



Public Accounts Committee

Simon Ridley
Second Permanent Secretary
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

By email

14 September 2026

Home Office English Language Testing (HOELT) procurement

Dear Simon,

Thank you for your letter of 27 August on the Home Office English Language Testing (HOELT) procurement. We will follow-up with you in due course on the substance of your responses to our further questions.

I was deeply disappointed with your accusation that one of our Members, Blake Stephenson MP, breached the confidentiality of the private briefing your officials gave us on HOELTs on 25 June. The annex to your letter, specifying the details of your accusation, does not contain any information that was not available in the public domain prior to the briefing, nor had not already been made available to Members.

Accusing a Member of Parliament of committing a contempt is incredibly serious and potentially damaging. I would have expected you to have contacted me prior to sending your letter so that we could have established the facts together. My Clerk and team would also have been ready to discuss the private briefing with your colleagues before you wrote to me; an approach that was not made. I am copying this letter to Gareth Davies, Permanent Secretary, in your Department.

I am happy to meet with you to further discuss this matter.

Yours Sincerely

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts