

Seventh Report of the Committee on  
Standards in Public Life

*Chairman: Lord Neill of Bladen QC*

*Standards of Conduct  
in the House of Lords*

## THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

### **Selflessness**

*Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.*

### **Integrity**

*Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.*

### **Objectivity**

*In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.*

### **Accountability**

*Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.*

### **Openness**

*Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.*

### **Honesty**

*Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.*

### **Leadership**

*Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.*

## Summary and List of Recommendations and Observations

### SUMMARY

#### Introduction

1. The Committee on Standards in Public Life was set up in October 1994 by the then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon John Major MP, to enquire into growing public concern about standards in public life.<sup>1</sup>
2. One of the immediate causes of concern was the ‘cash for questions’ scandal involving a small number of Members of Parliament. As a result, in its first enquiry, the Committee considered the regulatory regime in the House of Commons in some detail and made recommendations for changes to the content of the Commons’ conduct rules and to their enforcement.<sup>2</sup>
3. The Committee had intended that its first enquiry should also include the House of Lords but decided to defer consideration until the Griffiths Committee (appointed by the House of Lords in December 1994)<sup>3</sup> had completed its work on the declaration and registration of interests in the House of Lords.<sup>4</sup> The Griffiths Committee reported in July 1995. In the event, our Committee postponed its consideration of the House of Lords and moved on to other pressing areas of study.<sup>5</sup>
4. Early in 2000, the Committee returned to a study of the House of Lords. It was made clear at the outset of the enquiry that that decision was not prompted by any scandal or crisis. The Committee has long been committed to addressing issues relating to standards of conduct in the House of Lords. Given the compositional changes brought about by the House of Lords Act 1999 (which excluded all but 92 hereditary peers from the House of Lords), the appointment of the House of Lords Appointments Commission (which will make recommendations for non-party-political life peerages) and the increasing public interest in the Lords, the Committee took the view that the year 2000 was an appropriate time to fulfil that commitment.

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<sup>1</sup> The Terms of Reference of the Committee are set out on the inside back cover of this summary.

<sup>2</sup> Committee on Standards in Public Life, *First Report*, Cm 2580 (1995), referred to hereafter as ‘the First Report’.

<sup>3</sup> The Griffiths Committee, chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Griffiths, was a sub-committee of the Select Committee on Procedure of the House.

<sup>4</sup> *Third Report of the Select Committee on Procedure of the House*, HL Paper 90 (1994-95), referred to hereafter as ‘the Griffiths Report’.

<sup>5</sup> Such as local public spending bodies, local government and the funding of political parties.

## The Seven Principles of Public Life

5. The two key aims of the Committee's First Report were "*to rebuild public confidence*" in holders of public office and "*to restore some clarity and direction wherever moral uncertainty had crept in*".<sup>6</sup> To assist in achieving these aims, the Committee drew up the Seven Principles of Public Life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.<sup>7</sup> These Seven Principles have come to be regarded as the touchstone for ethical standards across the public sector generally and have informed every aspect of the thinking of the Committee.

6. In framing its recommendations, therefore, in relation to the House of Lords, the Committee has relied extensively on the Seven Principles. It has also had regard to the importance of 'proportionality': that is, that a recommended course of action should be proportionate to the problem or deficiency which it seeks to remedy.

## Present Arrangements Relating to Members' Interests in the House of Lords

7. Issues relating to the declaration and registration of members' interests<sup>8</sup> in the House of Lords were last considered in 1995 by the Griffiths Committee. The recommendations of that Committee were, like previous guidance to members of the House of Lords, based on the guiding principles that:

1. *Lords should act always on their personal honour; and*
2. *Lords should never accept any financial inducement as an incentive or reward for exercising parliamentary influence.*

8. The Griffiths Committee sought to address, in particular, concerns arising from the growth of parliamentary consultancies and of parliamentary lobbying. Its principal recommendation was that a register of interests, consisting of three categories, should be established. The first two categories, covering parliamentary consultancies (or similar arrangements) (category (1)) and financial interests in businesses involved in parliamentary lobbying (category (2)), were to be mandatory. The third category, covering "*other particulars relating to matters which Lords consider may affect the public perception of the way they discharge their parliamentary duties*" (category (3)), was to be discretionary. Members who registered interests in either the first or second (mandatory) categories would be subject to strict limits on how they could participate in parliamentary proceedings.

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<sup>6</sup> First Report, p 16, para 7.

<sup>7</sup> The Seven Principles of Public Life are set out in full on the inside front cover of this summary.

<sup>8</sup> In the present context, by 'registration' we mean the disclosure of interests in the House of Lords Register of Interests, and by 'declaration' we mean the disclosure of interests in the course of parliamentary proceedings and other circumstances where, in a communication, members of the House of Lords are using their influence as members of the House.

**9.** In contrast to the relatively recent introduction of the Register, the practice in relation to the declaration of interests is based on long-standing custom. Originally the rule was that members with a direct pecuniary interest in a subject being debated in the House should declare it. The rule was extended in 1990, on the recommendation of the Procedure Committee of the House of Lords, to include indirect and non-pecuniary interests as well.<sup>9</sup> The current guidance on declaration, based on the recommendations of the Griffiths Committee, has retained the broad scope of the declaration rules.<sup>10</sup>

**10.** The Griffiths Committee recommendations were embodied in Resolutions of the House of Lords passed on 7 November 1995. They remain in effect and are set out in **Appendix A** to this summary.

**11.** To date, there have been no allegations of failure by any member of the House to comply with the rules on declaration or registration. If such an allegation were made, however, the matter would be investigated by the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests.<sup>11</sup> If the Sub-Committee were satisfied that there was a *prima facie* case, then it would be further investigated. The conclusions of the Sub-Committee would be reported, through the Committee for Privileges, to the House. The 1995 Resolutions require that, in considering any allegation of failure to comply with the rules on declaration and registration, the Sub-Committee should include three Lords of Appeal.

**12.** As to the sanctions currently available to the House, in the event of a complaint being upheld, although in theory at least the House may have power to imprison and to fine, neither power has been exercised in recent years and it is questionable whether either could or would be invoked today. It is also very doubtful whether the House has power to suspend or expel a member.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

**13.** The Committee's main conclusions are briefly summarised below. They are followed by a list of recommendations.

### A Code of Conduct

**14.** The test of personal honour, the first of the guiding principles governing the declaration of interests in the House of Lords (see paragraph 7 above), is held to be central to the ethos in the House of Lords. Although appealing in its simplicity, the Committee has considered whether the test could usefully be amplified by an explicit statement of key principles underpinning personal honour.

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<sup>9</sup> *Second Report from the Procedure Committee*, HL Paper 50 (1989-90). In making this recommendation, the Committee followed closely the recommendation of the 1974 report of the Sub-Committee on Registration of Interests (unpublished).

<sup>10</sup> See *Companion to the Standing Orders and Guide to the Proceedings of the House of Lords* (2000), p 68, para 4.64.

<sup>11</sup> A sub-committee of the Committee for Privileges.

**15.** In considering the arguments, the Committee took into account the fact that the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament, the Assemblies in Wales and Northern Ireland have all adopted codes of conduct for their members. In the business sector, the Hampel Committee (on Corporate Governance),<sup>12</sup> which reported in January 1998, recommended a set of principles and a code of practice, building on the work of the Cadbury<sup>13</sup> and Greenbury Reports.<sup>14</sup> Similar developments have taken place in the professions.

**16.** The Committee has concluded that the House of Lords should adopt a short Code of Conduct which would incorporate the Seven Principles of Public Life, the two guiding principles set out in the 1995 Resolution and principles in relation to the declaration and registration of interests (**Recommendations 1, 2 and 3**).

