

Committee on Standards

Tel 020 7219 8315 Email chris.bryant.mp@parliament.uk

Website www.parliament.uk/standards

From Chris Bryant MP, Chair of the Committee

Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
Chair, Procedure Committee
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

22 March 2022

Dear Karen

I am writing on behalf of the Committee to seek your Committee's view on a possible change to the Guide to the Rules for Members, following our report, *Review of the Code of Conduct: proposals for consultation*.

At present, declarations of interest are not required when they would "impede the business of the House". Paragraph 6(a) of Chapter 2 of the Guide provides that this includes supplementary questions, (which itself includes topical questions), and responses to Ministerial statements. The Committee notes that supplementary and topical questions tend to be longer than previously, and a greater proportion of the sitting day is normally given to statements and Urgent Questions than has historically been the case. It therefore seems to be anomalous that declarations of relevant interests are not required for a significant proportion of proceedings. Equally, however, the Committee appreciates that requiring declarations of interest may be considered unnecessarily to impede business or exacerbate the trend of longer supplementary questions.

I would draw attention to the provision in the Guide that pro forma declarations that refer to 'my entry in the Register', which require the reader or listener to have recourse to the Register to understand the interest, are unlikely to conform with the Rules (Chapter 2, paragraph 3), and thus a descriptive (though succinct) declaration would normally be required.

I would be grateful if your Committee might indicate if it has any views on this matter, and, in particular, if it would support a proposal to require declarations of interests during supplementary and topical questions and responses to Ministerial statements.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Bryant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Bryant MP

Chair, Committee on Standards