

MPs' outside interests

Written evidence

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## SUBMISSION 1

Dear Committee,

1. I am a stay-at-home mum and I am deeply concerned that the role of an MP is becoming a side-line activity for some members of the House. £70000 is a perfectly adequate sum of money to live on comfortably and I don't see why MP's should be allowed access to other full time jobs. As a civil servant for 9 years I would never have been allowed to do so, even though as an experienced counter terrorism expert I was only earning £27000 a year and it was not enough to live on comfortably in London.

2. An MP's role is a full time job and with Brexit coming up it can only get busier. The people of the UK are experiencing real struggles with Brexit, emotionally and practically, and it is important for them to feel that they have their MP's full attention.

3. I am so concerned for people on low incomes about the unexpected consequences of Brexit that I have started a website [www.getabrexitbuffer.com](http://www.getabrexitbuffer.com) which offers people ideas on how they can use the next 2 years to prepare. It is self-funded and non-commercial. It aims to help people build a buffer around themselves and their families to protect against the problems that Brexit may bring and also be in a better position to take advantage of the opportunities it may create. I am doing this because I don't think the government will have time to prepare each family individually, but it will never get any traction if the very people needed to help spread the word are otherwise engaged on something else more profitable.

4. I feel that MP's should be able to write books or articles if it is about their work but not just run roughshod over the important role an MP has in our society. We need to feel we can trust our politicians but that cannot happen if we feel many use it as a way of accessing better paid jobs later on. There are too many truly vulnerable people in our society to have a parliament with one eye focussed on something else.

5. MPs should have to declare all their external work on their website, irrespective of how small it may be with payment amounts included. The consequences for failing to do so should be severe. If I had had a second job at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and had not declared it, I would have been dismissed immediately as it would have invalidated my DV clearance level. MPs should be no different.

6. Thank you for reviewing this. I feel very strongly that Parliament should have a reputation for honesty and it is essential for our future social cohesion at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely,  
Helen Rowe

### **SUBMISSION 3**

Dear Lord Bew,

MP's outside work has got totally out of control. Becoming an MP is the route to a very lucrative gravy train for far too many.

My view is that MP's are paid a full-time salary for a full-time job. If they want to pursue outside interests then they should stand down. There are plenty of others who would be willing and able to stand. Competition to become an MP is fierce.

The only exception which needs consideration is those who need to comply with continuous professional development or similar requirements, so that they can take up their former career again in the future.

I would appreciate your comments.

Yours sincerely

Kris Johnston

## SUBMISSION 5

Dear Lord Bew,

I understand you are looking into the issue of MP 's having second jobs in the light of Mr Osborne being announced as Editor of the London Standard and in your position of chairman of the standards in public office committee and I would like my comments taken into account.

I have never felt compelled to write to a select committee member before but really feel strongly that this situation is wrong.

As an MP when elected they are there to represent the people of their constituency and are paid a large salary to do just that, how can someone who also has 3 other jobs give that commitment?

If I apply for a job and am successful the expectation is that I will devote myself to that post and why should MPs' be any different?

I am also unhappy about the fact that it is reported he is chairman of the northern powerhouse partnership which he set up , and which I am assuming he receives some remuneration for , this seems another conflict of interest which as a normal employee could not happen.

Turnout at general elections is in decline, how can you expect people to have any confidence in the political system when this situation is allowed to exist

Yours faithfully

Sandra Smith

## SUBMISSION 8

Dear Lord Bew

I was interested and encouraged to learn that the Committee on Standards in Public Life is to review the rules on MPs' outside interests.

This is an issue, which has exercised me since my own days in Parliament during which I introduced the *Members of Parliament (Employment Disqualification) Bill*. As you will see from the attachment, this 10 Minute Rule Bill (of 15 January 2002) sought to prevent MPs from undertaking "remunerated employment likely to interfere with his performance of his Parliamentary duties" - though allowing for some activities "commensurate with his duties" such as (occasional) journalism, public speaking, lecturing and policy research and development.

It was based partly on the principles that, at least in my view, the work of a diligent MP could not possibly allow time for a second job and that MPs who are paid full-time salaries should, as expected of anyone else in employment, work fulltime.

However, it was also rooted in research I undertook which showed that MPs with second jobs were underperforming in Parliament. My analysis of the Register of Members' Interests, cross-referenced with MPs' Participation in Commons Divisions 2001-2, showed that MPs with paid outside interests participated on average in only 65% of Commons votes between June and December 2001, compared to a rate of 91% among those MPs without second jobs. I estimated that, were my Bill to be adopted, some 24% of MPs (155 at the time) would have to choose between their Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary careers. (I had also undertaken research in 2000, which showed that MPs with second jobs not only voted less frequently but were also poorer attenders of Select and Bill Committees.)

Clearly these findings are now dated but I would be surprised if a similar analysis did not reveal similar findings.

My Bill of course failed to make progress. (For what it's worth, the Hansard record of the short debate is [here](#).)

I hope this is helpful and would be pleased to assist your inquiry further if required.

Best Wishes

Peter Bradley

## **REVIEW OF THE RULES ON MPs' OUTSIDE INTERESTS SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

### **Background**

1. I make this submission in a personal capacity though with a longstanding interest in the issue.
2. In January 2002, as MP for The Wrekin, I introduced the [\*Members of Parliament \(Employment Disqualification\) Bill\*](#). This 10 Minute Rule Bill sought to bar MPs from undertaking "remunerated employment likely to interfere with his performance of his Parliamentary duties" while allowing for some activities "commensurate with his duties" such as (occasional) journalism, public speaking, lecturing and policy research and development. (The Hansard record of the debate of 15 January 2002 is [here.](#))

3. My argument was, and remains, that

in principle

- a. MPs are remunerated on a full-time basis and, accordingly, should work full-time
- b. MPs should not enjoy terms of employment unavailable to their constituents

and in practice

- c. the circumstances in which MPs' outside interests were historically considered acceptable no longer apply
  - d. given their now almost limitless workloads, MPs ought not to be able to find time for second jobs.
4. The Bill made little Parliamentary progress and when in 2007 it was revived as a Private Members' Bill by Martin Salter (then MP for Reading West) it met a similar fate.

### **The Committee's Terms of Reference**

5. I welcome the Committee's review but am concerned that themes 2 and 3 appear tacitly to accept the principle that outside interests can be tolerated so long as MPs are open about them and avoid conflicts of interest.
6. In my view, the issues of transparency and accountability are already well understood and regulated. Most MPs are fully aware of and comply with the requirements to register and declare their interests and sanctions can be applied when they fail to do so.
7. Nonetheless, I believe that conflicts do arise for MPs with outside interests which compromise if not their integrity then certainly the extent to which they are able to perform their Parliamentary duties.

8. This submission focuses on themes 1 and 4 and concludes that new rules are required to bar MPs from pursuing any remunerated outside interests other than exemptions which
  - a. are complementary to their Parliamentary, constituency and political work
  - b. do not impair the performance of their Parliamentary or constituency duties.

### **Outside Interests and Parliamentary Underperformance – The Evidence**

9. It is certainly the case that many MPs, from all parties, are extremely diligent and work very long hours; many of them could but do not take lucrative second jobs.
10. But a considerable number take advantage of their uniquely unregulated terms of employment in pursuing second (and not unusually multiple) sources of income, often at the expense of their Parliamentary duties. The research I undertook when promoting my Bill illustrates that, in measurable comparisons, MPs with second jobs significantly underperform those without.
11. My analysis of the *Register of Members' Interests*, cross-referenced with *MPs' Participation in Commons Divisions 2001-2*, showed that MPs with paid outside interests participated on average in only 65% of Commons votes between June and December 2001, compared to a rate of 91% among those MPs without second jobs.
12. I estimated that, were my Bill to be enacted, some 24% of MPs (155 at the time) would have to choose between their Parliamentary and non-Parliamentary careers. (I had also undertaken research in 2000 which showed that MPs with second jobs not only voted less frequently but were also poorer attenders of Select and Bill Committees.)
13. That research is obviously dated. However, when Martin Salter revived my Bill five years later, his analysis, though based on a different methodology, reached similar conclusions. He noted in his speech (Hansard, 16 May 2007, column 628) that “a quick trawl of the voting records of the top five outside earners for 2005-06 shows that between them they average less than 50 per cent. participation in all Commons Divisions. That compares badly with the average participation rate for all MPs in the same period—73 per cent.”
14. He also found (col 629) that “29 per cent. of current MPs have registered paid employment, representing 55 per cent. of Conservatives, 29 per cent. of Liberal Democrats and 14 per cent. of Labour MPs”.
15. He observed (col 628) that, in the five years since I introduced my Bill, “there has been a slight increase in the number of MPs registering second jobs, largely explained by the increase in the number of Conservative MPs entering the House at the 2005 election”.
16. Though I cannot offer up-to-date data, I anticipate that, as Conservative MPs have traditionally been more inclined to pursue them, the overall proportion of MPs with outside interests will have risen with each election since 2005. The Committee may of course wish to undertake its own analysis.



## **Anachronisms and Anomalies - The Basis for Current Arrangements**

17. I recognise that, no matter how strong the case for doing so, breaking with established practice will offer challenges. I hope that this will not inhibit the Committee.
18. In that context, it is important to consider how historically MPs' rights to pursue outside interests came to be assumed and whether it still possible to justify them in the 21st century.
19. From Parliament's earliest days it was accepted that the House of Commons would by definition comprise men of independent means and interests and that their Parliamentary duties, such as they were, would constitute only a portion of their daily affairs.
20. Indeed, the Parliamentary timetable was designed to facilitate the pursuit of those interests. Until relatively recently, the House sat only in the afternoon so that MPs could attend to their business affairs in the morning. The long summer recess was intended to allow them to enjoy the social season and oversee the harvest on their estates.
21. Our democracy has developed considerably since those times, as have the responsibilities of MPs and the expectations of their constituents. Today, the role of an MP is recognised and (generously) remunerated as full-time employment.
22. Current arrangements explicitly acknowledge the principle that private income should no longer provide either qualification for or subsidy of membership of the House of Commons.
23. They also implicitly recognise that the ever-increasing burden of Parliamentary and constituency duties ought not to allow MPs time for regular, unrelated employment.
24. In introducing my Bill, I noted that "in the 1950s, Members of Parliament routinely received 15 to 20 letters a week. That figure is now closer to 300 to 500". Over a decade later, access to email and social media will have increased public pressure on an MP's time still further.
25. Indeed, in recognition of these growing pressures, allowances are now provided and regularly increased so that MPs can employ staff to help with their workload. I would argue that this public funding is intended to help boost MPs' productivity, not free them to supplement their personal income outside Parliament.
26. Despite these very significant changes, MPs remain able, unlike almost any other set of employees, to choose independently how much or little time to devote to the duties for which the taxpayer pays them. This is anomalous.

## **The Argument for the Status Quo – An Exercise in Special Pleading**

27. It is often argued that outside interests make for better politicians, more in touch with the "real world".

28. This is a specious argument. MPs, in performance of their constituency and Parliamentary duties have unprecedented access to that "real world". The people they meet in their surgeries or in their local schools, hospitals, workplaces and voluntary groups should provide all the insight and inspiration a conscientious MP might need.
29. The argument might have some force were MPs taking the kind of jobs that most of their constituents perform and on the modest wages they receive or on none at all. But this is never the case. The outside interests which MPs embrace are invariably well paid positions in boardrooms, courts or consultancies - and are more likely to entrench a partial view of society than to broaden it.
30. Moreover, as suggested above, it is difficult to identify another sector, whether public or private, in which an employer would allow an employee to draw a full-time wage while working part-time hours of his/her own choosing.
31. In that regard, I question whether MPs can comply fully with the Nolan Principle of Leadership so long as they enjoy an exemption from the routine employment obligations, which apply to the vast majority of their constituents.