### Declaration and registration of interests

**17.** Rules governing the declaration and registration of personal interests are central to any regulatory system designed to ensure high standards of propriety. They have a direct bearing on the practical implementation of the Seven Principles of Public Life, in particular the principles of openness and honesty.

**18.** The Committee considered the present guidance on **declaration** of interests and took the view that it was both rigorous and effective. It has therefore made no recommendation for change to the guidance on declaration of interests.

**19.** As regards **registration** of interests, in particular the discretionary element (category (3)) of the Register, the Committee considered the arguments for and against maintaining its voluntary status and has concluded that the balance is strongly in favour of a fully mandatory register (**Recommendation 4**). That conclusion was based principally on the ground that the House of Lords, as a vital institution in public life (and one in which the public at large and the media are likely to show a growing interest), should adopt rules requiring greater transparency in order to maintain public confidence outside the House that the highest standards of conduct are being upheld within.

**20.** As to the general test governing the content of category (3) of the Register, the Committee fully endorses the focus on "*public perception*" but believes that it is, as presently phrased, too subjective. The Committee has, therefore, recommended that the present test should be amended so that it is an objective test. If this proposal is accepted, the language applicable to category (3) would require the registration of any interest which "*may reasonably be thought to affect the public perception of the way in which [a member] discharges their parliamentary duties*" (**Recommendation 5**).

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<sup>12</sup> Chaired by Sir Ronald Hampel.

<sup>13</sup> *Report of the Committee on the Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance* (Cadbury Committee, December 1992).

<sup>14</sup> *Report of the Study group on Directors' Remuneration* (Greenbury Group, July 1995).

**21.** The evidence the Committee received revealed a degree of uncertainty amongst members of the Lords about the scope of category (3), and, in particular, whether it covers non-financial as well as financial interests. On the premise that the purpose of the Register is to enable members, first, to disclose personal interests which might be perceived as influential and, second, to demonstrate their area of expertise, the Committee has concluded that category (3) should be broadly conceived to include both financial and non-financial interests (**Recommendation 6**).

**22.** The Committee has also recommended that the general test governing category (3) should be supplemented by brief written guidance which should include a list of 'clearly registrable' interests, that is, those interests which, in the view of the House, should always be registered (**Recommendation 7**). Although the list would be a matter for the House of Lords itself to devise in detail, the Committee would expect such a list to include all significant financial interests<sup>15</sup> and most offices held in voluntary organisations. The Committee would not expect hospitality and gifts received by a peer for a reason unconnected with his or her membership of the House normally to be registered. Nor does the Committee recommend that peers should have to disclose the amount of remuneration derived from financial interests registrable under category (3) (**Recommendation 8**).

**23.** The Committee considered whether its proposals in relation to making category (3) of the Register mandatory should apply to all members of the House without exception. It considered, in particular, whether the Lords of Appeal should be exempted on the grounds that rules relating to them in their capacity as parliamentarians could possibly have some bearing on their activities as members of the judiciary and have a wider implication for the judiciary as a whole. The Committee has concluded that there should be no exemptions from a mandatory requirement to register personal interests (**Recommendation 9**).

### Opposition spokesmen and women

**24.** The Committee considered whether there should be specific parliamentary rules – akin to those contained in the Ministerial Code – governing opposition spokesmen and women and their financial interests.<sup>16</sup> The Committee has concluded against such a change. The decision was based on two points: first, that opposition spokesmen and women could be distinguished from Ministers on the grounds that, unlike Ministers, they do not exercise executive powers; and, secondly, the proposed change could deter many able men and women from joining the front benches (**Recommendation 10**).

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<sup>15</sup> For example, remunerated directorships, remunerated employment, shareholdings amounting to a controlling interest or other significant shareholdings, and substantial land holdings.

<sup>16</sup> The Ministerial Code requires Ministers to be guided by a general principle that "they should either dispose of any financial interest giving rise to [an] actual or perceived conflict [of interest] or take alternative steps to prevent it": (*Ministerial Code: A Code of Conduct and Guidance on Procedures for Ministers* (July 1997), p 38, para 117).

## Lobbying and the ban on paid advocacy

**25.** The House of Lords has long endorsed a ban on paid advocacy. The ban was reformulated as one of the principles underpinning the guidance contained in the 1995 Resolution on the declaration and registration of interests (see paragraph 7 above) and given practical effect by the introduction (in 1995) of the mandatory categories (1) and (2) of the Register. Under the present guidance, members who have an interest registered in either category are advised that they "*should not speak, vote, lobby or otherwise take advantage of their position as members of the House on behalf of their clients*".

**26.** Category (1) of the Register applies to parliamentary consultancies and similar arrangements. Although the Committee has concluded against banning such consultancies (**Recommendation 11**), it has recommended some tightening up of the present guidance in order to ensure public confidence in the propriety of parliamentary consultancies. In particular, the Committee recommends, first, that peers who have an agreement registrable under category (1) should deposit a copy of the agreement with the Registrar of Lords' Interests (**Recommendation 14**), and, secondly, agreements and details as to the remuneration derived from parliamentary services under category (1) should be made available for public inspection (**Recommendation 15**).

**27.** As regards category (2) of the Register, which applies to financial interests in businesses involved in parliamentary lobbying on behalf of clients, the Committee has addressed two issues. First, there appeared from the evidence to be different views about the scope of category (2) and, in particular, whether the guidance prevented a member with a relevant interest from participating in parliamentary proceedings on issues relating to **any** client of the business or only those issues which related to a client with which the member had a **direct** professional relationship. The Committee has recommended that the guidance should make clear that the latter is the case (**Recommendation 13**).

**28.** Secondly, it appeared also that category (2) tended to be treated as if it applied only to those members with financial interests in commercial lobbying businesses, although other types of professional firms (for example, law, accountancy and management consultancy firms) might also be involved in parliamentary lobbying. The Committee has recommended that the guidance should make clear that category (2) applies to **all** businesses involved in parliamentary lobbying on behalf of clients and not simply lobbying firms (**Recommendation 12**).

## Compliance

**29.** The Committee considered the issue of compliance in terms of the following elements: (1) induction procedures to explain the conduct rules; (2) the provision of authoritative advice on their application; (3) machinery for the investigation of alleged breaches; (4) a fair adjudication and appeals procedure, and (5) the availability, when appropriate, of effective sanctions.

**30.** The quality of advice, whether at the induction stage or subsequently, about the interpretation of guidance is important to ensure consistency, transparency and fairness. The Committee has recommended that the House of Lords should review its present induction arrangements with a view to providing more detailed guidance about the operation and scope of the conduct rules (**Recommendation 16**).

**31.** At present, advice is provided by the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Registrar, supported by the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests and its chairman.<sup>17</sup> The Sub-Committee has met on two occasions to consider issues in relation to the Register. This Committee received no evidence to suggest that the present arrangement was not working satisfactorily. The Committee has, however, recommended that, on grounds of transparency, the general<sup>18</sup> advice of the Sub-Committee should be reported, through the Committee for Privileges, to the House of Lords (**Recommendation 17**).

**32.** In considering the procedures for the investigation and adjudication of allegations against a member, the Committee was concerned that, in serious cases, account should be taken of the view expressed by the Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege (chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead) that: *"In dealing with specially serious cases ... it is essential that committees of both Houses should follow procedures providing safeguards at least as rigorous as those applied in the courts and professional disciplinary bodies"*<sup>19</sup>. The report of the Joint Committee went on to identify the *"minimum requirements of fairness"* for the accused member in serious cases.<sup>20</sup>

**33.** The Committee has similarly borne in mind the view expressed in the Nicholls Report that although proceedings in Parliament are excluded from the Human Rights Act 1998,<sup>21</sup> the fact that they may be within the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights *"is a salutary reminder that, if the proceedings adopted by Parliament when exercising its disciplinary powers are not fair, the proceedings may be challenged by those prejudiced. It is in the interests of Parliament as well as justice that Parliament should adopt at least the minimum requirements of fairness"*.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The current chairman is the Rt Hon Lord Nolan.

