

Press release: MPs' outside interests: Committee publishes report

The Code of Conduct for MPs should be changed to state that outside interests, whether paid or unpaid, should not compromise their principal role as an MP, according to a new report published today by the independent Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Launching the report, Chair of the Committee, Lord (Paul) Bew said:

The evidence we received for this review demonstrates that there is a wide spectrum of views, both amongst the public and MPs, as well as those who regulate standards for MPs. We also heard convincing arguments about the importance of individual MPs retaining the flexibility to perform their roles in the way they choose, and of Parliament being open to a wide a range of people from different backgrounds and professions.

When we last looked at this issue in our report on MPs' expenses in 2009 ([link](#)), the Committee recommended a balance: that MPs should be able to undertake paid employment, providing that these activities remain within reasonable limits, and that there was transparency. At that time, there was consensus between the parties on this settlement but it is regrettable that the recommendations made then have not been fully implemented by Parliament, MPs and Government.

A majority of MPs do not hold remunerated outside interests, and a number of MPs hold outside interests which would be considered within 'reasonable limits'. However, where a small number of individuals have taken up outside interests beyond what might be considered reasonable, it risks undermining trust in Parliament and Parliamentarians. We are therefore recommending a package of important reforms to address issues concerning MPs' capacity to fulfil their Parliamentary duties and responsibilities to their constituents and to mitigate the potential for undue influence on our political system.

To demonstrate high standards, Parliament needs to be more transparent with the public about the registration and declaration of interests. The Register of Members' Financial Interests must be more accessible, searchable and usable. Voters should know what outside interests Parliamentary candidates intend to hold if they are elected. The Code of Conduct for MPs should be clarified to state that any MP's interests outside the House should not compromise their principal role as MPs. We also recommend that MPs should not undertake outside employment as Parliamentary strategists, advisers or consultants and that the rules on lobbying

need to be clearer.

Foremost, MPs themselves should continually demonstrate leadership and integrity, considering how any outside interests might impact on their work in the legislature and be prepared to be fully open and honest with the public about any outside interests they choose to hold.

In line with the Committee's Code of Practice, the three members of the Committee nominated by the political parties did not take part in formulating the recommendations made in this report. Indeed, they may not necessarily agree with every aspect. We are, however, grateful to our political colleagues for sharing their knowledge and advice on Parliamentary life.

My first report as Chair of this Committee recommended strengthening transparency around lobbying; my final report demonstrates that this continues to be an issue of public concern. As I complete my 5-year term, it is clear that Lord Nolan's principles remain the cornerstone of ethical standards in public life..

Notes to Editors

1. Interview requests and media enquiries should go to Maggie O'Boyle on 07880 740627.

1. The independent Committee on Standards in Public Life advises the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in the UK. It monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders.
2. Lord Bew wrote to the Prime Minister on 23 March 2017 outlining the [terms of reference](#) for this review. The Committee published a [consultation](#) and invited submissions from anyone with an interest in these issues. The Committee held a roundtable discussion, focus groups and commissioned research as part of its evidence-gathering process. Summaries of the roundtable and correspondence received are [available online](#).
3. The current members of the Committee are: Lord (Paul) Bew, Chairman, Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP (Labour), Simon Hart MP (Conservative), Dr Jane Martin CBE, Dame Shirley Pearce DBE, Jane Ramsey, Monisha Shah and Rt Hon Lord (Andrew) Stunell OBE (Liberal Democrat). In line with the Committee's [Code of Practice](#) the three political members did not take part in the conclusions or recommendations made in this report.
4. You can follow the Committee on twitter [@PublicStandards](#).

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[Press release: New Government Action Plan Pledges to Improve the Lives of LGBT People](#)

- action plan responds to the largest national survey of LGBT people in the world
- government to end conversion therapy as survey shows 2% of respondents have undergone conversion therapy, and a further 5% have been offered it
- plan includes over 70 commitments, including appointing a national adviser to reduce inequality for LGBT people
- government pledges £4.5million of funding to deliver the plan

The Government will eradicate the abhorrent practice of conversion therapy in the UK as part of a new 75-point action plan, published today (Tuesday 3 July), to tackle discrimination and improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the UK.

The LGBT Action Plan will be published alongside the results of the largest [national survey of LGBT people](#) ever undertaken. The survey, which had over 108,000 respondents, shows LGBT people are experiencing prejudice on a daily basis.

