

Committee on Standards

Register of Interests of Members' Staff: transitional provisions

Seventh Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1629

Committee on Standards

The Committee on Standards is appointed by the House of Commons to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, except in relation to the conduct of individual cases under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme; to examine the arrangements proposed by the Commissioner for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the Register of Members' Financial Interests and any other registers of interest established by the House; to review from time to time the form and content of those registers; to consider any specific complaints made in relation to the registering or declaring of interests referred to it by the Commissioner; to consider any matter relating to the conduct of Members, including specific complaints in relation to alleged breaches in the Code of Conduct which have been drawn to the Committee's attention by the Commissioner; and to recommend any modifications to the Code of Conduct as may from time to time appear to be necessary.

Current membership

[Alberto Costa](#) (Conservative; South Leicestershire) (Chair)

[Paula Barker](#) (Labour; Liverpool Wavertree)

[Gill Furniss](#) (Labour; Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough)

[Sir Francis Habgood](#) (Lay member)

[Prof Michael Maguire](#) (Lay member)

[Mehmuda Mian](#) (Lay member)

[Dr Rose Marie Parr](#) (Lay member)

[Anna Sabine](#) (Liberal Democrat; Frome and East Somerset)

[Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst](#) (Conservative; Solihull West and Shirley)

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[Gareth Snell](#) (Labour; Stoke-on-Trent Central)

[Dr David Stirling](#) (Lay member)

[Michael Wheeler](#) (Labour; Worsley and Eccles)

[Carys Williams](#) (Lay member)

Powers

The constitution and powers of the Committee are set out in Standing Order No.149. In particular, the Committee has power to order the attendance of any Member of Parliament before the Committee and to require that specific documents or records in the possession of a Member relating to its inquiries, or to the inquiries of the Commissioner, be laid before the Committee. The Committee has power to refuse to allow its public proceedings to be broadcast. The Law Officers, if they are Members of Parliament, may attend and take part in the Committee's proceedings, but may not vote.

Publication

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Register of interests of Members' staff: transitional provisions

1. On 16 July, the House approved the Third Report of the Committee on Standards, Session 2024–25, HC 943, on Register of Interests of Members' Staff, subject to any transitional arrangements agreed by the Committee on Standards. This Report provides a progress update on work towards making the changes then approved.
2. The motion approved by the House amended provisions previously endorsed by the Resolution of the House of 28 June 1993 as follows:

Members' staff who hold a permanent photo-identity pass or have been granted a Parliamentary network account are required to register in the Register of Interests of Members' Staff, subject to the thresholds set out in that register:

 - Any occupation or employment for which they receive over £470 from the same source in the course of a calendar year, if that occupation or employment is in any way advantaged by the privileged access to Parliament afforded by either a photo-identity pass or a Parliamentary Network Account;
 - Any gift (eg jewellery) or benefit (eg hospitality, services) they receive, if the gift or benefit in any way relates to or arises from their work in Parliament and its value exceeds £470 in the course of a calendar year; and/or
 - Any visit undertaken that has been paid for by a third party, if it in any way relates to or arises from their work in Parliament.”
3. One significant change to the existing register is the inclusion of all staff employed by Members who have privileged access to a parliamentary network account. Previously, only those staff who held photo-identity parliamentary passes were required to register their interests. The register contained their names, the interests declared, and the name of the Member of Parliament who employed them. Around 4,200 staffers hold network accounts but only around 2,000 hold passes. The change therefore more

than doubles the number of people who will be required to register any outside interest they hold, a substantial extension of transparency, made in light of changes in working practices since the original registration requirements were created for staff in the 1980s and 1990s.

4. In the five weeks between the Committee making its report on 12 June and the House debate on 16 July, it became apparent that some staff newly required to register their interests were concerned about questions of privacy and anonymity, particularly because of security concerns relating to employment away from Westminster in constituency offices. During the debate in the House on 16 July, our Chair, the Leader of the House and the shadow Leader of the House all referred to those emerging concerns. As the House gave the Committee responsibility to make transitional arrangements for the changes to be made to the register, we felt it right to hear those concerns and to take them seriously.
5. We received written submissions and held a private session with the trade unions Unite and GMB to listen to the concerns being raised, and we also contacted the Members' and Peers' Staff Association (MAPSA). We are grateful to them for their constructive and thoughtful engagement. We should make it clear that it was never intended to publish full details of staff beyond the name, job title, and employing MP for any staff member, as has been the case for those required to register since 1993, currently numbering more than 2,000.
6. The concerns we heard related largely to the security of staff employed by Members of Parliament. In brief, they related to the potential for staff to be identified and harassed, to the question whether staff are public figures in the same way that their Members are, and to whether full identification of individual staff is necessary to identify any conflict of interest arising from declarations of outside interest relating to the office and work of a Member themselves.
7. We were grateful to both Unite and GMB for fully acknowledging the importance of transparency in ensuring that outside interests or gifts received by those employed by Members of Parliament. We also recognise that the public interest in those declarations rests on the connection with the Member of Parliament and that if sufficient information is publicly provided on any interest or gift, the personal details of members of staff should be protected so far as is possible. In short, on the balance between transparency and the safety and security of members of staff, have sought to provide measures sufficiently robust to safeguard staff and provide sufficient information to secure public trust.

8. Under Standing Order 150(2)(a) of the House, the Committee approves arrangements for the compilation, maintenance and accessibility of the register, and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards maintains it accordingly.

9. **RECOMMENDATION**

We have made the following decision in relation to future publication of the Register of Interests of Members' Staff:

To require that all staff with a parliamentary network account and/or a parliamentary pass should have a register entry but that the names of all staff be replaced with their job titles, and that nil returns be required but need not be published.

10. We note the opinion of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards that our proposal reduces transparency and accountability in the sense that the public will no longer be able to see the individual names of Members' staff. We accept that this represents a change in the transparency provided by the current register, but we consider it a proportionate one in light of the safety concerns raised with us. It is also the case that the decisions we have taken provides a substantial gain in transparency by more than doubling the number of people required to register their interests. Furthermore, although the names of staff will no longer be made public, they will, by virtue of the declarations being made to the Registrar of Members' Financial Interest, still be available to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in the event of any complaint about a staff members' interests requiring to be investigated. In short, necessary information to ensure that staff who hold interests do not have conflicts of interest will remain available.
11. Further development work requires to be done before the new arrangements may be fully introduced. We therefore make this interim report at this stage to publicise the decision on how the details of members' staff will be handled in future iterations of the register. We would expect, once the new arrangements have been fully commenced, to review after a year or so of their operation whether they are working as intended.

Formal minutes

Tuesday 13 January 2026

Members present:

Alberto Costa, in the Chair

Gill Furniss

Sir Francis Habgood

Dr Michael Maguire

Mehmuda Mian

Dr Rose Marie Parr

Victoria Smith

Gareth Snell

Dr David Stirling

Michael Wheeler

Carys Williams

Register of Interests of Members' Staff: transitional provisions

Draft report (*Register of Interests of Members' Staff: transitional provisions*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 11 read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

None of the lay members present wished to submit an opinion on the Report (Standing Order No. 149(8)).

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Adjournment

The Committee adjourned.

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
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5th	Charlie Maynard	HC 1570
4th	Dr Neil Shastri-Hurst	HC 1569
3rd	Register of Interests of Members' Staff	HC 943
2nd	Andrew Bridgen	HC 832
1st	Bob Stewart	HC 455
2nd Special	Register of Interests of Members' Staff: Government Response	HC 1176
1st Special	The House of Commons standards landscape: how MPs' standards and conduct are regulated: Government Response	HC 637