<sup>18</sup> That is, advice which will not disclose the identity of the peer seeking the advice.

<sup>19</sup> HL Paper 43-1 and HC 214-1 (1998-99), p 75, para 281, hereafter referred to as 'the Nicholls Report'.

<sup>20</sup> These are: (1) a prompt and clear statement of the precise allegations against the member; (2) adequate opportunity to take legal advice and have legal assistance throughout; (3) the opportunity to be heard in person; (4) the opportunity to call relevant witnesses at the appropriate time; (5) the opportunity to examine other witnesses; and (6) the opportunity to attend meetings at which evidence is given, and to receive transcripts of evidence: *ibid.*, para 281, p 75.

<sup>21</sup> Section 6(3) of the Human Rights Act 1998 excludes the Houses of Parliament from the provisions of the Act.

<sup>22</sup> The Nicholls Report, p 76, para 284.

**34.** The Committee has, therefore, recommended that in cases involving a serious allegation of misconduct, the complexity or sensitivity of which would involve a detailed investigation into the underlying facts, the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests should be able to call upon the assistance of an *ad hoc* investigator (**Recommendation 20**). It has also recommended that the Sub-Committee should remain responsible for the (first instance) adjudication of complaints (**Recommendation 21**) but that in serious cases the Sub-Committee should ensure that the procedure it adopts meets the "*minimum requirements of fairness*" set out by the Nicholls Report for such cases (**Recommendation 22**). To complete the process, the Committee has recommended that an 'accused' member should have a right of appeal to the Committee for Privileges (**Recommendation 23**). In cases involving allegations which are less serious, the Committee has seen no reason to recommend a change in the present investigation and adjudication procedures.

**35.** As for sanctions, the weight of the evidence received by the Committee was that 'naming and shaming', either informally by the publication of the name of the 'accused' member in the Privileges Committee's report or more formally by resolution of the House, would be effective and adequate. The Committee makes no recommendation in relation to extending the range of penalties available to the House.

**36.** Finally, an issue which the Committee has been particularly concerned to address, and one which was foreseen in the Griffiths Report, is the risk that a mandatory register will provoke politically-motivated, unsubstantiated allegations of failure to register. The Committee has proposed that this risk might be averted to some degree by members being encouraged to raise an allegation of failure to declare or register initially in a private communication with the member about whom the complaint is made (**Recommendation 18**). If the complaining member then chooses to pursue the matter, he or she should be able to refer the allegation directly to the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests, through its Chairman, rather to the House for referral on to the Sub-Committee (**Recommendation 19**).

## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### A Code of Conduct

**R1.** The House of Lords should adopt a short Code of Conduct.

**R2.** The Code should incorporate both the Seven Principles of Public Life and the principles adopted by the House of Lords in its 1995 Resolution, viz.

1. Members of the House should act always on their personal honour; and
2. Members should never accept any financial inducement or reward for exercising parliamentary influence.

**R3.** The Code should also incorporate the principles which the House of Lords adopts concerning the registration of members' interests.

## Declaration and Registration of Interests

Reference is made in the recommendations which follow to the three categories of the present Register of Lords' Interests. The categories are:

- (1) *Consultancies or any similar arrangements, involving payment or other incentive or reward for providing parliamentary advice or services. [Registration mandatory]*
- (2) *Financial interests in businesses involved in parliamentary lobbying on behalf of clients. [Registration mandatory]*
- (3) *Other particulars relating to matters which members consider may affect the public perception of the way in which they discharge their parliamentary duties. [Registration discretionary]*

**R4.** The registration of all relevant interests should be made mandatory.

**R5.** The test of 'relevant interest' for registration under category (3) should be whether the interest may reasonably be thought to affect the public perception of the way in which a member of the House of Lords discharges his or her parliamentary duties.

