

CALUM MILLER MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE
Chair of the Ethics and Integrity Commission
Ethics and Integrity Commission
Room G/07
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

27 October 2025

Dear Mr Chalmers,

I would like to thank you for your work on the Committee on Standards in Public Life and congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the new Ethics and Integrity Commission. This strengthened body is welcome. Protecting and renewing standards in public life remains critical to the success of our democracy, and I look forward to supporting you in that work.

The Commission's inauguration earlier this month could not be more timely. Around the world, we are witnessing the erosion of public standards and trust in public institutions.

Nowhere is this perhaps clearer than in the United States, where President Trump's willingness to exercise power to advance his and his associates' commercial interests is transforming US politics into a system of clientelism.

We have a proud tradition in Britain of rejecting that form of patronage-based politics. Though that tradition has been tested in recent years, I believe that - as a country - we remain committed to those core values of transparency and accountability which underpin our institutions - a view reaffirmed by this Commission's establishment.

We cannot consider ourselves immune, however, to the insidious creep of cronyism from abroad. Rather, we must reflect honestly on - and work to address - the gaps which exist in our current systems. That is the only way we can future-proof our public bodies in the face of global influences which seek to infect our politics.

The Commission has an essential role to play in promoting this kind of robust transparency. Its remit to "examine any systems in place to uphold ethical standards across public life in England" offers an expansive opportunity to strengthen and reinforce our institutions.

I believe that part of that work must include a rapid examination of the systems in place to protect against UK Ministers or officials actively advocating for or advancing the personal, financial interests of foreign leaders.

There appears to be an alarming gap at the heart of our standards framework on this critical point. The Ministerial and Civil Service codes guard against UK Ministers and officials using public resources or their public position to pursue their personal interests. The Bribery Act prevents British businesses offering bribes to corrupt overseas Ministers or officials in favour of their companies. The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme is intended to provide transparency on efforts by foreign agents to influence UK Ministers or officials. Yet there is no framework to stop UK Ministers and officials acting in their public capacities to influence overseas Ministers or officials by appealing to their personal interests.

I was shocked in particular by reports in April that officials at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport were potentially lobbying the Royal & Ancient, the body behind golf's Open Championship, to host the championship at Donald Trump's Turnberry course in Ayrshire.

Will the Commission consider an examination of the systems in place to protect against these forms of patronage, and what legislative steps may be required to address critical gaps in those protections?

Specifically, will the Commission open an inquiry into the actions of Ministers and officials in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its agencies to ascertain whether or not they did, in fact, use public resources to lobby on behalf of Donald Trump's personal corporate interests?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Calum Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Calum Miller MP
Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs