



Lord True CBE
Minister of State

Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our reference: MC2022/05738

7th April 2022

Dear George

Thank you for your email of the 17th of March on behalf of your constituents, regarding concerns about the roles of Members of Parliament and the proposed reform to the MPs Code of Conduct. I am responding as Minister of State at the Cabinet Office.

Your constituents raise the issue of MPs having second jobs. The Government firmly believes that an MP's primary job is and must be to serve their constituents and represent their interests in Parliament.

While the House has historically benefited from Members having outside experience, this should compliment rather than take precedence over their parliamentary role as an elected Member. That is why the amendment brought forward by the Government (which the House approved on 17 November 2021) supported the introduction of "reasonable limits" on Members undertaking outside work. The Government also remains firmly of the view that, as the Committee on Standards in Public Life recommended in 2018, Members should be banned from accepting any paid work to provide services as a parliamentary strategist, adviser or consultant.

The Government believes that these changes address concerns around both paid advocacy and MPs properly serving their constituents and representing their interests in Parliament. This will strengthen the parliamentary system and ensure MPs always prioritise their parliamentary work.

In addition, your constituents mention the issue of MPs salaries and funding. The Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA) is responsible for the regulation and administration of salaries and financial support for Members of Parliament. This includes office, staffing, accommodation and travel costs incurred in the performance of their parliamentary duties. MPs' pay, pensions and expenses - and that of their staff are also set

and administered by IPSA, which is independent of Parliament and the Government. This means that the amount that MPs are paid is not a matter determined by the Government.

Further information, including on MPs salaries, and individual staffing and business costs, is available on IPSA's website: <https://www.theipsa.org.uk/>

Lastly, in relation to mention of the proposed Bill relating to second jobs. Any reform to the MPs Code of Conduct is delivered through changes to the Code which are approved by motions in Parliament and not by legislation.

Ultimately, the regulation of the amount of time that Members spend on outside work is a matter for the whole House to consider on a cross-party basis. The Government awaits the recommendations of the Committee on Standards.

I hope this helps your constituents understand the Government's position on the role of MPs and the way in which, in accordance with the relevant legislation, MPs salaries and funding are regulated.

Thank you, once again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas Peacock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and 'P'.

Lord True CBE