**R6.** Category (3) should cover both financial and non-financial interests and such interests should be distinguished in the lay-out of the Register.

**R7.** The Register should be supplemented by brief written guidance setting out a list of those interests which clearly fall within the test of 'relevant interest'.

**R8.** A member of the House of Lords who registers a relevant financial interest under category (3) should not be required to disclose in the Register the remuneration derived from that interest.

**R9.** The mandatory Register should apply to all members of the House of Lords.<sup>A</sup>

**R10.** Rules on private financial interests akin to those in the Ministerial Code should not be applied to opposition spokesmen and women.

## Lobbying and the Ban on Paid Advocacy

**R11.** Members of the House of Lords should continue to be allowed to hold parliamentary consultancies, subject to the existing prohibition on paid advocacy.

**R12.** The guidance on the operation of category (2) should be amended. It should be made clear that the requirement to register is not confined only to those members with interests in lobbying firms, narrowly defined.

**R13.** The guidance on the operation of category (2) should also be amended so as to make it clear that members who register under that category should refrain from participating in parliamentary business only when that business relates to their own personal clients.

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<sup>A</sup> Save those members of the House of Lords who have taken Leave of Absence.

**R14.** A member of the House of Lords who has an agreement for a consultancy or any similar arrangement under category (1) should deposit a copy of that agreement with the Registrar of Lords' Interests.

**R15.** The House of Lords should ensure that deposited agreements and details as to the remuneration derived from parliamentary services under category (1) be made available for public inspection.

## Compliance

**R16.** The House of Lords should reconsider the existing induction arrangements for new members of the House with a view to providing more detailed guidance about the scope and operation of the conduct rules.

**R17.** The general advice of the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests on the application of the guidance on the declaration and registration of interests should be reported, through the Committee for Privileges, to the House.

**R18.** Members should be encouraged to raise in the first instance any allegation about breaches of the rules in a private communication with the member about whom the complaint is made.

**R19.** Thereafter, if the complaining member chooses to pursue the matter, that member should, in accordance with the Griffiths Committee's recommendation, refer the allegation directly to the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests, through its Chairman.

**R20.** The Committee sees no need for the appointment of a standing Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in the House of Lords but recommends that the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests should be able, in appropriate cases, to appoint an *ad hoc* investigator.

**R21.** The Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests should continue to be responsible for the adjudication of allegations relating to the conduct of members.

**R22.** In serious cases, the procedures adopted should meet the "*minimum requirements of fairness*" set out by the Nicholls Committee for such cases.

**R23.** A member of the House of Lords who receives an adverse ruling from the Sub-Committee on Lords' Interests should have a right of appeal to the Committee for Privileges.

## APPENDIX A

### Resolutions of the House of Lords relating to the declaration and registration of interests (7 November 1995)

**Procedure of the House**—Resolved, That the practice of the House in relation to Lords' interests should be governed by the following principles:

- (1) **Lords should act always on their personal honour; and**
- (2) **Lords should never accept any financial inducement as an incentive or reward for exercising Parliamentary influence.**

Thus Lords who accept payment or other incentive or reward for providing Parliamentary advice or services, or who have any financial interest in a business involved in Parliamentary lobbying on behalf of clients, should not speak, vote, lobby or otherwise take advantage of their position as members of the House on behalf of their clients. This restriction does not extend to matters relating to Lords' outside employment or directorships, where the interest does not arise from membership of the House. Lords should, however, be especially cautious in deciding whether to speak or vote in relation to interests that are direct, pecuniary and shared by few others.

In relation to private bills, Lords should not speak or vote on bills in which they have a direct pecuniary interest.

The above guidance cannot cover all eventualities, and therefore the decision ultimately rests with Lords themselves whether it is proper to take part in a debate or a vote in which they have a personal interest.

