



The Select Committee on Standards

More information on the Select Committee on Standards and its membership is available at <http://www.parliament.uk/standards/>

Other 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
 - Information about complaints rectified or not upheld
- <http://www.parliament.uk/pcs/>

The Publications section of the Committee on Standards webpages, for:

- The Committee's reports and the Commissioner's memoranda on complaints she has investigated:
- <http://www.parliament.uk/standards/>

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

Electoral Commission:
www.electoralcommission.gov.uk

Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards:

Address

House of Commons,
London SW1A 0AA

Tel

020 7219 8431

E-mail

standardscommissioner@parliament.uk

Website

www.parliament.uk/pcs

Complaining about a Member of Parliament



The Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards looks into complaints that an MP has broken the Code of Conduct and the Rules for MPs. These include rules about:

- The registration and declaration of financial interests (eg paid employment, shareholdings, gifts, hospitality, land and property)
- The use of parliamentary facilities, or of parliamentary expenses before the 2010 General Election
- Advocacy or lobbying where the MP has a financial interest.

The Commissioner cannot look into complaints about:

- Policy matters
- The way an MP has handled an individual case or problem
- An MP's views or opinions
- The funding of political parties, which are matters for the Electoral Commission
- Breaches of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, which are matters for the Prime Minister
- An MP's private and personal life
- Criminal offences, which are normally a matter for the police.

If your complaint is about MPs' use of expenses since the 2010 General Election, please send it to the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) at: compliance@parliamentarystandards.org.uk.

If your complaint is about the funding of political parties, please send it to the Electoral Commission at: pof@electoralcommission.org.uk.

The Commissioner cannot investigate a complaint unless you provide sufficient evidence to justify an inquiry.

What to do if you want 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. The address is on the back page of this leaflet. The Commissioner will look at emails, but she must receive your complaint in hard copy, signed and showing your name and address, before she can accept it for investigation.

What happens next

The Commissioner will tell you, usually within five working days, whether she will investigate your complaint.

If the Commissioner accepts your complaint, she will send your letter and your evidence to the MP. She will ask the MP, and anyone else who she thinks may be able to help, for information. She usually conducts her investigation in writing but she may interview the MP and others if necessary. The Commissioner's inquiries are confidential and protected by parliamentary privilege. She does not give progress reports but lists on her website the names of MPs she is investigating.

The end of the process

The Commissioner can decide at any time that the evidence does not support your complaint. If so, she will write to let you know. She will publish her letter and the evidence on her webpages.

In some cases, if the Commissioner finds that the MP has broken the rules of the House, and the MP accepts this, the Commissioner may resolve the complaint informally. This is called the "rectification procedure". The MP must make an apology and sometimes a repayment. The Commissioner will then write to let you know. She will publish her letter and the evidence on her webpages.

In other cases the Commissioner will report the facts and her conclusions to the Committee on Standards. She will let you know just before she does this.

The Committee on Standards is made up of MPs and people from outside the House of Commons. It will reach its own conclusions on whether the MP has broken the rules of the House. It can recommend a range of penalties to the House. The Committee will then publish its own report on the complaint, together with the Commissioner's findings and the evidence she has received. You can collect a copy of the Committee's report just before publication or ask for it to be sent to you.