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Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP

Deputy Leader, Shadow First Secretary of State,

Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and

Shadow Secretary of State for the Future of Work

By email

28 June 2022

Dear Angela,

Thank you for your letter of 23 June 2022.

You asked if the Committee on Standards in Public Life would investigate a potential conflict of interest issue concerning reports that the Prime Minister lobbied for a job for Carrie Johnson (then Carrie Symonds) in 2018.

You rightly note that the Committee does not have a remit to investigate individual cases. You suggest, however, that given the resignation of Lord Geidt as Independent Adviser on Ministers’ interests, which leaves a vacancy in that role, and the fact that according to media reports there may be a conflict of interest for the Cabinet Secretary investigating the issue, such an investigation might fall to the Committee on Standards in Public Life. I note that the Cabinet Secretary has written to you about media allegations that he approached the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge‘s Royal Foundation in 2020 about a position for Carrie Johnson (then Carrie Symonds).

Our remit is very clear. The Committee is not a regulator and does not have investigatory powers. We advise on ethical standards across public life by conducting inquiries, collecting evidence to assess institutions, policies and practices and making recommendations to the Prime Minister where appropriate. As a public body it would be inappropriate for us to act beyond our remit.

It is imperative that an Independent Adviser on Ministers’ Interests is appointed, even if temporarily, whilst proposals for the role are developed. As we said in our blog published on 16 June, at a time of heightened concern about standards in public life, any change to the oversight of ministerial behaviour must be stronger, not weaker, than we have now. This is essential to provide public confidence and to provide Ministers with advice on the administration of the Ministerial Code and on upholding the Nolan Principles.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister; the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; the Paymaster General; the Cabinet Secretary; and Director General, Propriety and Ethics, Cabinet Office.

We will also publish a copy of this letter on our website.

Yours sincerely



**Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL**

**Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life**