

Conduct Committee

Minutes of the meeting on Friday 20 November at 9.30am via MS Teams

Present:

B. Anelay of St Johns	Vanessa Davies
L. Brown of Eaton-under-Heywood	B. Donaghy
Cindy Butts	B. Hussein-Ece
Mark Castle	L. Mance (Chair)
Andrea Coomber	

With the Clerk of the Parliaments.

DELIBERATION IN PRIVATE

1. Minutes from 4 and 11 November meetings

The minutes of the meetings on 4 and 11 November were agreed.

The Committee noted that in his oral appeal Lord Ahmed had made allegations of impropriety against the Commissioner for Standards. In that appeal Lord Ahmed stated that the Commissioner had approached the complainant and encouraged her to re-submit her complaint. The Committee notes that Lord Ahmed produced no evidence to suggest that the Commissioner did what he asserted. Records show that the complainant contacted the Commissioner's office and asked to resubmit her complaint after the Code of Conduct was amended.

2. Recruitment of the Commissioners for Standards (COND/19-21/79)

This paper was introduced by the Standards Clerk.

3. Oral update on Steering Group for Change

Baroness Donaghy, Chair of the Steering Group for Change, orally updated the Committee on the work of the Steering Group.

Baroness Donaghy raised the following points in relation to the Steering Group's activity:

1. A report would be published before Christmas summarising the Steering Group's activity since the last report;
2. An independent survey of staff was being carried out on bullying and harassment;
3. The Steering Group had a meeting with Alison Stanley about her 18-month review into the implementation of ICGS in which they discussed cluster reporting and what happens when a case is not "tidily finished", i.e. unsuccessful behaviour training;

4. Social media use by members of the House was a matter of concern that the Steering Group hoped the Conduct Committee might address.

The Committee noted that, following Lord Kilclooney's tweets about the Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, the Lord Speaker had written to the Chair to condemn Lord Kilclooney's language and ask that the Code be reviewed so that similar cases could be investigated. A paper would be considered at the December meeting.

4. Data on Commissioner workload (COND/19-21/80)

The Standards Clerk updated the Committee on the Commissioner's workload.

5. Written appeal

The Clerk to the Committee introduced this paper.

Baroness Anelay informed the Committee that she was a member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Armed Forces but did not attend either of the meetings covered in the report.

6. Disclosure of earnings: further follow-up (COND/19-21/76)

The Chair declared relevant interests and recused himself from discussion on this item and left the meeting. Lord Brown agreed to take the Chair.

The Committee agreed the draft report as amended.

7. Any Other Business

Baroness Anelay passed on a request from her party group that the list of members who had completed Valuing Everyone training be published more frequently. The ICGS Implementation Lead agreed to update the list every month, rather than every three months.

Chloe Mawson
Clerk to the Conduct Committee
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