More than two in three of those who participated in the survey said they avoided holding hands with a same-sex partner in public for fear of a negative reaction, while 23% said people at work had reacted negatively to them being LGBT and over half of those who accessed or tried to access mental health services said they had to wait too long.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

We can be proud that the UK is a world leader in advancing LGBT rights, but the overwhelming response to our survey has shone a light on the many areas where we can improve the lives of LGBT people.

was struck by just how many respondents said they cannot be open about their sexual orientation or avoid holding hands with their partner in public for fear of a negative reaction. No one should ever have to hide who they are or who they love.

This LGBT action plan will set out concrete steps to deliver real and lasting change across society, from health and education to tackling discrimination and addressing the burning injustices that LGBT people face.

The action plan – announced today in response to the survey results – will include a £4.5m fund to address inequality and support the delivery of actions in the plan in areas including health, education, personal safety and the workplace. It says the Government will, among other actions:

- bring forward proposals to eradicate conversion therapy, as 2% of respondents had undergone and 5% had been offered conversion therapy. We will consider all legislative and non-legislative options to prohibit promoting, offering or conducting conversion therapy
- appoint a national LGBT health adviser, as one in five trans respondents said that their specific needs had been ignored or not taken into account. The adviser will focus on reducing the health inequalities that LGBT people face, and ways to improve the care LGBT people receive when accessing the NHS and public health services
- work with the police to improve the response to LGBT hate incidents, as two in five respondents had experienced them, with more than nine in 10 of the most serious incidents going unreported. A refreshed Hate Crime Action Plan will include measures to improve the awareness and skills of police officers and staff to respond to the needs of hate crime victims – including LGBT victims
- support LGBT students and teachers to improve diversity and tolerance in

educational settings, as 19% of respondents had experienced verbal harassment, insults or other hurtful comments in education. We will invest in programmes that tackle homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and ensure that the new subjects of Relationships Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will support all pupils, whatever their developing sexual orientation or gender identity.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

Everyone in this country should feel safe and happy to be who they are, and to love who they love, without judgement or fear.

I am incredibly proud of the UK's global leadership on LGBT equality and the fact that this is the largest survey of its kind, but many of the results are very disturbing.

It's unacceptable that people feel they cannot hold hands with their partner in public, and that they are unable to walk down the street without fear of abuse. It is also deeply worrying that LGBT people experience difficulty accessing public services such as healthcare, and that so many are being offered the abhorrent practise of conversion therapy.

This Government has done much to promote a diverse, tolerant society and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – but it is clear we have more to do.

Our Action Plan is a step towards everyone – regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics – being able to live safe, happy and healthy lives where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination. It will mark a culture change to allow LGBT people to feel respected at every level of society.

The ground-breaking new plan will tackle some of the biggest issues facing LGBT people of different ages in the UK today, including: understanding the scale of LGBT abuse online; improving mental healthcare for LGBT people with a focus on suicide prevention; combating homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying in schools, and increasing awareness of the services available for LGBT victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse.

Ruth Hunt, Chief Executive of Stonewall, said:

These findings reflect what many LGBT people already know, that there's still a long way to go until we reach full equality.

The simple act of holding hands is something all same-sex couples do with a high degree of caution. Attitudes have changed but there are still pockets of society where we're far from safe.

We're really pleased that the Government is listening to the thousands upon thousands of LGBT people who responded to this survey and are investing funds in areas where LGBT people face some of the harsher inequalities, such as health care.

We now need people in all of Britain's communities to also come out for LGBT equality and to stand up against the hate and abuse we face daily. Our recent research has shown that LGBT people who are also discriminated against due to their faith, race or disability experience alarming levels of abuse, from across all sectors of society, including within LGBT communities. We all have a part to play in creating a society where every lesbian, gay, bi and trans person is accepted without exception.

In addition to dealing with the issues facing LGBT people in the UK, the action plan has an international element to help defend the rights of LGBT people globally. The UK continues to be recognised as one of the best countries in Europe for LGBT rights by the International Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Europe, and the action plan will further cement that reputation. The Government has promised to deliver an international conference with governments and civil society groups focusing on how to progress LGBT equality, and to provide funding to promote LGBT equality worldwide.

Paul Martin OBE, Chief Executive at LGBT Foundation, said:

We worked closely with the Government Equalities Office to help develop the National LGBT Survey and we encouraged as many LGBT people as possible to respond.

