

**Mr Alex Burghart MP**  
**Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster**

Sent via email

9th January 2026

Dear Mr Burghart

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: SHAREHOLDING IN LOBBYING FIRMS**

Thank you for your letter dated 24th December 2025 in which you raise concerns about conflicts of interest arising from public office-holders retaining shareholdings in lobbying firms.

Lobbying is an important and legitimate aspect of public life in a liberal democracy, but it undermines trust in the integrity of our democracy when it is associated with undue influence and secrecy. It is important that there are appropriate rules and guidance in place to ensure that lobbying is transparent to the public and that any conflicts of interest are declared and managed appropriately. This is an area that the Committee for Standards in Public Life (CSPL), our predecessor, made recommendations on in its 2021 report: 'Upholding Standards in Public Life'. This included a recommendation for a more thorough and rigorous compliance function in government.<sup>1</sup> Many of those recommendations overlapped or aligned with those of the Boardman report.

We stand by the recommendations on lobbying in the CSPL report and were pleased to see some of these adopted. However, several were not adopted at the time, and others were committed to but we have not seen sufficient progress made on them.

<sup>1</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/617c02fae90e07198334652d/Upholding\\_Standards\\_in\\_Public\\_Life\\_-\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/617c02fae90e07198334652d/Upholding_Standards_in_Public_Life_-_Web_Accessible.pdf)

We continue to push for these commitments to be met. We note that the previous Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists, Harry Rich, also made some clear and strong recommendations on transparent lobbying, including in the area of Special Advisers and Civil Servants, in his final evidence session to PACAC, which we support.

We will continue to look at the rules around lobbying, including the issues that you raise. I anticipate transparency around lobbying, as an ongoing issue, will feature in my first annual report to the Prime Minister, as EIC Chair, on the health of standards in public life later this year.

We will place a copy of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Doug Chalmers', with a stylized, flowing script.

Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE  
Chair, Ethics and Integrity Commission