

MPs in trouble

This Parliament has seen a surge of cases against MPs. There are now 18 MPs sitting as Independents because their parties no longer support them. 8 were Conservatives, 7 were Labour, 1 was SNP, 1 was DUP and 1 was Plaid. Looked at as percentage of MPs elected that means that 25% of Plaid MPs, 12.5% of DUP, 3% of Labour and 2% of SNP and Conservative MPs elected are currently suspended.

There are many differences in why they lost the whip. A few are on suspicion of criminal activity. Some said inappropriate things. Some behaved badly in their private lives though did not break the law. Some we are not allowed to know why Labour suspended them. Matt Hancock undertook a tv programme in the jungle.

The process for dealing with these very varied cases serves neither the public nor the MPs well. It is wrong for the public if an MP has broken the law or behaved badly but stays on for many months pending some action, in some cases barred from coming to the House. . It is wrong for the MP if it takes many months for Parliament to conclude the accusation was false. Whilst these matters deserve proper investigation it is in everyone's interest that decisions are speeded up.

Where the argument is over something the MP said or over actions that are not criminal the best judges are the electors at the next election. Where the accusations are about serious crimes the police and CPS are the judges of whether to bring a prosecution.