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THE PRIME MINISTER

11 March 2026

Dear Doug,

Last month, you will have seen the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister announce to Parliament details on further action that the Government will take to rebuild trust in public life, in light of the revelations of the depth and extent of Peter Mandelson's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein.

While the specifics of that case are now a matter for the Police, this scandal has rightfully led many to reflect on our systems, infrastructure, and processes for upholding standards more broadly.

We have, of course, already taken action in this area. We strengthened the powers of the Independent Adviser, introduced financial sanctions for breaches of the Ministerial Code, reformed severance payments, and tightened rules around gifts and hospitality with more frequent transparency declarations. We are also progressing the Duty of Candour Bill to ensure the truth is never inappropriately concealed by the state again.

In Parliament, the Hereditary Peers Bill brings much needed reform to the House of Lords, further legislation will enable the removal of peerages from disgraced peers, and the Government has asked the Lords Conduct Committee to review the Code of Conduct. The Government has also committed to the principle that second jobs for MPs should be banned with very limited exceptions, such as maintaining a professional qualification, and is engaging with the Standards Committee to introduce reforms to this effect.

Last month also saw the introduction of the Representation of the People Bill which includes landmark changes to boost transparency and accountability in politics via political finance reforms. The forthcoming recommendations from the Rycroft Review into foreign financial interference will enable us, via any amendments to the Bill, to introduce stronger safeguards against foreign interference in our elections.

I know that in many of these areas - in particular the role of the Independent Adviser and the Representation of the People Bill- we are implementing recommendations put forward by your predecessors at the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

As the Chief Secretary said, however, we can still do more and I believe that we should continue to go further to strengthen standards in public life. In particular, we should look again at how ministers declare and publish their financial interests; at how the government ensures transparency around lobbying; and at how we ensure the rules that govern post employment activity are fit for purpose, in respect of managing potentially improper access to, and influence within, government.

I am therefore asking the EIC to review these important matters, and a terms of reference for such a review is below. The review should cover:

- *Whether the current arrangements for the declaration and publication of financial interests for Ministers and senior government officials are sufficient and whether in the future, regular published financial disclosure forms or other additional transparency should be used.*
- *Whether the current arrangements for transparency around lobbying are sufficient, including the government's publication of monthly and quarterly integrity data; and the Register of Consultant Lobbying.*
- *Whether the current Business Appointment Rules are sufficient, in particular in respect of managing potentially improper access to, and influence within, government.*

I am sure you will engage with Parliament and office-holders as appropriate to undertake this important work.

I look forward to hearing from you.

All best wishes,



## REVIEW INTO LOBBYING, DISCLOSURE AND ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT

### *Terms of Reference*

#### *Purpose*

*It is recognised that the vast majority of public servants, whether officials or elected members, come to serve the public, not themselves.*

*However, whilst the current rules work in the majority of cases, recent events have shown that bad actors can nonetheless evade them. Issues raised include privileged access to senior decision makers, transparency around lobbying, and whether the current system of government disclosures reveals enough about who is engaging with government, on what basis, and for what purpose.*

*We must be able to ensure that our standards system guarantees the highest standards in public life, while ensuring there are consequences when these standards are not upheld.*

#### *Scope*

*The review will therefore look at the following areas:*

- Whether the current arrangements for the declaration and publication of financial interests for Ministers and senior government officials are sufficient and whether in the future, regular published financial disclosure forms or other additional transparency should be used.*
- Whether the current arrangements for transparency around lobbying are sufficient, including the government's publication of monthly and quarterly integrity data; and the Register of Consultant Lobbying.*
- Whether the current Business Appointment Rules are sufficient, in particular in respect of managing potentially improper access to, and influence within, government.*

#### *Approach*

*In undertaking this review it will be important to seek views from Parliamentarians including relevant Committee chairs, members of the public and other stakeholders, including the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards, the First Civil Service Commissioner and the Registrar for Consultant Lobbyists.*

### ***Timings***

*The review will report to the Prime Minister and the Chief Secretary to the Prime Minister by May 2026. The Government will publish the Review's findings and present the Government's response to Parliament in due course thereafter*