



House of Commons Guide

Complaining About A Member of Parliament

**Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner
for Standards:**

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www.parliament.uk/pcs

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THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS DEALS WITH ALLEGATIONS ABOUT:

Actions which breach the Code of Conduct and the Rules for MPs including:

- Registration and declaration of financial interests (eg paid employment, shareholdings, gifts, hospitality, land and property)
- An MP's use of parliamentary facilities, or – in relation to periods before the 2010 General Election - of parliamentary expenses
- Advocacy where the MP has a financial interest.

THE COMMISSIONER DOES NOT DEAL WITH ALLEGATIONS ABOUT:

- Policy matters
- An MP's decision on how to handle a particular issue, including a constituent's case;
- An MP's views or opinions
- The funding of political parties
- Breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct
- An MP's purely private and personal life
- Criminal offences.

Complaints about MPs' use of parliamentary expenses since the 2010 General Election should be sent to *compliance@parliamentarystandards.org.uk*.

The Commissioner is unable to consider allegations which are not supported by sufficient evidence to justify an inquiry.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

Write to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, setting out the complaint as fully as possible, with the evidence which supports it. NB: The Commissioner is always ready to consider emails, but before he could accept your complaint for inquiry, he would need to receive it in hard copy, signed and bearing your name and address.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The Commissioner will inform you, usually within five working days, whether he has opened an inquiry into your complaint.

If the Commissioner inquires into your complaint, he will forward it to the MP. He will seek information from the MP and any others who he considers can help with his inquiry. He usually conducts his inquiries in writing but he may also interview the MP and others. The Commissioner's inquiries are confidential and protected by parliamentary privilege. He does not provide the complainant – or anyone else – with progress reports.

The Commissioner may decide at any time that the evidence does not justify upholding your complaint. He would then write to inform you and he would publish that letter and the supporting evidence.

In less serious complaints, if the Commissioner finds that the MP has breached the rules of the House, and the MP accepts this, the Commissioner may resolve the complaint using the rectification procedure. This may involve a repayment. He would then write to inform you and he would publish that letter and the supporting evidence.

In other cases the Commissioner will submit a memorandum to the Committee on Standards and Privileges reporting the facts and setting out his conclusions. He will inform you of this.

The Committee will reach its own conclusions on whether the MP has breached the rules of the House, and may recommend any penalties to the House.

The Committee will then publish its own report on the complaint, together with the Commissioner's memorandum and the evidence he has received. The Clerk to the Committee will send you a copy of the report shortly before publication.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS AND PRIVILEGES

Rt Hon Kevin Barron MP (Chairman)

Sir Paul Beresford MP

Tom Blenkinsop MP

Annette Brooke MP

Rt Hon Tom Clarke MP

Mr Geoffrey Cox MP

Matthew Hancock MP

Mr Oliver Heald MP

Heather Wheeler MP

Dr Alan Whitehead MP

USEFUL LINKS

The Commissioner's webpages, for:

- The Code of Conduct together with the Guide to the Rules relating to the conduct of Members
- The Register of Members' Financial Interests
- The Commissioner's Annual Reports

www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/pcfs/publications/

The Committee on Standards and Privileges webpages, for:

- The Committee and the Commissioner's memoranda on complaints he has investigated:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmstnprv.htm.

Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority: www.parliamentarystandards.org.uk

Office of the Information Commissioner: www.ico.gov.uk

Electoral Commission: www.electoralcommission.gov.uk