



Independent Adviser on Ministers' Interests
The Rt Hon Lord Geidt

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister

10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

[by email]

15 June 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

I appeared before the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee in Parliament yesterday. I was glad for the opportunity to give an account of the recent changes to the Ministerial Code, to the Terms of Reference of the Independent Adviser, and to the support for the office of the Independent Adviser.

I was asked at length about my recent Annual Report. I alluded to my frustration, as made clear in my Preface, that you had not made any public reference to your own conduct under the Ministerial Code in the period since inquiries were underway. This would be especially important in the event that the Metropolitan Police found against you, which they did, and/or that Sue Gray's report included criticism of behaviour within the scope of the Ministerial Code, which it did.

Your letter in response to my Annual Report was welcome. It addressed the absence of comment by you about your obligations under that Ministerial Code up until that point. You explained that, by paying a Fixed Term Penalty, you had not breached the Ministerial Code. The letter did not, however, address specifically the criticism in Sue Gray's report about your adherence to the Nolan Principles (on leadership, in particular). Neither did the letter make mention that, despite being repeatedly questioned in the House of Commons about your obligations under the Ministerial Code (after paying a Fixed Penalty Notice), your responses again made no reference to it.

I reported to the Select Committee yesterday that I was satisfied that you had responded to my Annual Report to explain your position. I am disappointed, however, that the account you gave was not fuller, as noted above. Moreover, I regret the reference to 'miscommunication' between our offices, with the implication that I was somehow responsible for you not being fully aware of my concerns. These inconsistencies and deficiencies notwithstanding, I believed that it was possible to continue credibly as Independent Adviser, albeit by a very small margin.

This week, however, I was tasked to offer a view about the Government's intention to consider measures which risk a deliberate and purposeful breach of the Ministerial Code. This request has placed me in an impossible and odious position. My informal response on Monday was that you and any other Minister should justify openly your position vis-à-vis the Code in such circumstances. However, the idea that a Prime Minister might to any degree be in the business of deliberately breaching his own Code is an affront. A deliberate breach, or even an intention to do so, would be to

suspend the provisions of the Code to suit a political end. This would make a mockery not only of respect for the Code but licence the suspension of its provisions in governing the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers. I can have no part in this.

Because of my obligation as a witness in Parliament, this is the first opportunity I have had to act on the Government's intentions. I therefore resign from this appointment with immediate effect.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Geidt', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon Lord Geidt
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