We are delighted that the Government has listened. The proposed Action Plan outlines the concrete steps it will take to address some of the challenges still facing LGBT communities in this country.

LGBT people continue to face significant health inequalities and we welcome the Government's commitment to tackling these through the appointment of an LGBT Health Adviser.

We hope that today's plan is a clear statement of the Government's commitment to work in partnership with the LGBT charity sector to achieve a fair and equal society where all lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people can achieve their full potential.

Notes to editors

- statistics relating to workplace, health, incidents and education typically refer to respondents' experiences in the 12 months preceding the survey.

- the LGBT survey was launched in July 2017
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News story: Infected Blood Inquiry Terms of Reference published

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, David Lidington and Chair of the independent Infected Blood Inquiry, Sir Brian Langstaff have published the [Terms of Reference](#) of the Inquiry.

On 8 February this year, I announced the appointment of Sir Brian Langstaff to Chair the Infected Blood Public Inquiry.

From the outset, Sir Brian has been clear that he is determined to put people at the heart of the Inquiry, and to ensure an inclusive and transparent process. Sir Brian and his team conducted a public consultation on the proposed terms of reference for the Inquiry, which ran from 2 March to 26 April.

They invited contributions via an online questionnaire, by email, written correspondence and telephone. The Inquiry team also held 15 meetings with groups and individuals across the UK, something that Sir Brian is keen for the Inquiry to continue to do as it moves forward.

The Inquiry received almost 700 responses to its consultation, and Sir Brian wrote to me on 7 June, having reflected on those consultation responses, advising me of the outcome and his recommendations for the terms of reference. The Terms of Reference are comprehensive and reflect the key points made in the consultation.

The geographical scope of the Inquiry is UK-wide, looking at issues relating to the whole of the UK as well as regionally.

Sir Brian expects the Inquiry team to hold regular meetings across the UK. And so I have consulted, as I am required to do under the Inquiries Act 2005, with the devolved administrations of Scotland and Wales, and in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who in turn consulted the Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department of Health.

The Governments of Scotland and Wales, and my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland were content with Sir Brian's recommendations, and I am happy to accept his recommendations without amendment. I have written to Sir Brian to confirm this.

The terms of reference have been published and deposited in the Libraries of

both Houses today. The Inquiry can now formally begin its work, and will start today, 2 July 2018.

Sir Brian proposes to use groups of experts to assist the Inquiry. The groups would cover all the material fields relevant to the Inquiry. Their evidence would be public, transparent and subject to scrutiny.

People affected, and other participants to the Inquiry, would be able to propose experts and put forward questions to the expert groups.

During the Inquiry's public consultation, views were expressed both for and against the appointment of additional panel members. Some, noting the complex and difficult issues to be examined by the Inquiry, wanted a panel of many experts to assist the Chair.

It is Sir Brian's view that his proposal for expert groups will achieve the objectives of those who have been in favour of panel members, by providing legitimacy and transparency; a diverse range of expertise and importantly, speed.

Sir Brian's view is that experts will be able to progress work in parallel in a way that co-determining panel members could not and that very importantly everything the expert groups will do will be public.

Sir Brian plans to discuss this approach with those who will most centrally participate in the Inquiry, particularly survivors and the groups representing them, and ask them whether, in the light of the proposed approach there remains any significant wish for him to be joined by a decision-making panel.

Sir Brian has asked me to defer a decision now on panel members until core participants have been appointed and have had the opportunity to consider the proposed approach.

I am aware that when my Rt Hon Friend, the Member for Ashford met many of those affected before Christmas last year there were many who supported the Chair sitting alongside other panel members. I have not lost sight of this, but I think it only right that I allow Sir Brian time to consult core participants. I therefore do not propose to appoint other panel members at this time, but will consider the issue once core participants have had an opportunity to look at Sir Brian's proposed approach.

Of course, Section 7 of the Inquiries Act 2005 allows me to make further appointments to the inquiry panel during the course of the inquiry with the consent of the Chair.

Speed is of the essence and I have asked Sir Brian to report back to me as quickly as possible, and I will then make my decision on panel members.

Many thousands of people from across the United Kingdom have been affected by this terrible tragedy. Sadly, a number of people affected have died since the Inquiry was announced.

One of the clearest messages from the Inquiry's consultation was the need for speed; in his letter to me Sir Brian noted that one respondent to the consultation had said "I really hope this Inquiry does not drag on as I would like to live long enough to see the result".