### **The Limits of Regulation**

32. I would argue that my proposal is neither unreasonable nor punitive.
33. First, the bar I propose is related solely to time spent on outside interests which should be devoted to an MP's duties (and not to income which may be derived from personal assets, investments, inheritance etc).
34. Second, I acknowledge that some extra-Parliamentary activities, if undertaken occasionally, can complement and even enhance Parliamentary performance.
35. Third, I recognise that the demands on individual MPs can vary significantly depending on the character of their constituencies, their own political interests and, indeed, their role in the Commons or Government. While, as suggested above, some data can provide a useful measure of an MP's diligence, I would be wary of adopting rigid performance indicators which cannot on their own provide a rounded picture of his/her activity.
36. I do not therefore advocate intrusive regulation. MPs should remain free to decide how to balance the different aspects of their Parliamentary careers. Ultimately they will be accountable to their electors (even if some majorities are less vulnerable than others).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

37. In short, it is my view that current arrangements are anachronistic, anomalous and unjustifiable.
38. I would recommend that

- a. MPs should be barred from all forms of remunerated outside activities other than those included on a register of approved interests considered complementary to or supportive of their Parliamentary, constituency or political duties
- b. the register should be compiled, maintained and monitored by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards in consultation with the Committee on Standards
- c. reasonable limits should be placed on the time dedicated to approved outside interests, if remunerated, (say, an average of four hours per week while the House of Commons is sitting)
- d. MPs should be required to register the time spent on and income earned from their remunerated activities and be subject to the regulation of the Commissioner and the Committee on Standards.

Peter Bradley

Dear CSPL,

I saw that you will be discussing MPs' outside interests at your forthcoming meeting, including MPs undertaking paid work outside of Parliament. This has been a topic of interest for some time, although interest has no doubt been increased following the recent announcement by George Osborne. At present, the Commons' Committee on Standards is conducting an enquiry into the Code of Conduct for MPs. I gave evidence at a recent session alongside several journalists, and the topic of second jobs provoked a significant amount of discussion. This topic has come up repeatedly in other evidence sessions too, and has also been addressed in written evidence. Whether the Code of Conduct is the appropriate venue to settle this discussion is an interesting question, but we might remain concerned that the public will not accept a ruling by a Commons committee on the question of whether MPs should have second jobs.

From a public opinion standpoint, the topic is actually more mixed than we might assume. While the public is (perhaps understandably) concerned about the issue of second jobs, they are actually quite measured in their attitudes. Rosie Campbell and Philip Cowley wrote a recent article on this subject (<https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/S2052263014000219>), finding that the public are most hostile to politicians who take on part-time non-executive directorships, and much less hostile to politicians who continue to be involved in businesses that they founded before becoming an MP. Campbell and Cowley suggest that the effect they observe might be because of a fear by the public that directorships are ostensibly a 'reward' gained *because* someone is an MP. This seems like a reasonable fear. MPs are, of course, supposed to declare their interests but such declarations are inherently weak in the face of an MPs aspirations for future paid employment as a 'reward' for past decisions. Nowhere is this more concerning than in situations in which MPs take up work for which they are ostensibly unqualified for, but for their role as an MP. The weakness of the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments to regulate such behaviour makes the situation potentially more problematic than it otherwise would be.

All of this matters, though. My own research, published in *The Public Understanding of Political Integrity* (2014: ch.3), showed the importance of perceptions of the probity of MPs for broader issues, including trust in political authorities more widely. If the public believe that MPs are using their positions for their own personal gain, then there is the potential for real and broader harm. As such, I would encourage you to look into this issue in more detail. While the review of the Code of Conduct for MPs may touch on these issues, it is unlikely that the Committee on Standards will have the time or inclination to provide the kind of overarching review that the CSPL would be able to.

With best wishes,  
Jonathan

**Response to Committee on Standards in Public Life Review on MPs' outside interests**

**April 2018**

**Introduction and Reason for Submission**

1. I am a Senior Lecturer in Politics and Research Methodology at De Montfort University. My research interests focus particularly upon public probity and public attitudes towards standards of conduct in public life. I have a PhD from the University of Nottingham, which was co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
2. I am submitting this response on a personal (rather than institutional) basis, out of a general interest in ensuring effective regulation in public life and a desire to help the Committee to that end.

### **Consultation Response**

#### Question 1: What factors should be taken into account in determining the 'reasonable limits' on MPs' outside interests?

3. There are several factors by which the Committee could begin to consider the question of what constitutes a 'reasonable limit'. Firstly, the question could be considered from the point of view of a 'reasonable limit' in terms of contracted (or uncontracted) hours, from the point of view of the scale of financial remuneration received, or both. While in general remuneration is likely to correlate highly with time committed, this is not always the case. Moreover, the public themselves may be especially concerned about MPs having outside interests that are seen to pay extremely well for very small time commitments. However, the public may also be concerned about MPs who engage in very time consuming outside work regardless of how well it is paid. Secondly, the question could be considered from the perspective of the public, from the perspective of putatively independent public officials, or from the perspective of MPs themselves. The public are likely to have a somewhat more restrictive conception of the extent of permissible outside interests than either 'neutral' public officials or MPs.
4. As the Committee's own *Public Attitudes* surveys have shown<sup>1</sup>, most members of the public have a generally negative perception of how dedicated MPs are to doing a good job for the public, and also generally believe that MPs use their power for their own personal gain. Given that the public holds such perceptions, it is reasonable to assume that the public would be in favour of a more restrictive approach to MPs outside interests.
5. Nonetheless, from a public opinion standpoint, the topic is more mixed than we might assume. While the public is (perhaps understandably) concerned about the issue of second jobs, they are actually quite measured in their attitudes. Rosie Campbell and Philip Cowley have written a recent article on this subject<sup>2</sup>, finding that the public are most hostile to politicians who take on part-time non-executive directorships, and much less hostile to politicians who continue to be involved in businesses that they founded before becoming an MP. As such, 'reasonable limits' might also take into account the nature of the work undertaken, in addition to the number of hours or the level of remuneration.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/337017/Public\\_Attitude\\_Survey\\_2012.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/337017/Public_Attitude_Survey_2012.pdf), p.18-20

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/S2052263014000219>

Question 2: How and whether outside interests for MPs could lead to actual or potential conflicts of interest. Does this apply differently for MPs, ministers and ex-ministers, Chairs of Select Committees and other MPs holding parliamentary roles?

6. Outside interests could, at least under some circumstance, produce actual or potential conflicts of interest. This could be either through time conflicts, in which an outside interest has required obligations that interrupt the parliamentary schedule and so require a choice on the part of the MP between serving the public or serving their outside interest, or through classic financial conflicts of interest.
7. Such conflicts of interest are likely to be more serious the more senior an MP is; all other things being equal, the more senior an MP the more ability they have to shape debates and policy. As such there is a greater potential for harm from the actions of ministers and Chairs of Select Committees, and so we may wish to be particularly vigilant here.
8. Nonetheless, there are clearly situations in which governments have deliberately chosen to recruit ministers because of their outside interests as part of legitimate public policy objectives. One example was the Brown government's 'Government of all the talents' strategy<sup>3</sup>. If ministers were prevented from holding outside interests in their area of competency such a strategy would be far more difficult, if not impossible. As such, it may be difficult in practice to demarcate a sub-set of MPs to have much reduced outside interests, relative to other MPs.

Question 3: Whether there is sufficient transparency around MPs' outside interests, and how openness can be promoted.

9. MPs register financial interests in accordance with the Code of Conduct for MPs, which was under review during the recent parliamentary session<sup>4</sup>. A future parliament may wish to amend the Code of Conduct in light of the findings of that review, which in turn may alter expectations about reporting.
10. At present the register of financial interests provides a list of interests by MP at least for interests that began more than 28 days previously. However, and particularly in the case of employment, MPs will typically know of outside interests long before the beginning of the interest. In such a circumstance, the ability of MPs to register as much as 28 days later seems to be a weakness in the process. Moreover, while information about outside interests is included in the register, the level of detail presented is likely to be insufficient to allow constituents to make substantive judgements about the appropriateness of the interest, and whether the scale of remuneration is likely to be commensurate with the amount of work performed.

Question 4: Whether there needs to be new rules or guidance on MPs' outside interests, and how any new arrangements could be implemented.

11. At present, MPs outside interests are regulated by a series of rules that apply somewhat differently depending on the level of seniority. The Advisory

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<sup>3</sup> <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN05226/SN05226.pdf>, p.8

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/standards/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry/>

Committee on Business Appointments (ACoBA) guidance applies to former ministers (as well as senior civil servants), and all MPs are required to declare financial interests in the register. There are additional rules contained within the present Code of Conduct for MPs that pertain to disclosures of conflicts of interest, including the principle of honesty derived from the first report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, which states: “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.”

12. Academic literature often considers ethical regulation in terms of those which take a primarily ‘values-based’ approach, and those which take a primarily ‘compliance-based’ approach<sup>5</sup>. Values-based approaches seek to provide public officials with the appropriate values, such that they will not act unethically. Compliance-based approaches seek to create a system of formal regulation and punishments that force compliance with ethical codes. Compliance-based rules can have a tendency to lead those who are regulated to simply follow the written rules, irrespective of what the ethical course of action is. Where rules are weak and ineffective, these can make ethical problems worse than if the regulation was left solely as a matter of personal honour. Nonetheless, solely values-based systems can leave little recourse against corrupt officials. As such, if the majority of those regulated have appropriate standards of integrity, it is usually based to introduce a primarily values-based system with some minimal legislative backstop.
13. ACOBA is an institution that makes use of compliance-based rhetoric, but has no practical means by which to enforce its decisions. Since an MP can choose not to self-refer and still adhere to the law, the operation rests on the personal values of MPs, but without referencing such values, nor providing a comprehensive rationale for MPs as to why it is important to choose to self-refer. ACOBA therefore appears to acquire the negative aspects of compliance-based regulations without gaining any of the positives of values-based regulations. The advisory status of ACoBA is therefore untenable. Indeed, as Baroness Browning recently said, “With people who have not applied to us as they should, who have breached the rules, if you like, certainly there needs to be a methodology to identify them and do something about that.”<sup>6</sup>
14. Providing a mechanism for ACoBA to enforce judgements and to investigate those who do not self-refer would allow for the minimal benefits of a compliance-based system to be realised. Nonetheless, it would be better if the system were to be reconfigured towards a more openly values-based system.

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion, see Heywood, P. and Rose, J. (2016) “The Limits of Rule Governance”, in Alan Lawton, Zeger van der Wal, and Leo Huberts (eds.) *Ethics in public policy and management: A global research companion* (Abingdon: Routledge), 181-196

<sup>6</sup>

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/public-administration-and-constitutional-affairs-committee/the-role-and-effectiveness-of-acoba-and-the-independent-adviser-on-ministers-interests/oral/42072.html>, Q171

