Responses from trade unions to Committee consultation on the Commissioner’s paper on confidentiality, received 6 September 2019

1. Response from Ken Gall, President, House of Commons Trade Union Side

Dear Robin

The TUS supports the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards proposals on confidentiality in ICGS cases.

Breaches of confidentiality in ICGS cases considerably exacerbate the stress and anxiety that is already inevitably involved. Steps to deter them are needed. In addition to those proposed, we would suggest that consideration should be given to ensuring that all relevant documents are encrypted and password protected, to prevent inadvertent breaches of confidentiality.

Similarly, we agree it would be helpful for the PCS to be able to take steps to correct inaccurate media reports – another source of stress for our members.

We can see the argument for a quarterly report giving numbers of investigations, themes and outcomes, all in anonymised form, to build trust and confidence in the system. We welcome the assurance that cases would not be identifiable and that consideration would be given to delay, taking into account the mental and emotional well-being of those involved.

The TUS will of course be happy to engage further with your Committee and the PCS as we seek to develop and improve the ICGS together.

Regards

Ken

Ken Gall
Trade Union Side President
Ext 5611

2. Response from Max Freedman, representing Unite the Union

Dear Robin,

Thank you again for the prompting. We are happy with all of the recommendations in theory, though of course will want to see how they work out in practice.

Best wishes,

Max

Max Freedman
Chair
Unite 1/427 - Representing staff of MPs