

HOUSE OF LORDS

Conduct Committee

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2nd Report of Session 2021–22

# The conduct of Lord Singh of Wimbledon

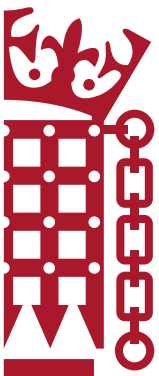
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### *Code of Conduct for Members, Guide to the Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct for Members' Staff*

The present Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords was agreed on 30 November 2009. Amendments to it were agreed by the House on 30 March 2010, 12 June 2014, 25 February 2016, 9 February 2017, 3 April 2017, 30 April 2019, 18 July 2019, 16 March 2020 and 8 July 2020.

The Guide to the Code of Conduct was proposed by the Committee for Privileges (2nd Report, Session 2009–10, HL Paper 81) and agreed by the House on 16 March 2010. The Guide was amended on 9 November 2011, 6 March 2014, 13 May 2014, 24 March 2015, 25 February 2016, 9 February 2017, 3 April 2017, 30 April 2019, 18 July 2019, 16 March 2020 and 8 July 2020.

The Code of Conduct for House of Lords Members' Staff was agreed on 13 May 2014. Amendments to it were agreed on 24 March 2015, 30 April 2019, 18 July 2019, 16 March 2020 and 8 July 2020.

### *Review*

The Codes and Guide are kept under review by the Conduct Committee. Recommended changes are reported to the House and take effect when agreed by the House.

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Lord Brown of Eaton-under-Heywood  
Cindy Butts (lay member)  
Mark Castle (lay member)  
Andrea Coomber (lay member)  
Dr Vanessa Davies (lay member)  
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# The Conduct of Lord Singh of Wimbledon

## REPORT FROM THE CONDUCT COMMITTEE

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### Background

1. The Conduct Committee has considered a report by the then House of Lords Commissioner for Standards, Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, on the conduct of Lord Singh of Wimbledon (at Annex A) alongside a written appeal from the complainant, FG,<sup>1</sup> and Lord Singh's response (at Annex B).
2. The procedure in cases such as this is set out in the *Guide to the Code of Conduct*. Under this procedure, if the Commissioner does not uphold a complaint against a member involving allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, the complainant has the right to appeal. The complainant did appeal in this case and the Committee has considered their written appeal against the Commissioner's findings. This report sets out our findings.
3. **This report relates to a complaint of bullying and may be upsetting to some readers.**

### Summary of the case

4. FG submitted a complaint against Lord Singh in August last year, saying that they had experienced bullying over the course of a chain of emails from Lord Singh. The emails are included as an appendix to the Commissioner's report.
5. Following interviews with both FG and Lord Singh, the Commissioner found that, on the balance of probabilities, she was not able to conclude that Lord Singh's behaviour had the effect of bullying laid out in the definition in the *Code of Conduct*. Namely, she could not find that FG had felt "vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened".

### FG's appeal

6. FG appealed on the grounds that they believed the Commissioner to have been "plainly wrong" in her findings. In doing so, they quoted the definition of bullying in the Code which reads:

"offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation."

7. FG wrote that according to their understanding of the definition:

"the wording is clear that those bullying behaviours 'can' make a person feel "vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or

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<sup>1</sup> Where initials are used in place of names in this report it is to protect the anonymity of those involved. The initials bear no relationship to real names. In addition, throughout this report plural pronouns, rather than gendered singular pronouns, have been used also to protect anonymity.

threatened” rather than they ‘must’ make a person feel “vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened” to meet the threshold of bullying. I believe that the behaviour from Lord Singh ‘can’ or ‘could’ have made a person feel any or all of the feelings set out in the Code, namely “vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened”, as well as many more.”

8. FG also said that they did feel “various of those feelings due to his behaviour at numerous times”.

### **The Committee’s decision**

9. We considered carefully the complainant’s written appeal, as well as examining the transcripts of the Commissioner’s interviews with FG to ascertain whether their description of the effect of the emails on them was, as described by the Commissioner, “equivocal”.
10. We noted that the definition of bullying in the *Code of Conduct* was intentionally broad and agreed that the only cogent way to apply the bullying provision was as the Commissioner had done: by requiring evidence that the behaviour has had at least some of the effects described in the definition. That the behaviour could have the potential to have such effects on somebody is not sufficient to warrant a finding of bullying.
11. We also agreed with the Commissioner that the complainant had not been clear about the effect of Lord Singh’s behaviour on them, although they were given a number of opportunities to state their position clearly.
12. **We agreed that, although the emails to the complainant from Lord Singh were abrupt and inappropriate, the conduct in question did not pass the threshold for bullying. We therefore concluded that the Commissioner was not “plainly wrong” in her finding and dismissed the complainant’s appeal.**

# Annex A: Report by the House of Lords Commissioner for Standards on the Conduct of Lord Singh of Wimbledon

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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1. This report deals with a complaint made about Lord Singh of Wimbledon by a member of staff employed by an MP. The complaint was made under the provisions of the Code of Conduct dealing with bullying.
2. In considering this complaint I have been supported by Sam Evans, Independent Investigator, CMP Solutions, and Donna Davidson and James Whittle, two of the Clerks who assist me in my work. I wish to place on record my thanks to them for all their help, while also acknowledging that I am solely responsible for the conclusions reached and the decisions made in this investigation.
3. By its nature, any report into allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct will include content that some readers may find upsetting or offensive. My aim is to reflect fairly and fully the evidence I gather in the course of an investigation and not to censor or in any way minimise views expressed or material uncovered. I believe this transparency is essential to helping the House of Lords to be a workplace where everyone is valued and respected, and where it is clear that bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated. This means that reports into allegations of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct will often make for difficult reading.
4. **The findings and discussions in this case relate to bullying.**

## CHAPTER 2: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### Complaint by FG<sup>2</sup>

5. FG submitted a complaint about Lord Singh of Wimbledon on 12 August 2020. They told us that over the course of a number of emails (see Appendix 1) they had experienced bullying by Lord Singh when they were made to feel undermined in front of their peers and subject to inappropriate comments about their performance.

### *Immediate and longer-term effect on FG*

6. FG initially told us that the emails had made them feel anxious and angry at the time they were dealing with them, and that a year later, it was still easy to recall all the things that were said in those emails and to revisit the emotions they brought on.
7. However, FG also told us that while they considered that Lord Singh was trying to bully them, they did not feel bullied. They repeated this on a number of occasions, telling us, for example, that “he maybe was trying to bully me, I don’t feel that he succeeded in making me feel bullied.”

### *Lord Singh’s response*

8. Lord Singh denied that he had bullied FG, suggesting instead that the complaint was made as a result of his ongoing dispute with FG’s employer, an MP (hereafter referred to as RS), and the Sikh Federation (UK) with whom RS worked. He expressed doubts as to whether FG was genuinely upset by any of the emails and described the complaint as “rooted in vindictiveness”.
9. He described his exchanges with FG as “firm but respectful” and did not consider there to be any power imbalance between them. He also emphasised that he considered all his correspondence to be directed at RS and the Sikh Federation, and no references to “you” in the emails were directed at FG, nor did he think it plausible that FG would genuinely understand them as having been directed at them.

### Finding

10. On consideration of all the evidence, I concluded that a finding of bullying could not be demonstrated on the balance of probabilities. While I believe that FG acted in good faith in making their complaint, I do not consider that the evidence available supports a finding that Lord Singh’s conduct amounted to bullying, as defined in the Code of Conduct.

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<sup>2</sup> Where initials are used in place of names in this report this is to protect the anonymity of those involved. The initials bear no relationship to real names. In addition, throughout this report plural pronouns, rather than gendered singular pronouns, have been used also to protect anonymity.



## CHAPTER 3: COMPLAINT BY FG: ACCOUNT OF THE KEY FACTS AND EVIDENCE

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### FG's complaint

11. I was first contacted by FG by email on 1 July 2019. FG was a member of staff employed by an MP. They told me that they felt that they had been “bullied by [Lord Singh] according to the definition by the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme in the Bullying & Harassment Policy & Procedure” and that Lord Singh had made them feel “undermined in front of [their] peers” and had “made inappropriate comments about [their] performance.” FG asked how they might proceed.
12. My office responded the same day with advice on the process of how FG could make a complaint and signposted resources they could access. FG decided not to make a complaint at that time, and we had no further contact regarding this complaint until August 2020.
13. On 12 August 2020, FG emailed me again to say that, having attended the ‘Valuing Everyone’<sup>3</sup> training, they had decided to make a formal complaint against Lord Singh of Wimbledon. The basis of their complaint was a chain of emails between them and Lord Singh, which had been copied by Lord Singh to a number of other recipients.<sup>4</sup>
14. FG again described feeling undermined in front of their peers and stated that they believed they had been subjected to “inappropriate behaviour for the workplace”.

### Lord Singh's written evidence

15. I carried out a preliminary assessment and concluded that it would be appropriate to investigate whether Lord Singh's conduct constituted a breach of the Code of Conduct. I wrote to FG with information about my next steps. I also wrote to Lord Singh on 13 October 2020, enclosing the complaint from FG and explaining that, as a result of my preliminary assessment, I had concluded that there was sufficient evidence to establish there was a *prima facie* case to be investigated.
16. I asked Lord Singh to send me a full and accurate account of the matter in question.
17. Lord Singh characterised the complaint as “another example of a sustained campaign by [RS] and the Sikh Federation to bully and harass me to prevent me expressing views contrary to theirs on Sikh issues.” Lord Singh had an ongoing dispute with RS, Chair of the APPG for British Sikhs, and the Sikh Federation (UK), sponsors of the APPG, regarding their differences of opinion over ethnic tick boxes in the census.
18. He wrote, “I believe that this unremitting attempt to bully me into silence, now seen in a baseless complaint by [FG], makes it important for me to explain my position in the Sikh community.” He then provided a brief

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3 Valuing Everyone is the Parliament-wide training programme designed to help ensure that everyone working at Parliament is able to recognise bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct, and feels confident taking action to tackle and prevent it.

4 The emails can be found at Appendix 1..

outline of the facts relating to his dispute with RS and the APPG for British Sikhs.

19. Addressing the emails which formed the basis of FG’s complaint, Lord Singh wrote that:

“our correspondence was confined to my repeated attempts to be allowed an opportunity to speak to MPs supposedly supporting the Federation Position, and [FG’s] attempts to allow only a token meeting with 2-3 MPs. The correspondence shows that my attempts were successfully thwarted by [FG] acting on instructions of [RS], I had to accept a smaller meeting. While I believe that [FG] simply did what [they were] told to do, [their] actions, together with the offensive and ageist language of [RS] and the Sikh Federation, constituted systematic and deliberate bullying.”

20. Lord Singh also told us that he believed that “an examination of correspondence confirms that my repeated requests were couched in firm but respectful language” and that “bullying requires some degree of power or authority over an individual. I have no authority over [FG].”

### FG’s evidence

21. Ms Evans and I interviewed FG on 13 November, with Ms Davidson attending. We asked them to explain the process by which they came to make a complaint. They said that at the time of the emails with Lord Singh, they had emailed my office to enquire about making a complaint. They said that they had spoken to other staff members at the time about the emails and also to RS as their manager. They ultimately decided not to make a complaint at the time as they “didn’t really see what the point was”, but they were clear that they felt undermined and they “understood that [Lord Singh’s] behaviour was bullying behaviour but that wasn’t necessarily the same as being bullied.”
22. FG said that they came to understand that they had been bullied after they went on the ‘Valuing Everyone’ training, which “triggered quite a lot of things”. In particular, they pointed to an exercise on judging behaviour as acceptable or unacceptable, during which they had “flashback[s] to some of these emails”. They also highlighted the part of the training focusing on power dynamics and the impact of people not reporting poor behaviour.
23. FG acknowledged that they may not have been the intended target for the email content about the Sikh Federation and that Lord Singh was using them as a proxy or conduit for messages intended for RS. Nevertheless, this confirmed to them that, “as far as [Lord Singh] was concerned, I wasn’t an individual with my own thoughts and feelings ... I was a thing connected to [RS].”
24. Other email content felt different. Speaking specifically about an email on 13 June—the email that Lord Singh copied to a number of other parliamentarians—FG said that they felt that Lord Singh was trying to pressure them into doing something by copying in the other MPs. As the emails continued, they began to feel Lord Singh was trying to undermine them by “underlining stuff, highlighting stuff, saying, effectively, “That’s not how those things work”.” They felt the comments were inappropriate

because they suggested that FG did not know how to do their job, which was untrue.

25. FG described how some of the emails felt personal. They referred to the 17 June email which concluded, “I will attend an open meeting if I have a clear assurance before 5pm today”. FG said that “Ultimatums like that, again, it’s the pressurised situation. That bit, I did feel was mean.”
26. They also referred to the 17 July email, in which Lord Singh said, “Those copied into this note do have some intelligence and will see why you’re ensuring that few attend the meeting”. FG saw this as “a criticism of me, and it was again, kind of, public. It wasn’t just a conversation between me and him, it was a direct call for everyone else to have a look. It was a direct attempt to undermine me in front of those people. It wasn’t just a, “If you read this, you might think that [they’re] bad at [their] job”. It was a, “They all know”.”
27. FG told us that when the APPG meeting which had been the subject of the email exchanges did happen, they took it upon themselves to say to Lord Singh something along the lines of, “Hi, Lord Singh, sorry about any misunderstanding”, and that they did not receive any apology or acknowledgement from Lord Singh in return.
28. Describing the overall effect of Lord Singh’s behaviour on them, FG said that seeing new emails from Lord Singh pop up on their computer had made them feel anxious and angry, and that a year later it was still easy to recall all the things that were said in those emails and to revisit the emotions they brought on.
29. When asked whether they would be concerned to receive further contact from Lord Singh, FG said that because they were no longer working in the same role, “I would probably think, “Oh, what’s this going to be?”” and that they could not imagine “any reason that he would get in touch with me other than a negative reason.”
30. When asked for their thoughts on Lord Singh’s written response to their complaint, FG said that they were concerned by Lord Singh’s failure to recognise the power dynamic between them. They disagreed with Lord Singh’s characterisation of his emails as “firm but respectful”, pointing to the fact that Lord Singh gave what FG considered to be ultimatums. Overall, they expressed disappointment that Lord Singh had not acknowledged his behaviour or apologised.
31. The outcome FG hoped for from raising the complaint was for Lord Singh to recognise his behaviour was not appropriate and think about the way he interacted with other individuals working within Parliament.

### **Lord Singh’s oral evidence**

32. Ms Evans and I interviewed Lord Singh on 16 December, with Mr Whittle attending. Lord Singh repeated his belief that RS was behind this complaint and was clear that he saw “nothing in the correspondence that undermined [FG] as an individual” and that it contained no “abusive” or “bullying language”.

33. We asked him whether he was accusing FG of fabricating the effect of the emails:

“I feel that [they were] acting as a secretary and as a loyal person to [RS], and this [making a complaint] is what [they were] told to do.”

34. Lord Singh also said that he failed to see how the emails could have had the reported negative effects on FG:

“I don’t think it’s any sort of traumatic event [they] went through. [They were] trying to think of, “What can I say that fits in with the course we are doing, what sort of response?” I don’t think there was any sort of emotional scarring or anything like that. There’s nothing in this correspondence that was directed to [them].”

35. When we asked him why he had copied other parliamentarians into the exchange, Lord Singh said, “I copied people that I knew—some MPs—hoping that they would put the interests of the Sikh community first and say, “What’s wrong with a wider meeting?”” He added that this was something that was done quite regularly.

36. Lord Singh disputed that there was any kind of power dynamic at play in the exchanges because, he said, “there is nothing in my correspondence in which I was talking to [them] as an individual.” He explained:

“I said that other APPGs do things differently, meaning they send out meetings, minutes of meetings, also meaning that they give due notice to people to attend, things like that are not personal criticism of [FG]. [FG is] not running the APPG. [FG is] acting as secretary to [RS].”

37. He told us that all references to “you” in the emails were not directed at FG but at RS and the Sikh Federation (UK). When challenged on whether FG’s perception of this might have differed, Lord Singh said that “given the circumstances, the delayed complaint and everything, I feel it is more an attempt to find some reason to bring me into some sort of disrepute.”