So it is extremely important that the Infected Blood Inquiry can complete its work as quickly as a thorough examination of the facts allows, and this is something that Sir Brian and his team are very aware of.

This Inquiry is a priority for Government, and I have assured Sir Brian that the Cabinet Office will provide all the resources and support the Inquiry needs to meet the demanding timescales that are essential in order to meet the expectations of the people affected by this tragedy, who have already waited so long for answers.

The Inquiry will have much to do over the coming months and I'm sure will waste no time in getting started.

The first stages of the Inquiry will be critical in obtaining evidence including witness statements from people who have been infected and affected. The Inquiry will use this evidence to help uncover what happened and why. It will hold its preliminary hearings in September at Church House, London, where core participants will be able to set out their priorities for the Inquiry.

My exchange of correspondence with Sir Brian and the full terms of reference have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and I commend this Statement to the House.

Statement to Parliament: PM Commons statement on June European Council: 2 July 2018

Introduction

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a Statement on last week's European Council.

The focus of this Council was on migration – and there were also important conclusions on security and defence.

The UK made a substantive contribution to both. And our continued co-operation after we have left the EU will be in everyone's interests, helping to ensure the long-term prosperity and security of the whole continent.

Migration

Mr Speaker, the consequences of mass uncontrolled immigration are one of the most serious challenges confronting Europe today.

The problem is felt especially acutely by countries on the Mediterranean and the Aegean that are often where migrants first arrive.

But this is a shared challenge, which affects us all.

More than anything the situation is a tragedy for the migrants themselves – thousands of whom have now lost their lives.

And at the core of all our efforts must be trying to prevent others from doing so.

The UK has long argued for a comprehensive, whole-of-route approach to tackling migration, and the Council agreed actions in each of the three areas that we have championed.

First, there will be more work upstream to reduce the number of people who undertake such perilous journeys in the first place.

This includes providing more opportunities in the countries where economic migrants are coming from. And helping ensure that refugees claim asylum in the first safe country they reach.

To support this, the UK will continue to invest for the long term in education, jobs and services – both in countries of origin and transit.

We are also committed to the second tranche of the EU's Facility for Refugees in Turkey, provided we can agree an appropriate mechanism for managing the funds.

And we made a further commitment at this Council of 15 million euros to support the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Both are delivering on the UK's call for more support for countries of transit and origin on the main routes into Europe – which is vital if we are to achieve the solutions we need to mass uncontrolled migration.

Alongside our economic development and humanitarian support, we have also been stepping up our communications effort upstream, so that more potential migrants understand the grave dangers of the journeys they might undertake – and the criminal people smugglers who are waiting to exploit them.

Second, there will be more work to distinguish between genuine refugees and illegal economic migrants.

This includes exploring the concept of regional disembarkation platforms. It was agreed at the Council that these could be established on a voluntary basis. Key to their success would be operating in full respect of international law and without creating a pull factor for further migration.

There is clearly much more work to be done with the support of UNHCR and the IOM to establish whether such proposals are practically and legally viable.

But we do need to be prepared to look again at new solutions given the gravity and intractability of this challenge.

Third, there will be further efforts to strengthen borders to help prevent illegal migration.

Last week I agreed with Prime Minister Tsipras of Greece that we would work towards a new action plan of UK support for Greek and European efforts, including a further Border Force patrol vessel to work with the Greek Coast Guard.

The UK now has law enforcement officers in 17 EU and African countries as part of our Organised Immigration Crime Task Force.

UK and French officers are also working together to build links between counter-trafficking agencies in Nigeria and Niger to strengthen this key border on the Central route.

And I am keen that we should replicate this model with other states.

Mr Speaker this is a challenge that faces the whole of our continent.

And as I said at the Council, we will continue playing our full part in working together with the EU to meet it – both now and after we have left.

For that is in our national interest – and in the interests of Europe as a whole.

##Security and defence

The same is true for security and defence – which is why at this Council I made the case for a new security partnership between the UK and the EU after we have left.

We have seen over recent weeks and months that Russia and other hostile state and non-state actors are trying to sow disunity, destabilise our democracies and test our resolve.

So we must work together to adapt our current defences to the new normal and take responsibility for protecting international norms and institutions.

In this context, I thanked our European partners for their solidarity in the wake of the appalling nerve agent attack in Salisbury.

The unprecedented co-ordinated expulsion of undeclared Russian intelligence officers demonstrated our unity in response to this kind of disregard for global norms and rules, which poses a threat to us all.

