

Review of Intimidation of Parliamentary Candidates

Committee on Standards in Public Life

By email: public@public-standards.gov.uk

4 October 2017

Dear Lord Bew,

CALL FOR EVIDENCE: INTIMIDATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES

Thank you for your letter of 22 September and for the opportunity to give oral evidence to the Committee. I would suggest that the evidence session illustrated there was a cross-party consensus on the fact there is a growing problem that needs to be addressed, and there were a number of policy proposals which were commonly supported. I hope your report will highlight areas where there is already consensus, as well as helping bridge further agreement on practical measures that should be undertaken.

You asked for information about Conservative Party members being disciplined for intimidation of candidates during the general election. The Party has a complaints procedure which is available to anyone who is concerned about abuse, including online and social media abuse. It is run through CCHQ and available online. However, no complaints about abuse against candidates were logged by CCHQ during the general election period in 2017 (consequently, no disciplinary action was undertaken).

More broadly, there have been approximately 20 suspensions in the last 12 months (either carried out locally or centrally), some of which led to subsequent expulsions, that relate directly to inappropriate social media use. None of these have related to the intimidation of other candidates, as such.

I hope this information is useful, and illustrates that the Conservative Party has an effective disciplinary process which it is willing to use. Notwithstanding, as I highlighted in my written evidence, I do not believe that the growing problem of intimidation, and the volume of it, stems from party members. The abuse is principally from extremes of the political spectrum, and by social media accounts which are frequently anonymous or operate under a false name.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Sir Patrick McLoughlin MP
*Chairman of the Conservative Party &
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster*