



**5th meeting
COND/21-22**

Conduct Committee

Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 10 November at 2.30pm via MS Teams

Present:

B. Anelay of St Johns	Vanessa Davies
L. Brown of Eaton-under-Heywood	B. Donaghy
Cindy Butts	B. Hussein-Ece
Mark Castle	L. Mance (Chair)
Andrea Coomber	

With the Clerk Assistant.

DELIBERATION IN PRIVATE

1. Minutes of the meeting from 13 October

The Chair informed the Committee that he had written to the Commissioners and the complainant from the Lord Mann case following the discussions at the previous meeting. He also told the Committee that he had also written to the Senior Deputy Speaker about the upcoming rotation for members of the Conduct Committee.

The minutes of the meeting on 13 October were approved.

2. Oral update by the Chair

The Chair drew attention to a report published by the Commissioner for Standards on the 8 November on the conduct of four members.

The Chair updated the Committee on plans for meetings with party groups.

3. Letters from Unlock Democracy on registration of interests COND/21-22/28

Chris Johnson introduced this paper. Tom Brake had written two letters proposing small changes to the Guide to the Code of Conduct. The Committee deliberated on the proposal related to holding companies, and whether a member should be obliged to provide a description of the activities of the holding company. Members of the Committee noted that the key aim of the provisions in the Guide is to ensure access to transparent and meaningful information, with the motive being to ensure

transparency through relevant descriptions of companies, and also to disclose an appropriate level of information to the public.

The Committee agreed to amend the Guide to the Code at the next opportunity, as proposed in the paper, and agreed that the other changes could be made without changing the Code. They agreed that members should provide proportionate descriptions of the main activities of holding companies.

4. Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme: ‘Cluster reporting’/multiple complaints about the same individual COND/21-22/29

Alexander Brocklehurst introduced this paper. The ICGS working group proposals have been accepted by the Commons and by the Lords Management Board, and consequential changes will be made accordingly to the rest of the ICGS scheme. The Committee was asked to consider whether the proposals should also apply to the ICGS process for members of the Lords and members’ staff. The paper put forward a process for recording multiple complaints about the same individual and making complainants aware of other potential complainants. Members of the Committee considered issues surrounding data protection and noted that the proposals were limited.

The Committee agreed that the process outlined in the paper should apply to complaints of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct against members of the House of Lords, or Lords members’ staff, so that potential complainants can log details with the ICGS helpline and be alerted, within one year, if there are other complaints about the same individual.

5. Addison Rules COND/21-22/30

Chris Johnson introduced this paper. The Addison Rules, which provide guidance for members with interests in public bodies, predate the Code of Conduct and have not been incorporated in it. It was suggested that there is some confusion among members who have roles within public bodies regarding the extent to which they can participate in sittings and debates in the House.

The Clerk of the Journals advised that one option would be to write to the Senior Deputy Speaker, seeking his views on updating the Addison Rules and including relevant elements of the Rules in the Code of Conduct instead of the Companion. Some members of the Committee thought this would be beneficial. Others expressed reservations and thought that the inclusion of the Addison Rules in the Companion was sufficient.

The Committee agreed to consider a further paper from the Registrar of Interests, providing more detail on any difficulties he had encountered with the Rules, at a future meeting.

6. Any Other Business

The Chair noted the report from the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and the Committee briefly discussed recent events in the House of Commons concerning proposed changes to the standards regime.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would take place in person on Wednesday 8 December at 2.30pm.

The Committee adjourned.

Christopher Johnson
Clerk to the Conduct Committee
x3828