



PACAC (Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee)

House of Commons · London SW1A 0AA

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Simon Case CVO
Cabinet Secretary
Cabinet Office
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18th May 2021

Dear Simon,

Post-appointment Hearing: The Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests

The Committee was pleased to take evidence from the newly appointed Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests, Rt Hon Lord Geidt, on 13th May 2021. Lord Geidt was kind enough to discuss a range of issues with the Committee regarding his recent appointment and the Terms of Reference of his new role.

In particular, the Committee was interested to hear from Lord Geidt on the recruitment and selection process for his role. The Committee feels that there are still transparency concerns relating to the drawing up of the shortlist of potential candidates for this role and the criteria that were applied when doing so, particularly with regards to the diversity of that list. It is disappointing that you were unable to provide information on this in your letter of 10th May; even when there is no formal process, regard should be taken to ensure the field represents the diversity of the UK.

Indeed, the Committee was disappointed that this post was not subject to fair and open competition. I would like to invite you to review now whether this should be the case in future and write to the Committee with your conclusions.

Additionally, Lord Geidt indicated during the session, he expects that you, as Cabinet Secretary, will keep his own interests "under active review" and inform him of your view as to whether there are any actual, or indeed perceived, conflicts of interest with his role as Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests. The Committee would be keen to understand what processes and procedures you have in place to monitor such interests.

The Committee was interested to discuss the difference between the Terms of Reference applicable to Lord Geidt in his role as Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests compared with his predecessor, Sir Alex Allen's. The Committee retains some concerns about the conduct of the earlier stages of any potential inquiry or investigation being behind closed doors but welcomes the new capacity of the Independent Adviser on

Ministers' Interests to advise that an inquiry should be initiated. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Terms of Reference are capable of periodic review, and that Lord Geidt indicated his willingness to return to the Committee at a later date to discuss these, and other matters, and we look forward to welcoming him back soon. The Committee would be interested in your views at the time of the first review, which I envisage would be after a set period (eg. one year) or after a small number of investigations have been undertaken.

Finally, the Committee sent Lord Geidt a questionnaire before the evidence session. He wrote and answered many of the questions but, under the advice of Cabinet Office, he did not complete the questionnaire. I would be grateful to understand why he was given such advice – although there is no formal agreement for a pre-appointment session for this post, committees may write to any witnesses and ask them for any information and I find it strange that Cabinet Office felt the need to intervene in this process.

I would be grateful for a reply by Tuesday 1 June. I will be placing this letter, and your response, into the public domain.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. Wragg', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William Wragg MP
Chair, Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee