

Written evidence submitted by Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

Dear Chris

I am writing to you concerning your current enquiry about the MPs code of conduct. In general I think the direction of travel that you outlined before Christmas is sensible. But I would like to draw your attention to one particular issue. In its 2018 report the Committee on Standards in Public Life made the following recommendation

Recommendation 10: The Code of Conduct for MPs and Guide to the Rules should be updated to state: MPs should not accept any paid work to provide services as a Parliamentary strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on Parliamentary affairs or on how to influence Parliament and its members. MPs should never accept any payment or offers of employment to act as political or Parliamentary consultants or advisers.

Whilst the first part of this is a reasonable and sensible recommendation, the use of the word “political” is very broad ranging and could draw into the proposed restrictions areas of activity which are unrelated to UK parliamentary activity but which can sometimes have a political dimension – for example for a planning solicitor who continues to practice after being elected in a location away from their constituencies. Or alternatively someone working with an international business on environmental strategies across several countries. Could I suggest that if this approach is to be adopted that the wording is amended to say something like: *MPs should never accept any payment or offers of employment to act as consultants or advisers on matters related to their role as a Member of Parliament.*

I hope this is helpful.

With best wishes

Chris

07 February 2022