

Valerie Vaz responds to the Gemma White QC report

Valerie Vaz MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, responding to the publication of The Bullying and Harassment of Members of Parliament Staff report led by Gemma White QC, said:

“There is no place for sexual harassment or bullying in any workplace. The accounts it contains are shocking and totally unacceptable.

“The House of Commons has introduced an independent complaints process to deal with cases of bullying and sexual harassment under the supervision of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. Labour has supported the scheme being accessible to those with historic complaints as well as those no longer working in Parliament.

“It is clear that more must be done to ensure that the culture of Parliament is one where those with complaints feel supported and able to challenge those in a position of power and authority.

“There is also a clear role for political parties which do not directly employ Members of Parliament’s staff, but have a pastoral care role. That is why in 2014 Labour MPs changed their standing orders to allow staff to bring cases through the Parliamentary Labour Party as well as being able to access the party’s complaints procedure.

“Labour thanks Gemma White QC for her report and will look seriously at the detail of the recommendations. We will continue to work on a cross-party basis to make parliament a modern workplace with zero tolerance of any form of bullying or harassment.

“Labour calls on the government to ensure the necessary time in the House of Commons to debate and implement changes to the independent complaints process before the summer recess.”