38. We asked Lord Singh whether he considered the effect his tone might have had on FG when they read the emails. He told us that “I must frankly say that I didn’t—I do consider the impact on the person to anyone I write to or speak to. I do consider it. But I expected it would be taken—[they] would take it as my response to the people who were asking [them] to do what [they] did.”

39. Lord Singh denied that he had issued an “ultimatum” when he wrote “I will attend a meeting if I get an assurance by five o’clock this evening” to FG:

“It’s not an ultimatum. It is simply putting the constraints down. I cannot attend a meeting where there’s no point in attending a meeting when there’s no one there. It’s not an ultimatum to specify constraints. It’s a misuse of the word “ultimatum”. That suggests some sort of threat. There was no threat.”

40. Lord Singh’s recollection of their conversation when they did meet in person was as follows:

“I believe, as far as I recall it, there was a conversation, and it began with me saying, “It’s nice to meet you in person”, and then [FG] carried on

the conversation. And I said, “There’s nothing at all personal between us. You were doing your job and I was trying to do mine”. I think that was about the gist of the conversation.”

41. Lord Singh told us that this friendly conversation at the meeting was proof that FG could not have been upset by the contents of the previous emails.
42. Following our interview, Lord Singh sent a further written note, repeating much of the evidence from our interview and the first written response. He said, “In effect it was I who was bullied by [FG] acting on [their] employer’s instructions to frustrate my request for a fuller briefing meeting.” He continued:
 

“I believe that some 15 months after the smaller meeting, [FG] has been persuaded by [RS] to add to her attempt to smear my reputation with a formal complaint that I bullied [them], (despite my having no power or authority over [them]) in my legitimate request for a wider meeting.”
43. He considered that the aspects of his interactions with FG that FG suggested demonstrated bullying were “so ludicrous that they could usefully be used for a training exercise on how a Complaints Procedure can be abused.”
44. He concluded, “My request for reasonable time to be given to MPs wishing to attend, was absurdly described as an ‘Ultimatum’ and a **traumatic experience that led to later ‘flash-backs’!** I have deliberately highlighted this to show the patent absurdity of a complaint rooted in vindictiveness.”

### Responses to my draft factual report

45. On 27 January, I sent Lord Singh and FG my draft factual report and invited any comments or clarifications from both of them.
46. Lord Singh confirmed that he found it to be “factually correct”. He again said that he believed that FG had been encouraged to make the complaint by the MP they work for, and wrote that:
 

“It is easy to throw mud on someone but much harder for the victim to remove it. I have no secretarial support and have spent many hours in correspondence and meetings to try to show the vindictiveness of the complaints. They have caused me and my family considerable hurt. This a cynical abuse of an important Complaints Procedure.”
47. FG replied with some comments on the draft factual report. They said they wished to draw a distinction between bullying behaviour and being bullied. FG clarified that while they considered Lord Singh to have exhibited bullying behaviour, they did not necessarily feel bullied.
48. FG also wrote that their primary emotions during the time of receiving the emails were anger and frustration, rather than anxiety.
49. In the light of FG’s comments on the draft factual report, I asked to interview them again. Ms Evans and I conducted a further interview with FG on 25 February, supported by Ms Davidson.

50. FG continued to say that they did not feel they had been bullied. They told us that:

“I think all of that could be described as someone being bullied, and maybe externally, if I was talking about someone else, I would maybe say that they were clearly being bullied whether the impact of it—whatever the impact of it was. But I guess it’s a personal feeling that, while he maybe was trying to bully me, I don’t feel that he succeeded in making me feel bullied.”

51. When I described the definition of bullying to FG as “an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened”, they did concede that they “experienced some of those feelings, if not all of those, at different points.”
52. FG explained further that they thought “that being bullied, there is more of an emphasis on [...] my reception of the actions as opposed to the actions being the issue.” They said that “the reason I’m making the complaint is because I think he’s done something wrong, not because of the way I have responded to it, I guess.”

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND OUTCOME

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53. Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords provides that:

“Members of the House should observe the principles set out in the Parliamentary Behaviour Code of respect, professionalism, understanding others’ perspectives, courtesy, and acceptance of responsibility. These principles will be taken into consideration when any allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is under investigation.”

54. Paragraph 17 of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords provides that:

“Members are required to treat those with whom they come into contact in the course of their parliamentary duties and activities (including parliamentary proceedings) with respect and courtesy. Behaviour that amounts to bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is a breach of this Code.”

55. Therefore, while all Members ought to adhere to the principles and standards of behaviour set out in the Parliamentary Behaviour Code, it is only behaviour that amounts to bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct that constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords.

56. There are no allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment in this investigation. The following paragraphs assess the evidence gathered against the definitions of bullying set out in Appendix B to the Code of Conduct.

57. That the emails were sent and that Lord Singh wrote in the manner complained of to FG is not contested. The only contested aspect of the narrative is the content of the conversation that took place between FG and Lord Singh at the APPG meeting. However, I do not consider that anything of significance follows from this discrepancy in their accounts.

58. Lord Singh has consistently claimed that FG made the complaint on the advice of RS as part of a sustained campaign against him by the MP.

59. I have spoken to FG twice during the course of this investigation and can find no evidence to support Lord Singh’s claims that FG made the complaint in bad faith.

### Finding

60. The Behaviour Code, incorporated into the House of Lords Code of Conduct, describes bullying as:

“offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.”

61. For a finding of bullying to be made, all elements of this definition (the behaviour, the misuse or abuse of power and the effect on the complainant) must be upheld by the evidence. The key aspect in this instance is the



effect of the conduct on FG: whether it made them feel “vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened”.

62. FG’s description of the impact of Lord Singh’s conduct on them was equivocal. While they did on some occasions, after sustained questioning, say that his behaviour had been undermining, FG consistently characterised Lord Singh’s behaviour as bullying, but carefully, and in my view conscientiously, stopped short of saying that they felt bullied.
63. I was left with the strong impression that FG’s motivation for making the complaint was to stop Lord Singh from behaving in the same way to someone else, rather than because they themselves had been significantly adversely affected by it.
64. Given the way in which FG described the effects of Lord Singh’s behaviour on them I do not consider that the evidence shows on the balance of probabilities that Lord Singh’s conduct had the effects on FG described in the definition of bullying. **I therefore do not consider that Lord Singh’s conduct towards FG meets the criteria for it to amount to bullying. It does not, therefore, constitute a breach of the Code.**

### Conclusion

65. The Parliamentary Behaviour Code requires all members of the parliamentary community, among other things, to:
  - think about how their behaviour affects others and strive to understand their perspective;
  - act professionally towards others; and
  - ensure Parliament meets the highest ethical standards of integrity, courtesy and mutual respect.
66. Although I have found that his behaviour towards FG did not meet the criteria necessary to constitute bullying—and therefore did not constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords—I would remind Lord Singh, and all members of the House, to ensure that correspondence with others is conducted in a respectful manner which meets the expectations set out in the Behaviour Code.



**APPENDIX 1: EMAILS BETWEEN FG AND LORD SINGH**

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**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Fri, 7 Jun 2019 15:35****CC: [RS]; [other recipient]; [other MP]****Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

[RS] has asked me to get in touch with you to try and arrange a meeting. Sorry for the slight delay in me doing so- I was on leave and then had a large back-log.

Are you available on the 18th of June between 10:30 and 12:30? If not I will find some other potential dates.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 7 June 2019 16:43****Cc: [RS]; [other recipient]; [other MP]****Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear [FG]

Yes, I will be happy to make time if it is with members of the APPG to discuss an alternative Sikh view to that of the Federation on ethnic monitoring as previously requested by me.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Tue, 11 Jun 2019 14:21****Cc: [RS]; [other recipient]; [other MP]****Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Great. I will invite the vice-chairs.

Are you able to book one of the rooms in the Lords at that time? We don't have any availability in the commons and the committee rooms will need me to call up on Monday and hope there are some available.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 12 June 2019 11:00****Cc: [RS]; [other recipient]; [other MP]****Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear [FG],

In view of the difficulty of booking a room, the importance of the topic, and the need for all members of the APPG to be invited, can I suggest that we should try to book a room for the same time on Tuesday 25 June?  
Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt, MBA

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Wed, 12 Jun 2019 13:15**

**CC: [RS]; [other recipient]; [other MP]**

**Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Hi again,

As next week works for both diaries I think best to go ahead with it. I will call the room booking office on Monday morning when the rooms become available and have not had problems in the past obtaining a room.

If that doesn't work then we can look to the 25th.

Will send invites out now.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 13 June 2019 10:32**

**Cc: [RS]; [7 other MPs] [1 other Peer] [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear [FG]

The APPG for Sikhs should have had a briefing on the pros and cons of labelling Sikhs as an ethnic group long ago. All Sikhs agree it is important. The Federation view has been presented to MPs as a 'Sikh community view'. I and many other Sikhs totally disagree and I would like to present what I feel is the majority view, invite questions and discussion with APPG members, and other MPs. They should be given sufficient time and notice to attend.

Your suggestion that this should take place next Tuesday 18th June, when today 13 June, we have neither a meeting time nor location is completely impractical.

You need to give at least one week's( preferably two weeks) notice to give time for interested parties to put it in their diaries. I also suggest that you invite a representative of the ONS to this important meeting.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, DLitt, MBA

Director Network of Sikh Organisations UK

PS Could you please send me the minutes of the meeting of last October promised me by the Chair. Thanks.IS

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Thu, 13 Jun 2019 14:42**

**CC: [RS]; [7 other MPs] [1 other Peer]**

**Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

The purpose of the meeting is for you to meet with the officers of the All Party Group.

I have sent invites for a start time of 10:30 and will book a room for an hour on Tuesday the 18th. Will confirm the room on Monday.

Will also bring along the minutes/actions of the AGM for you.

Thanks and look forward to seeing you on Tuesday.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 14 June 2019 13:45**

**Cc: [RS]; [7 other MPs] [1 other Peer] [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear [FG]

**Repeated Request for an Open Discussion on Ethnic Monitoring**

I find your latest response to my request completely unsatisfactory. I have repeatedly asked for an opportunity to give members of the APPG an opportunity to hear a non-Federation view on its suggestion that members of a world religion, born in different countries, constitute a single ethnicity. ,

**Why are [RS] and her supporters in the Sikh Federation so afraid of open discussion on what she and the Federation say is an important issue for Sikhs!**

It is unsatisfactory, having initially agreed to my consistent request seen in the email trail below, for open discussion on this issue to now completely ignore it. I am (on Friday 14th June), being asked to meet with [RS] and one or two of her supporters next Tuesday morning for a private chat to persuade me to drop my request. I am not prepared to do this.

[RS] is being wrongly advised by the Sikh Federation to prevent an open discussion on a key issue facing Sikhs.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, DLitt, MBA

Director Network of Sikh Organisations UK

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Mon, 17 Jun 2019 9:21**

**CC: [RS]; [5 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]**

**Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

Tomorrow's meeting has been arranged with an open agenda and I have invited the Members of the All Party Group.

