

1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Tel: 020 7271 2948

E-mail: public@public-standards.gov.uk

Claire Bassett
Chief Executive
Electoral Commission
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

13 December 2017

Dear Claire Bassett,

Intimidation in Public Life: A Review by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

I enclose a copy of the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report, Intimidation in Public Life, which was published today.

The increasing prevalence of intimidation in our public life, including of Parliamentary candidates at elections, should concern everyone who cares about our democracy. There has been persistent, vile and shocking intimidatory behaviour, and it is clear that much of this is targeted at certain groups.

We present a full body of evidence showing the extent and seriousness of the problem. We have found intimidation takes place across the political spectrum, both in terms of those engaging in intimidation and those receiving it.

Our report supports calls that the imprints currently required for print material promoting a political party should also be extended to online material, including social media, and references the need to update electoral law.

Following the Commission's evidence to the review, and careful consideration by the Committee, we also recommend that the government consult on a new electoral offence, of intimidating Parliamentary candidates or party campaigners. We recommend that any offence would not make any behaviour illegal which is currently legal, but would recognise the seriousness of the threat that intimidation poses to the electoral process, and would result in more appropriate sanctions. We hope that the Commission would play a full role in any consultation.

Addressing this important issue in our public life will require a committed and concerned approach from a number of individuals and organisations. We will be monitoring progress on the implementation of our recommendations, and will keep in touch with you over the coming months in that regard. Determined action on the part of all those involved is required, as the cost to our democracy of not engaging constructively to resolve these issues is too high.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Bew
Chair

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