Lords who have a direct financial interest in a subject on which they speak should declare it, making clear that it is a financial interest. They should also declare any non-financial interest of which their audience should be aware in order to form a balanced judgment of their arguments. Such interests may be indirect or non-pecuniary, for example the interest of a relation or friend, hospitality or gifts received, trusteeship, or unpaid membership of an interested organization, and they may include past and future interests. This rule also applies where Lords are using their influence as a member of the House in communication with a Minister, Government Department, local authority or other public body outside the House.

On certain occasions such as Starred Questions and the various stages of a bill following Second Reading, it may be for the convenience of the House that Lords should not take up time by repeating declarations of interest but Lords should make a declaration whenever they are in doubt. The nature of the interest should be made clear notwithstanding that it may be well known to most other Lords present in the Chamber.

Similar principles apply to proceedings in committees off the floor of the House.

The Clerk of the Parliaments is available to advise on the interpretation of this guidance in a case of uncertainty.

**Registration of Interests**—Resolved, That there shall be established a register of:

- (1) consultancies, or any similar arrangements, whereby members of the House accept payment or other incentive or reward for providing Parliamentary advice or services;
- (2) any financial interests of members of the House in businesses involved in Parliamentary lobbying on behalf of clients; and
- (3) any other particulars which members of the House wish to register relating to matters which they consider may affect the public perception of the way in which they discharge their Parliamentary duties.

The register shall be maintained under the authority of the Clerk of the Parliaments by a Registrar appointed by him.

Existing arrangements falling within categories (1) and (2) above shall be registered within one month of the register being established. Subsequent arrangements falling within those categories shall be registered within one month of their being made.

The register shall be available for public inspection in accordance with arrangements to be made by the Registrar. The register shall also be published annually. The annual edition shall include all arrangements registered since the previous edition; and all continuing arrangements unless their termination has been notified to the Registrar.

The operation of the register shall be overseen by the Committee for Privileges.

The Committee for Privileges shall investigate, and report to the House on, any allegation of failure to register interests within categories (1) and (2); provided that the Committee shall first satisfy itself that an allegation has sufficient substance to warrant investigation.

The Committee may remit any or all of the matters covered by this order to a sub-committee.

In considering any allegation of failure to register interests, the Committee and any sub-committee shall not sit unless three Lords of Appeal be present.

## ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

The then Prime Minister, the Rt Hon John Major MP, announced the setting up of the Committee on Standards in Public Life in the House of Commons on 25 October, 1994 with the following terms of reference:

*To examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all holders of public office, including arrangements relating to financial and commercial activities, and make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements which might be required to ensure the highest standards of propriety in public life.*

*For these purposes, public office should include: Ministers, civil servants and advisers; Members of Parliament and UK Members of the European Parliament; Members and senior officers of all non-departmental public bodies and of NHS bodies; non-Ministerial office holders; members and other senior officers of other bodies discharging publicly-funded functions; and elected members and senior officers of local authorities.*

*(Hansard (HC) 25 October 1994, col 758)*

Mr Major made it clear that the remit of the Committee does not extend to investigating individual allegations of misconduct.

On 12 November 1997 the terms of reference were extended by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Tony Blair MP: *"To review issues in relation to the funding of political parties, and to make recommendations as to any changes in present arrangements"*.

The Committee on Standards in Public Life has been constituted as a standing body with its members appointed for renewable periods up to three years. Lord Neill succeeded the Rt Hon Lord Nolan as Chairman on 10 November 1997.

**Lord Neill of Bladen QC**  
*(Chairman)*

**Ann Abraham**  
**Sir Clifford Boulton GCB**  
**Professor Alice Brown**  
**Sir Anthony Cleaver**  
**Lord Goodhart QC**

**Frances Heaton**  
**Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP**  
**The Rt Hon Lord Shore of Stepney**  
**Sir William Utting CB**

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