I have booked Committee Room 21 for 10.30 and will send a reminder email to the group. I have already had provisional confirmation from 3 of the officers in addition to [RS].

As requested I have the minutes of the 2018 AGM which I will bring with me to give to you.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 17 June 2019 10:50**

**Cc: [RS]; [7 other MPs] [1 other Peer] [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

No. You are again missing the point. I have never asked for an open meeting.

I have consistently asked to give a proper briefing to APPG members to present an alternative view to that of the Federation on Ethnic Monitoring. Members of the APPG, and other MPs who were led to believe that the Federation were representing a Sikh view must be given proper notice to enable them to attend and ask questions.

I will attend an open meeting if I have a clear assurance before 5 pm today, that this will be used to plan a meeting and invitation list and date for all who were erroneously persuaded to support the Federation to hear and question an alternative Sikh view.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Mon, 17 Jun 2019 14:29**

**CC: [RS]; [5 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]**

**Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

The meeting tomorrow is an opportunity for you to brief the APPG. I am more than happy to send the minutes out to all members following the meeting (including those who are unable to attend).

The All Party Group is a group of MPs from different political parties who raise the concerns & aspirations of British Sikhs in Parliament. They receive a wide

range of evidence and support from many different organisations on a number of issues related to the British Sikh community.

If you would rather discuss this on the phone I can call you if you give me a suitable number.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 17 June 2019 20:11**

**Cc: [RS]; [7 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: APPG for Sikhs**

Dear [FG],

My emails have been consistently clear. I have repeatedly requested an opportunity to brief MPs to show that the Federation view on ethnic monitoring does not stand up to scrutiny. The only reason for your Chair not wanting a proper meeting with opportunities for Members to ask questions is that she is afraid that the truth will come out.

The APPG should be for all Sikhs, not just for Federation supporters. I again request an opportunity to discuss ethnic monitoring with all those who have unthinkingly given their support to the Federation's anti-Sikh stance to hear another view and then make up their own minds. Members should be given sufficient notice. I am happy to send out a briefing paper when I have the names of those attending.

Your suggested 'chat' tomorrow with 2-3 people is no substitute for a properly called meeting on the lines suggested. It is simply designed as a clear attempt to brush the issue under the carpet.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt, MBA

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Tue, 18 Jun 2019 09:17**

**CC: [RS]; [7 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: RE: APPG for Sikhs**

Lord Singh,

At your request, the meeting today has been organised as an opportunity for you to brief MPs. There will of course be opportunities for Members to ask you questions and for you to respond.

Looking forward to seeing you later.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Fri, 21 Jun 2019 11:19**

**CC: [6 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]**

**Subject: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

Sorry that you were unable to attend the meeting on Tuesday the 18th of June. Those officers of the APPG in attendance, [...] agreed that I would try to arrange another time for you to brief the APPG.

To ensure you are able to attend, can I ask for you to send me some potential dates. I will then book a room etc.

As I have said previously, it may be easier to discuss this over the phone. My extension is [redacted].

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 22 June 2019 09:40**

**Cc: [RS]; [7 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Dear [FG]

My thanks to [RS], [...] for finally agreeing to my request to make a presentation and invite open discussion on the pros and cons of calling Sikhs an ethnic group. It is important that the more than 100 MPs who were told by the Federation that Sikhs wanted to be called an ethnic group, should be told a different view and invited to ask questions.

It is also important that:

- (1) As many MPs as possible attend, and for this, there should be a minimum of 2 weeks notice.
- (2) In view of the clear bias of Federation Secretariat, invitations should be sent out from the office of one of the non-Sikh MPs. I am happy to assist if it helps.
- (3) It will be helpful if I could have a list of invitees to send them a briefing note
- (4) The date, room number, start and finish time should be included with the Agenda, stressing the importance of the topic for Sikhs.

I suggest we hold the meeting on Monday 8 July or Tuesday 9 July any time between 10-5 (except 2.15-3.15).

Please send me the list of invitees in the next few days and let me know if I can help in any other way.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Fri, 28 Jun 2019 11:27**

**CC: [RS]; [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: RE: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

We have been consistently open to arrange a meeting for you to brief the APPG and again really sorry you were unable to attend the previous meeting.

Can I suggest in light of the time that we set a date of the week commencing the 22nd July?

To ensure you are able to attend, please let me know which dates/times suit you are and I will book a room.

I will send the invitations out to all Members and will put it in the all party notice etc.

Happy to send you a list of those who confirm attendance in the week preceding the meeting to allow you to send them a note ahead of time.

Thanks for your offer for further help but I don't think there is anything else- will let you know if I think of anything.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 29 June 2019 16:31**

**Cc: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Dear [FG],

### **Continuing Delay in Organising a Briefing Meeting**

The Sikh Federation Secretariat and the APPG Chair have been trying to prevent an open discussion on ethnic monitoring since I first requested it on 19 May 2019. Both the Chair and the Sikh Federation are on record as saying that the issue of ethnic monitoring is so important as to justify High Court intervention, and yet are reluctant for open debate on its supposed merits.

You write that you were sorry that I missed a meeting a couple of weeks back for 'briefing and open discussion'. Yet you provided no Agenda, date, room number or time for this meeting, and unsurprisingly only two or three people turned up. You then asked me to provide suitable dates and times. I suggested 15 or 16 July and gave possible times. You ignored these and went on to suggest that it should be in the last week of the present sitting when fewer people would be around to attend.