15. Reform to ACoBA would also be helpful to assuage some of the public's concerns about outside interests. In their recent article, Campbell and Cowley<sup>7</sup> suggest that the high degree of concern the public express about MPs taking on part-time directorships might be because of a fear by the public that directorships are ostensibly a 'reward' gained *because* someone is an MP. Indeed, one of the most concerning forms of outside interest are surely those which MPs take up work for which they are ostensibly unqualified for, but for their role as an MP. A reconfigured ACoBA could be well-placed to ensure that employment opportunities for MPs are actually adhering to appropriate standards of conduct.
16. While reform of ACoBA in this way would be helpful, ACoBA's remit applies only to a sub-set of MPs. It may be desirable to broaden its remit to all MPs. This would be particularly helpful for constituents who are required at elections to make the ultimate judgements about the integrity and work-ethic of their MP. A detailed and considered judgement by an independent group would be very useful when making such a judgement. While this role is theoretically fulfilled by the register of interests and the local media, in practice both these systems seem unlikely to provide the level of impartial detail needed to make substantive judgements.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/S2052263014000219>, p.71



## SUBMISSION 11

Dear CSPL

According to an announcement on your website, the Committee will be discussing the outside interests of MPs in two days' time.

I should like to suggest that in its deliberations the Committee adopt the following principles:

(a) In a heavily regulated society no fresh regulations should be brought into force unless there are compelling reasons for them.

(b) It is desirable that Members of Parliament should have employment outside Parliament, so that a range of experience can be brought to bear on the affairs of the nation.

(c) It is also desirable because if Members of Parliament are limited in what they can do and earn few people of worth will in future apply to become a Member: as a consequence the nation's affairs will be handled by a group whose only experience has been provided by bodies in a limited range such as Transport House and the Conservative Research Department.

(d) Human beings come in an almost inexhaustible range of abilities, and persons of great ability and organisational capacity can handle numerous occupations effectively.

(e) If the employers of a multi-tasking employee come to the conclusion that he/she is not performing effectively in the task for which they are responsible they can dismiss the employee. The "employer" in the case of a Member of Parliament can vote him/her out at the next election; his Party can also de-select him/her.

(f) Provided it is declared, there is no inherent conflict of interests between being a Member of Parliament and carrying out another occupation of political significance, such as being a lobbyist, journalist or editor of a newspaper.

(g) The Committee should take due time in its deliberations and not be swayed by the urgency of political passions or newspaper headlines.

Yours sincerely

Hooky Walker

## SUBMISSION 12

I am writing in connection with the recent appointment of George Osborne to work for the Evening Standard with a VERY high salary.

Both myself and many of my friends and colleagues are absolutely appalled that he should be allowed to earn his full salary as a Member of Parliament from what should be a full time career representing his constituents, paid for by the British Taxpayer, in addition to his new appointment. It also begs the question " How well does he do his job as an M.P " as well as his other 'small' jobs such as his U.S. asset management fund?

This represents sheer hypocrisy when, as Chancellor of the Exchequer he had the sheer audacity to financially penalise those who are the more vulnerable in British society.

This is sheer unadulterated greed and makes one wonder just how rife it is in the House of Commons without the added huge expenses of the House of Lords.

I ask you then, as your Committee holds the title Standards in Public Life, when the ordinary citizen of this country will see George Osborne and his ilk being brought to account and made to resign from his position of M.P. (N.B. I did not say work!) or being made to resign from his other positions.

If this is ' Standards, ' then they are very low ones and he should be made to be far more accountable.

I await your reply,

Annette Davis

**SUBMISSION 13**

Dear Sir or Madam,

George Osborne finds it so easy to maintain many other business positions, apart from the work of a Member of Parliament.

It therefore appears, that we can cut the number of Members of Parliament down to a third, and then they can each take on three constituencies!

I also wish to express my condolences for the terrible atrocities, which happened yesterday.

Yours Faithfully,

Sylvia Partridge

Dear Lord Bew,

Please find attached a copy of a letter, which we have today sent to George Osborne regarding his recent appointment as Editor of the Evening Standard. I hope that you and your Committee will impress on him the way in which this demeans and diminishes the important full time role and responsibilities of a Member of Parliament.

Yours sincerely

I. A. Evans

**Your conflicts on interest – A letter from an ‘ordinary hard working family’**

We are writing to you personally after reading with shock and dismay about your appointment to the Editorship of the *Evening Standard* – a job which you presumably intend to carry out alongside your many other roles, principally that of Member of Parliament for Tatton.

