

Email sent on 15 September 2023 to the chair of each registered APPG

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Dear Chair,

## **All-Party Parliamentary Group for 12 Step Recovery**

### **1. Message from Sir Bernard Jenkin MP, acting Chair of the Committee on Standards**

On Tuesday 12 September, I chaired the Committee on Standards as acting Chair and we agreed revised transitional arrangements for the new APPG rules, following strong representations from senior Members of the House signalling concerns about the proposals that were approved in July. The House authorised the Committee to agree transitional arrangements when it approved the new rules. When the Standards Committee meets again under its new elected Chair in October, there will be further discussion about these new rules.

The attached note from the Registrar of Members' Financial Interests explains how the transitional arrangements will work.

The rules prohibiting foreign governments from providing or funding (whether directly or indirectly) a secretariat will still come into force with immediate effect on 16 October 2023. This reflects concerns raised by the Parliament's Director of Security.

During the transition period to 31 March 2024, APPGs should try to meet the requirement for 4 officers and no more, as this will become mandatory on 31 March 2024.

APPGs are not expected to comply with any other new rules until 31 March 2024; except that the rule providing that a Member of the House of Commons may be an Officer of a maximum of six Groups shall apply from the start of the next parliament (the 'six groups rule').

### **2. Note from the Registry Office on the transitional arrangements for the introduction of the new APPG Rules**

On Tuesday 12 September, the Committee on Standards agreed the following revised transitional arrangements for the new APPGs:

#### **Transitional Arrangements**

(1) The rules prohibiting foreign governments from providing or funding (whether directly or indirectly) a secretariat come into force with immediate effect on 16 October 2023.

(2) APPGs need to comply with any other new rules from 31 March 2024; except that the rule providing that a Member of the House of Commons may

be an Officer of a maximum of six Groups shall only apply from the start of the next parliament.

(3) APPGs will be able to hold EGMs virtually or by correspondence during a transition period (to meet the requirement for 4 officers and no more) ending on 31 March 2024.

(4) An audit of compliance will be carried out in April 2024. Any APPG that has not complied with the Rules by 31 March 2024 will be deregistered.

The transitional arrangements provide APPGs with the opportunity to make arrangements to comply with the rules by 31 March 2024 and to use the provisions to allow EGMs to be held virtually or by correspondence to meet the requirement for 4 officers and no more. The new Rules and Guide to the Rules can be accessed [here](#).

As the transitional arrangements make clear, any group that has not complied with the new rules by 31 March 2023 will be deregistered.

Below is a timetable for the transitional arrangements for the key new rules coming into effect.

### **Secretariats**

**From 16 October 2023:** No APPG can have a secretariat that is provided by or funded by a foreign government. (See [page 11](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.) The Chair or an Officer of an APPG must undertake due diligence as to whether a foreign government is the eventual funder of a secretariat or other benefit. Guidance on due diligence will be sent to Chairs of APPGs.

### **Officers**

**From 31 March 2024:** APPGs must have four officers and no more. The Chair is one of the four officers. (See [page 15](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.)

The four Officers are the only formal post holders in an APPG and are elected at either an AGM or an EGM. Members of an APPG may hold informal positions but they are not officers of the group. Informal positions cannot be included in the Group's APPG Register entry.

**From the start of the next parliament:** A Member may be an officer of a maximum of 6 APPGs. (See [page 15](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.) Members are responsible for keeping track of which APPGs they are an Officer of.

### **Membership**

**From 31 March 2024:** An APPG must have at least 20 members of either House (This includes the four officers of the group). Each APPG is

responsible for maintaining its membership list.(See [page 15](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.)

### **AGMs/EGMs**

**From 31 March 2024:** All APPGs will be required to approve at their AGM an income and expenditure statement, even if it is a “nil return”. (See [page 22](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.)

**From 31 March 2024:** The following requirements will apply to APPGs that have received over £1,500 in the calendar year:

- An external chair, appointed by the Speaker, to preside over AGMs and EGMs.
- A quorum of 8 parliamentarians
- The publication and approval of an Annual Report setting out the work of the APPG
- The publication and approval of a due diligence statement.

The quorum for other formal meetings remains 5 parliamentarians

(See [pages 22 and 23](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.)

### **Due diligence on benefits**

**From 31 March 2024:** The Chair or an Officer of an APPG must undertake due diligence to ascertain whether the ultimate funder of any benefit – secretariat services or otherwise – is a foreign government. If it is, and the value of the benefit meets the threshold for registration, the benefit will need to be registered in the normal way as having been received from the foreign government. (See [page 11](#) of the new Guide to the Rules.)

Should you need further advice, you can contact the Registrar (James Davies) or the Deputy Registrar for APPGs (Philippa Wainwright) via [groupsregister@parliament.uk](mailto:groupsregister@parliament.uk) or on 020 7219 3277 or 0401).

Kind regards,

**The Registry Office  
Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards**