



HOUSE OF LORDS

Report from the Commissioner for Standards

# Descriptions of companies in the Register of Interests

### *Commissioners for Standards*

The independent Commissioners for Standards are responsible for considering any alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct.

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### *Registrar of Lords' Interests*

The Registrar of Lords' Interests advises members of the House and their staff on their obligations under the Codes of Conduct.

Address: The Registrar of Lords' Interests, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW

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### *Registers of Interests*

A list of interests of members and their staff can be found online:

[www.parliament.uk/hlregister](http://www.parliament.uk/hlregister)

### *Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme helpline*

Telephone: 0808 168 9281 (freephone)

Email: [Support@ICGShelpline.org.uk](mailto:Support@ICGShelpline.org.uk)

# Descriptions of companies in the Register of Interests

## Summary of complaint

1. On 10 August 2021, my office received a complaint from a member of the public, Tom Brake, about the conduct of 39 members of the House of Lords (see Appendix 1).
2. Mr Brake complained that these members were in breach of the Code of Conduct as they had failed to provide adequate descriptions of companies for which they had registered a directorship, where the nature of the business of those companies was not self-evident from the company names.

## Relevant aspect of the Code

3. Paragraph 53 of the Guide to the Code of Conduct states the following:

“Members should register the name of the company in which the directorship is held and give a broad indication of the company’s business, where this is not self-evident from its name. Directly remunerated directorships of companies which are not trading should be registered”.

## Summary of investigation

4. At preliminary assessment, I dismissed the complaint against 14 members as I determined that there was no evidence that they were in breach of the Code.
5. Having examined their entries in the Register of Interests, I considered that there was enough evidence to launch an investigation into the remaining 25 members. On 3 September, I wrote to each of the members to provide them with a copy of the complaint and to inform them that I had launched an investigation. The following members were investigated:
  - Lord Bamford
  - Lord Bilimoria
  - Lord Borwick
  - Lord Carter of Coles
  - Lord Crisp
  - Lord Curry of Kirkharle
  - Lord Fellowes of West Stafford
  - Lord Hameed
  - Lord Kestenbaum
  - Lord Kirkham
  - Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate

- Lord Levene of Portsoken
  - Lord Northbrook
  - Lord O’Shaughnessy
  - Lord Powell of Bayswater
  - Lord Redesdale
  - Lord Selkirk of Douglas
  - Lord St John of Bletso
  - Lord Sugar
  - Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean
  - Lord Wei
  - Lord Whitby
  - Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise
  - The Duke of Wellington
  - The Earl of Liverpool
6. I informed each of the members that from my initial reading of their entries in the Register of Interests, it appeared as though they were in breach of the Code, but that I considered it to be a minor breach which could be remedied by providing a description of the registered companies. I asked them to do so by 17 September.
7. All members replied by the deadline I set and remedied the situation by providing descriptions in their Register of Interests.
8. One member, the Duke of Wellington, wrote to me to say that he did not consider he was in breach of the Code as his company, Richemont Holdings (UK) Limited, was described elsewhere in his Register of Interests under the name “Compagnie Financière Richemont SA”.

### **Finding**

9. **Apart from the Duke of Wellington, the other 24 members committed a minor and inadvertent breach of the Code of Conduct by failing to provide a description of companies they had registered. Each of them has resolved the breach to my satisfaction and I consider that no further sanction is necessary.**
10. **I conclude that the Duke of Wellington is not in breach of the Code of Conduct. The complaint against him is therefore dismissed.**

### **Future consideration**

11. It is the responsibility of members to ensure that entries within the Register of Interests are correct and up to date. It is in everyone’s interest that matters are reported accurately and fully.

12. I have liaised with the Registrar of Lords' Interests and he has said he will use the opportunity of the next annual audit of the Register (in April 2022) to ensure that all members are in compliance with the requirement to provide descriptions of registered companies. He added that all new entries in the Register will also be checked for compliance with the requirement as a matter of course, at the point of registration.
13. I am grateful to all of the members for their cooperation in this matter, for their prompt engagement with the office of the Registrar of Lords' Interests and for the assistance and cooperation of the Registrar's office.

Martin Jelley QPM  
Commissioner for Standards

## **APPENDIX 1: LETTER FROM TOM BRAKE TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS, 10 AUGUST 2021**

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I am writing to make a formal complaint about alleged breaches of the House of Lords Code of Conduct.

The precise rule that I believe is being breached is set out in Paragraph 53, which says that if a Peer has a company directorship then they should “give a broad indication of the company’s business, where this is not self-evident from its name”. A recent case shows that the Commissioner has ruled on similar matters in the past.

I believe that the following peers, unintentionally I imagine, are in breach of this paragraph of the Code of Conduct and that greater clarity about the business of the companies listed below would be welcomed by the public. I do not believe it could be claimed that the nature of their business is self-evident.

[The names of members dismissed at preliminary assessment have been redacted]

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean—Director, EPBS Consultancy Limited

Lord Bamford—Editallied Limited

Lord Bamford—Hydrogen Equity Partners UK Limited

Lord Bilimoria—Bilimoria & Bilimoria LLP

Lord Borwick—Chairman, Second Poore Ltd (holding company) and Director of its subsidiary: Federated Trust Corporation Ltd

Lord Carter of Coles—Director, Primary Group Limited, Bermuda

Lord Carter of Coles—Director, Stanmore Rehabilitation Limited

Lord Crisp—Director, Vertical Future Ltd

Lord Curry of Kirkharle—Corchester Towers Limited

Lord Curry of Kirkharle—Meritas Developments Ltd

Lord Curry of Kirkharle—Nimbus Topco Limited

Lord Curry of Kirkharle—Nimbusbco Limited

Lord Fellowes of West Stafford—Director, Praemium Intentus (member’s company owned 100 per cent by member)

Lord Hameed—Director, Proton Treatment Ltd

Lord Kestenbaum—Director, Graywood Limited (consulting)

Lord Kestenbaum—Director, Spencer House Limited

Lord Kirkham—Director, Richard Aitch Limited

Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate—Director, BRASS Trustees Limited

Lord Levene of Portsoken—Director, Harley House Limited

Lord Northbrook—Director, Almanach de Gotha Limited

Lord O'Shaughnessy—Director, Mayforth Consulting

Lord Powell of Bayswater—Director, Financière Agache

Lord Powell of Bayswater—Director, Matheson & Co

Lord Redesdale—CEO, SECR Reporting Ltd

Lord Selkirk of Douglas—Director, Lennoxlove House Limited

Lord St John of Bletso—Non-executive Director, Choice International, Mauritius

Lord Sugar—Director, Harper Fox Partners Ltd

Lord Wei—Director, Shoreditch Ventures (HK) Ltd

Lord Whitby—Director, Harborne Consultancy Midlands Limited

Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise—Director, Lipsy Limited

Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise—Director, Ventura Group Limited

The Duke of Wellington—Director, Richemont Holdings (UK) Limited

The Earl of Liverpool—Director, Rutland Management Ltd

I look forward to your response.