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Committee on  
Standards in  
Public Life

The Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP  
Minister for the Cabinet Office, Paymaster General  
70 Whitehall  
London, SW1A 2AS

21 July 2015

Dear Minister,

I write further to your letter of the 24 June 2015 which I have now had an opportunity to discuss with my committee.

The Committee welcomes the importance the government places on ethical behaviour of third party providers of public services both in terms of monitoring providers and ensuring ethical considerations are taken into account in commissioning. We are pleased to learn that several of our recommendations on ethical awareness for commissioners have already been implemented.

Our recommendation addressing the Seven Principles of Public life in contractual arrangements, reflected your government's recent clarification of the Committee's terms of reference to include 'standards of the delivery of public services by private and voluntary sector organisations, paid for by public funds, even where those delivering the services have not been appointed or elected to public office'. This means that the Seven Principles of Public Life encompass all those involved in the delivery of public services whatever the sector and we are working within the remit you set for us. Our research showed the public clearly want all providers of public services to adhere to and operate by common ethical standards.

The Committee does however accept that reflecting the Seven Principles of Public Life in proportionate contractual and monitoring arrangements requires some thought. Our research found that commissioners expect providers to conform to ethical standards but rarely explicitly articulate this and commissioners want guidance on how to embed ethical standards in both the commissioning and procuring process and the delivery of the service. What is important therefore is clarity and communication of ethical expectations from government to providers and providers to their employees.

Since our report was published we have received a considerable level of interest in our findings and have met with interested parties to discuss internal organisational measures for delivering high ethical standards. As a consequence my Committee intends to publish a further short guidance document in the autumn setting out practical examples of measures commissioners and providers can use to support high ethical standards in public services. We would be very pleased

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to meet with you and the Chief Commercial Officer at the time of publication to discuss best practice.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Bew". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "B" at the end.

Paul Bew  
Chair