

### **Further written evidence from the Trade Union Side (TUS) (SAN0004)**

In evidence to the Committee on 25 June 2019, we discussed withdrawal of services as a possible sanction.

To explain in more detail, we think this might operate on two levels, ie, in relation to:

- Cases where a finding of bullying and harassment has been made under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS). In this case, the decision on the appropriate sanction would be made by our proposed Parliamentary Tribunal.
- ‘Minor breaches’ of the behaviour code. Posters on the behaviour code throughout Parliament state that “unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with seriously, independently and with effective sanctions.” However, there is no process for dealing with behaviour that breaches the code but does not constitute bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct. Developing and implementing an effective policy for this is essential to changing the culture of the House. Failure to do so will mean unacceptable behaviour continues to go unchallenged, contributing to a corrosive culture in which bullying and harassment is normalised.

These could potentially be one-off incidents which are better resolved quickly. There needs to be a process for investigating reports and making decisions on whether the code has been breached and what sanction should apply. Any sanction would need to be appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances, as we discussed in our oral evidence to the Committee. This could include the ability to withdraw services, such as access to catering outlets, for a period from any individual (including an MP or and Peer) where it is judged that the Behaviour Code has been breached. We think that any decision to withdraw services would need to be made by a senior manager, probably at Commons Executive Board level. There would need to be a short process for challenging the decision.

*27 June 2019*