



House of Commons Guide

Complaints Against A Member of Parliament

**Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner
for Standards:**

Address

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel

020-7219 3956

E-mail

standardscommissioner@parliament.uk

Website

www.parliament.uk/pcs

THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS DEALS WITH:

- breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of Parliament
- registration and declaration of financial interest and benefits (eg. paid employment, directorships, shareholdings, gifts, hospitality, land and property)
- sponsorship and financial support of Members of Parliament
- deposit of employment agreements
- advocacy where the Member of Parliament has a financial interest
- participation in delegations where the Member of Parliament has a paid interest

THE COMMISSIONER DOES NOT DEAL WITH:

- policy matters
- a Member of Parliament's decision on how to handle a constituent's case
- a Member of Parliament's views or opinions
- the funding of political parties
- breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct
- anonymous complaints
- complaints where no evidence is provided

For advice on what can be looked into and the investigation process please contact the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Write a *letter* (not an e-mail) to Mr John Lyon CB, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, setting out the complaint as fully as possible with the evidence which supports it. Please give your address and a contact telephone number so that we can get in touch with you as necessary.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards:

1. Decides whether enough evidence has been provided to justify a preliminary enquiry.
2. Conducts a preliminary enquiry, usually asking the complainant further questions and the Member of Parliament for a response.
3. Reports to the Committee on Standards and Privileges if he finds there is no case to answer.
4. If a full investigation is justified he will usually interview the Member of Parliament and will interview others and collect evidence as necessary.
5. Reports the facts and his conclusions to the Committee on Standards and Privileges.

The Committee on Standards and Privileges:

6. Considers the Commissioner's report.
7. May conduct further inquiries by taking written or oral evidence.
8. Produces its own report.
9. May make recommendations to the House of Commons on any further action, including penalties.
10. Publishes its own report on the complaint along with the Commissioner's report and evidence.
11. Issues general guidance to Members of Parliament on conduct as necessary.

The House of Commons:

12. May impose penalties. (Penalties include an apology by the Member of Parliament in person to the House of Commons; the withholding of a Member's salary for a specified period; and suspension of the Member from the House of Commons, which includes loss of pay.)
13. Approves any arrangements relating to the conduct of Members of Parliament in general.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

The Committee Members are appointed by the House of Commons and are all Members of Parliament.

Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind (Chairman)

Rt Hon Kevin Barron

Andrew Dismore

Nick Harvey

Rt Hon Greg Knight

Elfyn Llwyd

Chris Mullin

Hon Nicholas Soames

Paddy Tipping

Dr Alan Whitehead

PUBLISHED INFORMATION

The 'Code of Conduct and Rules relating to the conduct of Members' is published by The Stationery Office (document reference HC 735). It is also available on www.parliament.uk (look under 'C' in the index on Parliament's home page).

The Register of Members' Interests is published by The Stationery Office soon after the beginning of a new Parliament and annually thereafter. Between annual publications the Register is regularly updated. Annual editions and periodic updates may be viewed on www.parliament.uk (look under 'R' in the index on the Parliament's home page). They may also be inspected by appointment in the Search Room of the Parliamentary Archives (Tel: 020-7219 5316).

Further guidance on the complaints procedure outlined in this leaflet is available in the 'Publications' section of our website, the address of which is on the cover of this leaflet.

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