

# Independent Expert Panel

Chair, Sir Stephen Irwin

Email [independentexpertpanel@parliament.uk](mailto:independentexpertpanel@parliament.uk)

Website: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/independent-expert-panel>

Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP  
Speaker of the House  
House of Commons

22 March 2021

Dear Mr Speaker,

Thank you for meeting me and for the support you have shown for the Panel in commencing our work.

We have prepared guidance for the parties, setting out how cases will be managed. This is available on our webpages.<sup>1</sup> As we continue to develop our procedures, I am writing to request your agreement to a small number of proposals relating to the Panel's sanctioning powers.

## Apologies to the House

The Panel have the power to require a Member to make an apology to the House by way of a personal statement or on a point of order. I am aware that because the practice of the House is not to permit such statements to be subject to intervention or debate, the precise contents of the proposed statement are submitted to you in advance to ensure that they are appropriate.<sup>2</sup> I would like to request your agreement that where the Panel require an apology to be made to the House, the text of the statement should be agreed with us as well as with you.

## Former Members – passes

It appears to me self-evident that anyone who has been found to have committed a serious breach of either the Sexual Misconduct Policy or the Bullying and Harassment Policy should not have continued free access to the estate through use of a former Member's pass. It might be appropriate for this to be refused (if not already granted) or withdrawn (if already granted) permanently or for a set period of time, depending on the facts of the individual case.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/independent-expert-panel/>

<sup>2</sup> Erskine May 25<sup>th</sup> edn (2019), para 19.24

## Independent Expert Panel

Would you be content to delegate your authority to refuse or withdraw a former Member's pass to the Panel in ICGS cases?

I am aware that a former Member might be able to obtain a pass in other ways, including as a spouse or partner of a member, as a member of staff for the House or another Member or as a contractor. I do not think it would be right to intervene in those relationships by refusing or withdrawing a pass. However, if the Panel were aware that a former Member did hold another type of pass, we might seek to impose an alternative sanction, such as a requirement to apologise or attend training; we would draw this to the attention of the pass sponsor where appropriate.

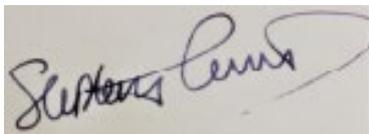
It would be of great assistance to the Panel if you would authorise the Secretary to the Panel to confirm directly with the Pass Office whether a former Member who is the subject of an appeal or referral to the Panel already holds a pass.

### **Former Members – reprimand**

In addition, or as an alternative to restricting right to a pass, it would be of great symbolic value if a former Member were to be reprimanded by means of a resolution of the House in cases where the Panel considered this appropriate. I would welcome your views on this.

I am most grateful for the helpful and constructive start to our relationship. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about our work and approach.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Irwin', written on a light-colored background.

**Sir Stephen Irwin**

**Chair of the Independent Expert Panel**