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Summary

5 The allegation I investigated was that the Member had hosted a meeting in a Committee Room on the parliamentary estate for a ticketed event for which a charge was levied. I also considered, during the course of the inquiry, whether the invitations had been properly issued in the name of the Member.

I did not uphold the allegation.

10 The evidence suggested that confusion had arisen when the original commercial venue for an event had been cancelled at short notice. An alternative, commercial venue was found and advertised. A separate event was then arranged for the same date on the parliamentary estate.

15 I found no evidence that attendees were charged to attend the event on the parliamentary estate. There had been a charge for tickets to attend the event held at another Westminster venue. Individuals who had paid to attend the event at the original venue were offered a refund and I was provided with evidence that refunds had been made. I saw evidence that the invitation to the event on the parliamentary estate was clear that the event was hosted by the Member.

Mr David TC Davies MP: Resolution letter

Letter from the Commissioner to Cllr Zoë O'Connell, 23 May 2018

5 I wrote to you on 27 March 2018 to say that I was beginning an inquiry into your allegation of a breach of House of Commons rules by Mr David TC Davies MP. I am writing now to let you know the outcome.

I have corresponded with Mr Davies and I have consulted the Serjeant at Arms. Having considered carefully the evidence I have obtained, I do not uphold the allegation.

10 The allegation that a charge was made for an event held in a House of Commons Committee room on 14 March 2018 has not been made out. I have seen evidence that the invitation to that event was issued in the name of Mr David TC Davies MP.

15 In reaching this conclusion, I have seen evidence that an event was originally arranged, with a commercial venue (Millwall Football Club - MFC). This event was advertised on-line and tickets offered for sale. I understand that MFC subsequently cancelled the booking and the organiser sought an alternative venue. Another commercial venue was secured, at a Westminster public house. In addition, Mr Davies agreed, at short notice, to host an event on the parliamentary estate. He has assured me that he was always clear that no charge could be made to attend that event.

20 I have seen a screenshot of an advertisement for the event held on the parliamentary estate. It is clear that Mr Davies was to be the host, and that attendance was free of charge.

25 Mr Davies has provided evidence to support his assurance that refunds were made to people who had purchased tickets for the original event. The Serjeant at Arms has confirmed that he and his Deputy met Mr Davies and the meeting's organiser ahead of the meeting. The Serjeant at Arms has told me that he has seen no evidence of any deviation from the assurances he was given about the arrangements for the meeting on the parliamentary estate.

30 I can see that the late change of venue after tickets had been sold for the original event; the fact that two events took place on the same evening; and the fact that tickets were sold for one of those events and not the other could easily have given rise to confusion.

I have notified Mr Davies of my decision and the matter is now closed.

35 I will update my webpages and post the evidence pack here <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/parliamentary-commissioner-for-standards/complaints-and->

[investigations/allegations-the-commissioner-has-not-upheld/](#) on the Parliament website.

I will report briefly on the outcome to the Committee on Standards in due course.

23 May 2018

Written evidence

1. Letter from Cllr Zoë O'Connell to the Commissioner, 15 March 2018

5 I am writing to make a complaint regarding David TC Davies MP, in relation to an event held in his name on 14 March in Committee Room 10 titled "*Transgenderism and the war on women*".

10 This event was ticketed, with tickets being sold from £5 to £22.15. I understand that under parliamentary rules, organisations other than registered charities are not entitled to benefit financially from events held on the parliamentary estate. The event was organised by an individual, [name], who as far as we are able to tell was not acting on behalf of a charity.

At the time of writing, ticket prices are visible at [hyperlink]. A screen capture of this page is attached.¹

15 Further, both men and trans women were excluded from the event, which may have been in breach of the Equality Act 2010. I appreciate that your office may not be able to investigate potential breaches of the Equality Act and, if this is the case, I would be grateful if you could direct me to the relevant officers who would be able to look into this.

15 March 2018

Enclosure: Eventbrite screenshot, text

20 Mar 14

Transgenderism and the War on Women, by We need to Talk UK and Ireland tour

£5 - £22.15 Sold out

Description: Lesbian feminist academics [names] will join trade unionist campaigner [name] at the event

25 Date and time: Wed, March 14, 2018, 7.00pm - 10.00pm GMT

¹ Screen capture not reproduced - the information it contained is summarised in the preceding paragraph

2. Letter from the Commissioner to Mr David TC Davies MP, 27 March 2018

I would welcome your help with an allegation I have received from Cllr Zoe O'Connell about your compliance with paragraph 15 of the House of Commons Code of Conduct for Members. I enclose a copy of Cllr O'Connell's letter for information.

5 The scope of my inquiry

The scope of my inquiry will be, in essence, to establish whether you acted in breach of paragraph 15 of the House of Commons' Code of Conduct as a result of a meeting held in House of Commons' Committee room 10 on 14 March 2018.

The relevant rules and guidance

10 Paragraph 15 of the Code of Conduct (copy of Code enclosed) says that:

15 *"Members are personally responsible and accountable for ensuring that their use of any expenses, allowances, facilities and services provided from the public purse is in accordance with the rules laid down on these matters. Members shall ensure that their use of public resources is always in support of their parliamentary duties. It should not confer any undue personal or financial benefit on themselves or anyone else, or confer undue advantage on a political organisation."*

20 The *Rules of the use of committee, conference, meeting and interview rooms*² set out the conditions for the use of such facilities. By way of introduction, those rules explain that *"Rooms are available for Members to book for private meetings or functions related to the work of Parliament,"*

Part 1 of the rules states that rooms can be booked:

25 *"For purposes connected with the parliamentary duties of the member booking the room, or relevant to the work of Parliament. This includes launching pamphlets or reports of a political or party political nature, but excludes events of a commercial nature or any other non-parliamentary purpose. A full list of qualifying activities is given at the end of this leaflet."*

30 Under the heading *Purposes for which Members may book rooms* the rules say

"Members can book Committee, meeting, conference or interview rooms in connection with:

² Item Sii in the Code of Conduct ring-binder.

- 5

 - *matters intended to increase the awareness of, interest in, or promote discussion of Parliament, its history, institutions and procedures, or the constitution of the United Kingdom*
 - *matters relating to the effect, or possible effect, of current or proposed legislation (including Private Bills and Private Members' Bills)*
 - *subjects under investigation by a Select Committee of the House*
 - *local issues, especially those involving more than one constituency, or which could not more easily or readily be dealt with in a Member's regular advice surgery*
- 10

 - *meetings with recognised charities, when the sponsoring Member is a trustee, governor, parliamentary adviser or other officer of the charity*
 - *matters to raise interest in, or to encourage or facilitate movement towards the establishment of parliamentary democracies in other countries*
- 15

 - *matters which are affecting, or could affect, the safety, well-being or interests of UK citizens or organisations at home or abroad, or those of EU, Commonwealth or foreign nationals resident, or organisations operating, in the UK*
- 20

 - *matters in which the UK is, or may become involved on a political, economic or military level, and relationships between the UK and any other country or countries*
 - *meetings with representatives (elected or otherwise) from the EU, Commonwealth or foreign parliaments or governments, or from the European Parliament, the European Commission or international organisations such as the UN or NATO*
- 25

 - *meetings with representatives of Secretaries' and Assistants' Council, the Whitley Committee Trade Union Side, recognised trade unions or staff associations*
 - *any other meeting approved by the Speaker."*

Paragraph 4 of the rules states:

- 30 *"All invitations, notices and circulars to do with the meeting must be issued in the name of the Member making the room booking."*

Paragraph 10 of the rules states:

“Members are asked not to advertise meetings as ‘public’ because it can lead to overcrowding if more people turn up than can be accommodated in the room. This is a security risk and contravenes fire regulations.”

- 5 To further assist Members, the House authorities have published an explanatory leaflet which is available on the intranet [hyperlink]. This amplifies the rules and in relation to invitations, it makes clear that invitations should not be issued in the name of any third party involved (*“Invitations and publicity”* - page 13)

Next steps

- 10 I would welcome your comments on the allegation that you have misused public resources by booking a Committee room of the House of Commons, on 14 March 2018, for a meeting which was made open to the public through Eventbrite and for which admission fees were charged.

- 15 In addition to your response to the over-arching allegation, it would be helpful to have the following information:

- the background which led to you booking this meeting room
- details of your role in the meeting and its arrangement
- whether you, or your staff, sought the advice of the House authorities about the arrangements for this meeting

- 20 — If so, please provide details, including copies of any emails or contemporaneous notes

- the part, if any, played by Venice Allen in this event, including the details of any organisation for which she was acting as a representative

- 25 • details of the admission charges (there appears to have been a range of charges)

— the total amount taken in admission fees

— the details of the beneficiary of those fees

- copies of all invitations, notices and circulars to do with the meeting

- 30 — if copies are no longer available, please provide, as far as you are able details of the text of all such communications

- whether you consider the meeting on 14 March 2018 was in accordance with the permitted uses listed in the rules and, if so, the basis for that belief
- details of any events hosted on a similar basis in rooms on the parliamentary estate since May 2015

Evidence: Please provide any supporting evidence you have, including copies of any press releases issued in connection with the above (in your name, or that of any other individual/organisation connected with this event).

Important Information

- 10 I enclose a copy of the *Commissioner's Information Note*,³ which sets out the procedure I follow. I am writing to Cllr O'Connell to let her know that I have decided to begin an inquiry into this matter and why I have decided not to investigate her other allegations. I will shortly update my parliamentary web pages to show that I am conducting an inquiry into an allegation into an alleged breach of paragraph 15
- 15 of the Code of Conduct. My office will not comment further on any aspect of the inquiry to third parties. (They will, however, confirm that I have begun an inquiry if asked before this information is posted on my webpages and they will answer factual questions about the processes I follow and the standards system more generally.)
- 20 As you will be aware, my inquiries are conducted in private. This letter and any subsequent correspondence between us is protected by parliamentary privilege. Our correspondence should be kept confidential until any report is published. Any such report will include all the relevant evidence, including our correspondence. I would, therefore, ask that you respect that confidentiality. I have made a similar
- 25 request of Cllr O'Connell.

- As a matter of courtesy, I should say now that I may make enquiries of the relevant House authorities in due course. If I do so, I will share that correspondence with you. While I do not, at this stage, know whether it will be necessary to interview you about this matter, it would be open to you to be accompanied at any such interview.
- 30 I am, of course, very happy to meet with you at any stage if you would find that helpful.

Action

³ <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/pcfs/New%20Website%20Documents/PCS-Information-Note.pdf>

I would appreciate your help and co-operation, and welcome your comments on the allegation, together with any evidence you feel may assist my investigation, as soon as possible and no later than 10 April 2018.⁴

27 March 2018

5 **3. Letter from Mr David TC Davies MP to the Commissioner, 12 April 2018**

Thank you for your letter dated 27 March 2018 regarding an allegation you have received about my compliance with paragraph 15 of the House of Commons' Code of Conduct for Members.

Background

10 I am very concerned at government proposals to allow people to self-identify their gender and to give young people wider access to so-called "sex-change" drugs:

<http://www.edf.org.uk/government-equalities-office-announcement-gender-recognition-act-consultation/>

15 I raised the issue of cross-sex hormone treatment being given to children as young as 12 in the Commons chamber following news that a GP in Monmouthshire is under investigation for this:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4869920/GP-set-practice-gave-child-12-sex-change-drugs.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/davidtcdavies/videos/1493881310694790/>

20 After looking into the matter further, I have become extremely worried about the proposal to let people officially change gender without medical checks.

25 Gender self-identification will allow transgender women, most of whom have male genitalia, to access places where women would not expect males to be present i.e. hospital wards, changing rooms, refuges and female prisons. I have expressed concerns about this in Parliament and these concerns are shared by a number of lesbian and feminist campaigners.

In October 2017, I held a seminar in Parliament during which a number of women's rights campaigners spoke about the impact these proposals will have if and when they become law:

⁴ Extended to 24 April on request

<https://www.david-davies.org.uk/news/caution-urged-over-transgender-law-concerns>

5 As a result, I have become known as one of a small number of MPs willing to voice opposition to the Government's proposals. I was subsequently contacted by Venice Allen who has also been campaigning on this issue.

She explained that a meeting which she had arranged at Millwall Football Club, and for which she had sold tickets, had been cancelled because of protests by transgender activists who did not want the three speakers - all lesbian feminist activists - to be given a platform.

10 I believe it was important that the speakers were given a platform. I was fully aware of the rule about selling tickets and made clear that while I was happy to arrange a platform for the three speakers, under no circumstances could tickets be sold for an event in Parliament.

15 I therefore booked a committee room and Ms Allan arranged another commercial event at a pub called [name and address redacted] which took place on the same evening. The commercial event was due to start at the same time with different speakers and continue until later with the speakers and some of the attendees at the event in Parliament going over to it after the Parliament event had finished. I understand most of those who had paid to attend the event at Millwall, which was
20 moved to [redacted], actually attended the event in Parliament first. However, these were two separate events.

I have attached a copy of the invitation to the event in Parliament. It shows my name and states that the event is free. I believe Ms Allan may have kept details of the commercial event secret until the last moment because of concerns about disruption and abuse by those opposed. I fully understand this having been on the receiving
25 end of abusive behaviour myself.

Admission fees

30 There were no admission fees to the event in Parliament and no money was collected for this event. I wanted to hold it to ensure that the principle of free speech was upheld. All of this was discussed at a meeting with the Serjeant at Arms on Tuesday 13 March 2018, which Ms Allan also attended.

Discussions with the House of Commons authorities

35 The afternoon before the event (Tuesday 13 March 2018), Ms Allan and I met with the Serjeant at Arms, at his request, following complaints of exactly the same nature to the ones you have received. We discussed at length the issue of ticketing and the fact that this was a separate event. We also discussed the issue of who could attend.

Notes were taken by an official and I believe it was by mutual agreement with, if not at the suggestion of the Serjeant at Arms, that we would limit numbers who could attend the event in Committee room 10. This was to ensure that a) they could be spoken for and; b) there could be no disturbances. Obviously, you will be able to confirm everything with the Serjeant at Arms and I give full written consent to discuss the meeting which we held.

Confidentiality

I believe a number of people have reported me to various bodies for holding this meeting and for other comments I have made about the proposed legislation. [Name] of the Sunday Times recently contacted me to ask about the pressure I have been put under to cease discussing this matter.

[Redacted] is aware that a journalist at Pink News has claimed to have reported me to your office for a related matter. I confirmed that you are investigating a complaint, although I have not provided any details.

I would like to share a copy of this reply with Ms Allan, but not your letter, as she has been named and is presumably part of your inquiry. I will ask her to keep it confidential, however I am perfectly content for you to make public all our correspondence on this matter.

Summary

I am concerned that there is a concerted attempt, by some individuals, to prevent an open debate on a matter of legislation coming before Parliament and that complaints are being made to various bodies to try and discourage open discussions on the proposed legislation. The individual who has made this complaint is seeking to become an MP:

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/meet-transgender-would-be-mp-lesbian-5583963>

I wish to rigorously and publicly defend my right to raise these issues and I intend to hold another meeting in Parliament shortly, with some of the same speakers, to discuss the legislation further.

I would be very pleased to meet with you to answer any questions you may have.

12 April 2018

Enclosure: Text of email from Ms Allan to Mr Davies dated 29 March 2018, subject: Eventbrite screenshots of the new event

"Description

You have been invited to attend a meeting hosted by David Davies MP and featuring talks by [3 names] followed by Q&A.

We are meeting in the Central Lobby at 6pm and doing a mass lobby of our MPs at 6.15pm.

- 5 Please allow an hour to go through airport style security. Enter the Palace through the main St Stephen's entrance.

Please let me know if you have any disability needs and we can make sure you are assisted.

- 10 Please let me know ASAP if you cannot attend. If you do not tell us your seat will be wasted.

Any urgent questions, please let me know."

4. Letter from the Commissioner to the Serjeant at Arms, 18 April 2018

- 15 I would like to ask for your advice on a complaint I have received about Mr David TC Davies MP, and into which I have begun a formal inquiry. The complaint concerns the use of Committee room 10 on the evening of 14 March 2018 and an alleged breach of paragraph 15 of the Code of Conduct for Members.

- 20 I enclose a copy of the relevant correspondence. As you can see, Mr Davies has told me that he met you and members of your team on 13 March 2018 to discuss the arrangements for the meeting. I would be grateful if you would let me have a copy of any note of the meeting, as well as any observations you might wish to make on the content of Mr Davies' letter.

It would be very helpful to have your response to this letter by 26 April 2018. Thank you for your assistance.

18 April 2018

- 25 **5. Letter from the Serjeant at Arms to the Commissioner, 20 April 2018**

On 13 March 2018, this event was brought to my attention by our Events Booking Team, raising concerns about the meeting.

- 30 I met the Member in my office, along with my Deputy (name) where we discussed the room booking and received assurances from Mr David TC Davies MP that the rules in relation to room bookings were being followed. The Member also brought Venice Allan, from the group, with him.

The Member informed me that this was relevant to his work within Parliament, he wanted to hear from this group in relation to the topic which is subject to legislation and he wished to seek wider opinions to increase his understanding in order to contribute to the debate.

- 5 We received assurances that the capacity of the room was not to be exceeded and that no-one would be charged for the event, with the understanding that this was a separate and different event to that advertised - which was to occur in a commercial venue within Westminster. Both Venice and the Member stated that refunds would be offered to anyone who misunderstood the Eventbrite page.
- 10 I was informed by the Member that, the location of 'Houses of Parliament' on the event website was for an initial meeting place for a pre-arranged lobby and some of the group attended the meeting in Committee Room 10, whilst others went to the 'commercial venue' and the others then joined them after the meeting, for their event.
- 15 Neither I nor my team witnessed any deviations from the assurances provided.

Please feel to get in contact if you have any further queries.

20 April 2018

**6. Letter from the Commissioner's Office to Mr David TC Davies MP,
26 April 2018**

- 20 I am writing in the Commissioner's absence to share with you the letter she has received from the Serjeant at Arms in response to hers of 18 April.

The Commissioner routinely invites Members to comment on the advice and information she receives from the House authorities before making any decisions, and I enclose a copy of the Serjeant's letter for that purpose now.

- 25 In addition to any comments you might wish to make, I think the Commissioner may find it helpful to know
- when Ms Allan first asked you to host the 14 March meeting on the estate (in your letter of 12 April you state that it was after Millwall FC had cancelled the booking but do not give a date); and
- 30
- the steps that were taken to ensure that refunds were made to anyone who had understood that they were paying to attend the meeting held on the parliamentary estate.

On the second page of your letter you refer to an attached copy of the invitation to the event in Parliament. I am not sure that the attachment sent (copy enclosed now

for ease of reference) is the one you intended. The attachment was a copy of an email dated 29 March 2018, titled "Eventbrite screenshots of the new event". It mentions you by name but does not state that "*the event is free*". The Commissioner may also find it helpful to see a copy of the invitation to the event held at Walkers of Whitehall, or the text of that invitation if the original is no longer available.

The Commissioner will not be in the office again until week commencing 8 May, by which time we expect to have moved to Richmond House. If you would let her have any comments you wish to make by 10 May 2018, that would be very helpful.

26 April 2018

10 **7. Email from Mr David TC Davies MP to the Commissioner's office,
3 May 2018**

Thank you for your recent letter. Here are my responses to your queries:

1. Thank you for enclosing a copy of the letter from the Serjeant at Arms.
- 15 2. My first contact with Venice Allan was over the telephone and the purpose of the call was to discuss the cancellation of the event at Millwall and the difficulty she faced in enabling women's right and lesbian campaigners to hear the speakers. I cannot be certain of the date, however the first email I had from her was on 7 March which referenced a conversation the day before. I would therefore think it reasonable to assume that our first contact was on or just before 6 March.
- 20 3. I explained to Ms Allan that it would be against the rules for anyone to pay for meeting to be held at the House of Commons. This was explained again at the meeting with the Serjeant at Arms. Ms Allan had by then already organised an alternative event for those who had bought tickets for the original event. The Serjeant at Arms made clear that refunds should be made to anyone who wanted
- 25 one. Ms Allan agreed. I understand that only a few people asked for refunds and of course these were given.

I am going to send separate emails with the following:

- A. Confirmation of the booking with [venue]
- 30 B. An invitation to the Parliamentary Event which states that it is free in the box on the right-hand side.

3 May 2018

Enclosure A: Emailed appointment booking an alternative venue in Whitehall

Enclosure B: Screenshot of Eventbrite Booking page, text

"NEW Transgenderism and the War on Women by We Need to Talk UK and Ireland Tour"

Description: You have been invited to attend a meeting hosted by David Davies MP and featuring talks by [3 names] followed by Q&A.

5 We are meeting in the Central Lobby at 6pm and doing a mass lobby of our MPs at 6.15pm.

Please allow an hour to go through airport style security. Enter the Palace through the main St Stephen's entrance.

10 Please let me know if you have any disability needs and we can make sure you are assisted.

Please let me know ASAP if you cannot attend. If you do not tell us your seat will be wasted.

Any urgent questions, please let me know

Additional details:

15 Free

Sold out

Date and Time

Location

Wed, March 14, 2018

House of Commons

7.00pm - 9.00pm GMT

Committee Room 10

House s of Parliament

20

Parliament Square

London SW1A 0PW

8. Email from Mr David TC Davies MP to the Commissioner's Office, 3 May 2018

25 Further to your letter, I have also now had a list of those who asked for and received a refund, with names redacted.

Enclosure: Table showing order numbers, order dates, ticket type, order type and refunds

Details of 24 refunds provided but not reproduced here as those details are not relevant.