



Business and Trade Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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The Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP,
Secretary of State for Business & Trade,
Department for Business and Trade, Old Admiralty Building,
Admiralty Place, Whitehall,
London

[by e-mail]

02 June 2025

Dear Jonathan,

I am writing to seek clarification on the governance framework and accountability mechanisms pertaining to the UK's Trade Envoy Programme.

Trade envoys play a pivotal role in promoting UK trade interests across various markets. Given their responsibilities and high-profile engagement, it is important to understand the standards and oversight in place to guide and monitor their conduct. I would be grateful for further information on the following points:

Standards and Conduct

Each Trade Envoy is supported by a DBT Relationship Manager, with whom they meet on a regular basis to discuss engagements, objectives, goals they wish to achieve, and ensure they are aligned to the Department's objectives. Envoys also work closely with the relevant Ambassador or High Commissioner and HM Trade Commissioner, which presumably provides an additional layer of coordination and support.¹

1. Are trade envoys explicitly bound by the Nolan Principles or any other code of conduct applicable to individuals acting in a public capacity?
2. What guidance or training is provided to ensure envoys understand their responsibilities, including around impartiality, lobbying, and alignment with UK policy?

Oversight and Transparency

¹ Department for International Trade, 'Letter to Baroness Anelay of St Johns, chair of the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee, ref trade envoy programme and new trade envoys', 30 October 2020

A previous Secretary of State noted that the Department was establishing a “robust mechanism” to capture and evaluate the contribution of trade envoys more effectively.²

3. What processes are currently in place to monitor envoy activities, assess performance, and ensure compliance with standards?
4. Are annual summaries of envoy activity published or shared with Parliament? How is the impact and value of the programme evaluated?

Clarity on these points is vital to ensure confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of the programme.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liam Byrne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chair of the Business and Trade Committee

² Department for International Trade, ‘Letter to Baroness Anelay of St Johns, chair of the House of Lords International Relations and Defence Committee, ref trade envoy programme and new trade envoys’, 30 October 2020