted by [2014 c. 29 s. 24\(2\)](#)
- s. 87(1A) inserted by [2014 c. 29 s. 24\(5\)](#)