And at the March Council we agreed to do more to strengthen our resilience against such threats.

Since then the UK has led work with our European partners to propose a package of measures to step up our strategic communications against online disinformation, strengthen our capabilities against cybersecurity threats and further reduce the threat from hostile intelligence activities.

This Council agreed measures in all of these areas, including an Action Plan by December which must go even further in co-ordinating our response to the challenge of disinformation.

This effort to adapt our defences to protecting international norms should also enable us to respond robustly to events beyond Europe when they threaten our security interests.

So this Council welcomed the agreement reached by my Rt Hon Friend the Foreign Secretary in the Hague last week, enabling the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons use.

And the Council reinforced this by agreeing with President Macron and myself in calling for the adoption of a new EU sanctions regime to address the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

The Council also agreed to roll over current sanctions on Russia in light of its failure to fully implement the Minsk Agreements in Ukraine.

In the context of online threats from the full range of state and non-state actors, President Macron and I joined together in pushing for further action to tackle illegal content, especially terrorist content, online.

Finally on security, Mr Speaker, we looked ahead to the NATO Summit next week, which will be an important moment to demonstrate Western unity.

The NATO Secretary General joined this discussion at the Council where we agreed that Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security while complementing and reinforcing the activities of NATO.

Far too few of our allies are currently meeting the commitment to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence.

And at this Council, I urged them to do so, in order that, together, we can meet the full range of targets that challenge our interests.

Mr Speaker, for our own part, we have the biggest defence budget in Europe and the biggest in NATO, after the United States.

We are investing more than £179 billion on new equipment. That means, among other items, new aircraft carriers and submarines for the Navy, new cutting edge F35B aircraft for the RAF and new Ajax armoured vehicles for the Army.

We are leading throughout NATO – whether that is deployed forces in the Mediterranean, air policing in Eastern Europe or our troops providing an enhanced forward presence in Estonia.

And we are operating with our allies to defend our interests all over the world.

In April, RAF aircraft took action to degrade the Syrian Regime's chemical weapons capability and deter their future use.

Over 1000 personnel are deployed in the fight against Daesh – and we are the second largest contributor to the coalition air campaign in Iraq and Syria.

In Africa, UK troops have built and now operate a hospital in South Sudan supporting the UN mission there; they are training security forces in Nigeria, and our Chinook helicopters are deploying to Mali in support of the French this week.

Two Royal Navy vessels are deployed in Asia in support of sanctions enforcement on North Korea, working closely with the US, Japan and others – with another to follow, the first Royal Navy deployments to the Pacific since 2013.

Our submarines are silently patrolling the seas giving us a nuclear deterrent every minute of every hour, as they have done for 50 years.

Our Modernising Defence Programme will ensure that our capabilities remain as potent in countering the threats of tomorrow as they are in keeping us safe today.

We are the leading military power in Europe with the capabilities to protect our people, defend our interests, and project our values, supporting the global rules based system.

And the government that I lead will ensure that is exactly how we remain.

Brexit

Turning to Brexit, Mr Speaker, I updated my fellow leaders on the negotiations – and the 27 other Member States welcomed the further progress that had been made on the Withdrawal Agreement.

With the exception of the Protocol relating to Northern Ireland, we now have agreement or are close to doing so.

There remain some real differences between us and the European Commission on Northern Ireland. So Mr Speaker, on the Protocol on Northern Ireland, I want to be very clear. We have put forward proposals, and will produce further proposals, so that if a temporary backstop is needed there will be no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

We are absolutely committed to the avoidance of such a border. And we are equally committed to the avoidance of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland is an integral part of our country and we will never accept the imposition of a border within our United Kingdom.

We all agreed that we must now urgently intensify and accelerate the pace of negotiations on our future relationship.

I warned EU leaders that I do not think this Parliament will approve the Withdrawal Agreement in the autumn unless we have clarity about our future relationship alongside it.

I will hold a meeting of the Cabinet at Chequers on Friday and we will publish our White Paper on the future partnership with the EU next week.

The EU and its Member States will want to consider our proposals seriously. We both need to show flexibility to build the deep relationship after we have left that is in the interests of both our peoples.

Our White Paper will set out detailed proposals for a sustainable and close future relationship between the UK and the EU – a partnership that means that the UK will leave the Single Market and Customs Union, but a partnership which supports our shared prosperity and security.

It will mark an important step in delivering the decision of the British people. And I commend this Statement to the House.