To move on, I agree to your suggestion and would like a meeting on 22nd to 23rd July between 10 am and say 5 pm, except between 2 pm- 3.30 pm. The meeting should last about one and a half hours. To ensure maximum participation:

The agenda, meeting location and timing should go out this week, to ensure maximum attendance.

- I require about 15-20 minutes for my presentation with perhaps 30-40 minutes for questions and discussion.
- Please send me a list in the next few days, of those invited. This should include all MPs who had earlier signed support for the Federation position. I will then send all invitees a short briefing note.

Please confirm your agreement to the above.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt, MBA

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Mon, 1 Jul 2019 10:25**

**CC: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: RE: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Dear Lord Singh,

Thank you for your email and for sending times that you were available.

I have booked meeting room W3 from 9.45-11 on the 23rd.

I will send an invite to all MPs this week with an agenda and put the meeting in the all party register. You are welcome to send them all the briefing note.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh to FG, 02 July 2019 07:55**

**Cc: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs**

Thanks.

Please send me the email details of the MPs to whom you are sending invitations. Please confirm that invitation letters will be sent to all who signed in support of the Federation's position on ethnic monitoring.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon



Email from FG to Lord Singh, Tue, 2 Jul 2019 16:23

CC: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]

Subject: RE: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs

Dear Lord Singh,

As I said in my previous email, I will send an invite to all MPs this week with an agenda and I will also put the meeting in the all party register.

Best wishes

[FG]

Email from Lord Singh to [FG], Tue, 2 Jul 2019 17:43

CC: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]

Subject: Re: New meeting for Lord Singh to brief the APPG for British Sikhs

Dear [FG]

Please be precise as I need to send briefing note to those invited Do you mean **all** MPs, Members of the APPG + those who signed support for the Federation position on monitoring as requested by me, or simply the officers of the APPPG?

Regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon

Email from Lord Singh to FG, 13 July 2019 07:37

Cc: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]

Subject: Re: Meeting on 23rd July to brief MPs on the downside of calling Sikhs an ethnic group.

Dear[FG]

**It is now a week** since I last reminded you to give me an urgent list of invitees to this repeatedly-delayed meeting.

It appears that the Chair does not want MPs lobbied by the Federation to know that they were deliberately misled,

If only a few selected individuals turn up, it will confirm that you are averse to open discussion on what, you maintain, is an important issue. It will also confirm to those copied that the APPG is for Sikhs only in name, and **in reality, it is an APPG for the Sikh Federation.**

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt. MBA

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Mon, 15 Jul 2019 15:22**

**CC: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: RE: Meeting on 23rd July to brief MPs on the downside of calling Sikhs an ethnic group.**

Dear Lord Singh,

As you will have seen from my out of office I was on annual leave and only back in the office today. I have had a lot of messages to catch up on hence the slight delay in responding to your email.

The all party notice gets sent to all MPs inboxes. I think it would be a good idea for you to bring some hard copies along to the meeting next week to distribute – let me know if you want me to print and bring them along if that is easier.

As you know, I cannot guarantee the number of attendees but will be more than happy to let you know if/how many have said they will be attending later in the week.

Best wishes

[FG]

**Email from Lord Singh, 17 July 2019 07:39**

**Cc: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Subject: Re: Meeting on 23rd July to brief MPs on the downside of calling Sikhs an ethnic group.**

Dear [FG]/[RS]

I am well-aware that APPG notices routinely go out to Members. I am also aware that few read them. I am a member of a number of APPGs, and all except the APPG for the Sikh Federation send out reminders and Agendas well in advance.

Why have [RS] and the Federation deliberately ignored my request for MPs who signed support for the Federation not been invited? Why were my repeated requests for a list of names repeatedly ignored? Could it be because the unrepresentative Sikh Federation is worried about any challenge to their position?

Those copied into this note do have some intelligence and will see why you are ensuring that few attend the meeting.

Kind regards

Indarjit

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE, DL, D Litt MBA

**Email from FG to Lord Singh, Wed, 17 Jul 2019 09:13**

**CC: [RS]; [8 other MPs]; [1 other Peer]; [1 other recipient]; [1 external organisation]**

**Sent: Subject: RE: Meeting on 23rd July to brief MPs on the downside of calling Sikhs an ethnic group.**

Lord Singh,

In advance of the meeting next Tuesday hosted by the APPG for British Sikhs for you to brief MPs on your views, I have

- Sent a note for the all party notice to include the time and date of the briefing by you: 23rd July, Room W3, 9.45-11

- Emailed supporters/members of the APPG as well as the officers with an invite to attend a briefing by you on your views of the Sikh ethnic tick box in the 2021 Census.

So, all MPs have had some form of correspondence with the details of the event.

If you have any further questions please could you call me on [redacted].

I look forward to seeing you next Tuesday.

Best wishes

[FG]

## APPENDIX 2: RELEVANT ASPECTS OF THE CODE

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### External investigator

1. Paragraph 139 of the Guide to the Code says:
 

“In cases involving bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct, the Commissioner is supported by independent investigators. The Commissioner may delegate to the investigator to the extent she considers appropriate any of her investigatory functions”.
2. In this case, I was supported by Sam Evans of CMP Solutions. I did not delegate any of my investigatory functions to her, but discussed all aspects of the investigation with her, welcomed her input, and took account of her views and suggestions.
3. Parliamentary Behaviour Code and the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords
4. Paragraph 10 of the Code of Conduct says:
5. “Members of the House should observe the principles set out in the Parliamentary Behaviour Code of respect, professionalism, understanding others’ perspectives, courtesy, and acceptance of responsibility. These principles will be taken into consideration when any allegation of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is under investigation.”
6. Paragraph 17 says that “Members are required to treat those with whom they come into contact in the course of their parliamentary duties and activities with respect and courtesy” and makes clear that “behaviour that amounts to bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct is a breach of this Code.”
7. Parliamentary Behaviour Code and definitions of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct
8. The Parliamentary Behaviour Code, included as Appendix A to the Code of Conduct, sets out six principles of conduct:
  - (a) Respect and value everyone—bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated;
  - (b) Recognise your power, influence or authority and don’t abuse them;
  - (c) Think about how your behaviour affects others and strive to understand their perspective;
  - (d) Act professionally towards others;
  - (e) Ensure Parliament meets the highest ethical standards of integrity, courtesy and mutual respect;
  - (f) Speak up about any unacceptable behaviour you see.
9. Appendix B of the Code defines bullying at some length, drawing from definitions included in the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme Delivery Report.

*Bullying*

10. Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened.
11. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.
12. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.
13. Bullying behaviour may be in person, by telephone or in writing, including emails, texts or online communications such as social media.
14. It may be persistent or an isolated incident and may manifest obviously or be hidden or insidious.
15. My investigation applied these definitions in considering whether Lord Singh's conduct towards FG amounted to bullying and whether it constituted a breach of paragraph 17 of the Code of Conduct.

## Annex B: Appeal documents

### FG's appeal

I would like to appeal the decision given that Lord Singh's behaviour was deemed appropriate and acceptable within the guidelines laid out in the *Code of Conduct* for Members of the House of Lords.

I would like to make it clear from the outset that I believe that the Commissioner has at all times acted in good faith and has gone out of her way to make me feel comfortable to tell my story and revisit it to gain a greater understanding of the behaviours displayed and the effect they had on me.

I will now lay out my reasons for appealing the decision to give the judgment that Lord Singh's behaviour was acceptable.

Appendix B of the Code distinctly and categorically refers to the different forms in which bullying behaviour can be conducted and the different characterisations that the behaviour can be characterised as. It highlights the different modes through which bullying behaviour may be displayed, including "in person, by telephone or in writing, including emails, texts or online communications such as social media."

The Code related to bullying lays out its definition as being: "offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving an abuse or misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation."

For a finding of bullying, the Commissioner has asserted that the effect on me has to fit certain criteria and the reason given for finding that Lord Singh did not meet the criteria was based on the effect on me rather than his behaviour. However, my understanding of the behaviour code seems to me that the wording is clear that those bullying behaviours 'can' make a person feel "vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened" rather than they 'must' make a person feel "vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened" to meet the threshold of bullying. I believe that the behaviour from Lord Singh 'can' or 'could' have made a person feel any or all of the feelings set out in the Code, namely "vulnerable, upset, undermined, humiliated, denigrated or threatened", as well as many more.

I think it is this definition which is so important and is where I disagree with the Commissioner predicating her conclusion on the fact that she did not believe "Lord Singh's conduct had the effects on FG described in the definition of bullying". I certainly felt various of those feelings due to his behaviour at numerous times but I would argue that even if I had not, Lord Singh's behaviour, under the conditions laid out in the Code, would still constitute bullying as they 'can' or 'could' have had that effect on me.

I fear that if the desire for the complaints process is to create a "workplace where everyone is valued and respected, and where it is clear that bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated" then it has failed on its own terms if it rests squarely on the recipient or victim of behaviour. The issue with the finding

and the interpretation of the code is it that it allows any perpetrator of certain unacceptable behaviours to escape punishment and accountability for their actions or behaviours if victims and recipients of that behaviour do not go through the process for whatever reason. If the Code is truly about the behaviour of Members of the House of Lords then the behaviour should be the primary focus, and bullying behaviour should not be excused or permitted because of a perception that the effects of said behaviour on an individual do not fit a certain criteria. Indeed, in order to create a workplace “where everyone is valued and respected, and where it is clear that bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct are not tolerated”, bullying behaviour should be categorised as fundamentally wrong in principle, regardless of whether the victim comes forward, or whether it makes the victim feel a prescribed way.

While I understand that it was not within the remit of the Commissioner to assess whether behaviour from Members of the House of Lords breaks the Behaviour code, I would also like it to be noted that Lord Singh has repeatedly and consistently failed to demonstrate “respect, professionalism, understanding others’ perspectives, courtesy, and acceptance of responsibility” . Throughout the entire process Lord Singh has never once shown any contrition or acceptance that as a Peer there is a power dynamic at play. Neither has he acknowledged that his behaviour was wrong in any way shape or form, and has continually denigrated my character by asserting that I am lying or have been seeking to slander him without cause.

If, following my appeal, the Committee determine that Lord Singh acted within the parameters of the current Code then I would suggest that the *Code of Conduct* is not, in its current form, fit for purpose. I would be more than willing to work with the committee and any other interested parties, to supplement the Code so that members of staff who interact with Peers are protected from behaviour which would be deemed totally unacceptable in most other work places.

I look forward to hearing from you and the committee in due course and stand ready to provide further explanation if and when that is helpful.

### **Lord Singh’s response to FG’s appeal**

I don’t know how to respond. [They have] previously agreed that [they were] not bullied. Now [they say] there was a potential to bully and if you reject [their] vexatious appeal your procedures are not fit for purpose and [they] will help you rewrite them.