Together with David Cameron, you used to invoke the rhetoric of concern for ‘hard working families’. We want you to know that **this** hard-working family is disgusted by such a cynical disregard and contempt for the *full-time* obligations, responsibilities and commitment, which should be the hallmark of a conscientious constituency MP.

At a time when there are ever increasing numbers of children and families living in poverty – not least as a result of your own austerity policies and misguided but costly vanity projects – it is offensive to see personal money-making priorities at the expense of public duty. Far from enhancing Parliament, as you claim, this demeans and diminishes high public office to the level of a part-time hobby.

We hope the continued outcry and reaction will shame you into resigning as an MP and a Privy Counsellor. As a Companion of Honour we hope that you will finally recognise that this is the only honourable course of action.

We are copying this letter to Lord Bew, Chair of the Committee on Standards in Public Life; Kathryn Hudson, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; and the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely

**I A Evans** for The Evans Family

## SUBMISSION 16

Dear sir,

I am opposed to any significant restraint on MP's holding outside work

It is essential that MP's experience work outside politics - both prior to becoming an MP and that it should continue after they become an MP.

The last thing we want is for MP's to become exclusively "Political" - Westminster is already a narrow isolated bubble - remote from most people's actual experience of living in UK

Ultimately the electorate should judge whether their MP's behaviour is acceptable at the ballot box.

Additional work (and income) would enable the brightest and most capable to have well rewarded lives. The alternative of higher pay for all MP's would only attract yet more professional - and isolated from reality - politicians. External income will encourage those with non-political experience to put themselves forward for selection as candidates - and election

Richard Bliss

## SUBMISSION 18

I am writing to express my concern at the recent announcement that George Osborne intends to take up the full time role as editor of the London Evening Standard in addition to his lucrative work with Black Rock and of course his role as MP for Tatton. I have worked in public services all my life and even if it was permissible for other public service employees to gain permission to do another job whilst continuing to claim a full time salary for the original one it is inconceivable that they would have the time or stamina to do so. Apart from MPs all the public service workers I have come across have given their full energy and commitment to the job they are paid to do, often exceeding their contractual working hours and usually for a far lower salary than an MP.

I agree that parliament needs MPs with a broad range of skills and experiences rather than the stereotypical white, male, public school educated, political adviser route which propelled Osborne into parliament. This route has demonstrated time and again the paucity of real life skills and understanding that this route enshrines. I therefore suggest that all MPs be required to have a minimum of 5 years experience in a 'real' job outside of parliament before they are eligible for consideration as an MP which would at least enable them to experience and hopefully understand the demands of life for many people.

I understand that the committee will be discussing whether or not MPs should hold another job in addition to their role as MP and would like to suggest that this is not acceptable in most circumstances and where an exception might be made that the MPs salary should be reduced in line with the amount of time taken from the job of MP and some substitute found to carry out the work of the temporarily absent MP.

We have already seen Malcolm Rifkind boasting on film to a female lobbyist that she would be surprised at how little MPs have to do. Osborne's brazen accumulation of other lucrative and self-serving jobs would appear to reinforce this impression. MPs are already held in contempt by many citizens but Osborne is making a mockery of the role of an MP and fuelling real anger at the aloof contempt of the electorate held by the out of touch and privileged few. How refreshing it would be in these times of deep austerity, which is borne mainly by the poor if millionaires like Osborne donated their MPs salary to the repayment of the national debt.

### **Follow-up:**

I would be delighted for my previous comments as well as the comments in this email to be used as part of your much needed enquiry. I would also be interested in receiving more details of this as they become available on your web site.

The quality of existing and prospective MPs is an important issue and there is a sense that Westminster is still lagging behind the standards required of other public servants with an ethos of entrenched privilege and entitlement. I believe that the quality of MPs would be greatly enhanced by eliminating the public school/Oxbridge/SPAD route and requiring MPs to have proven ability in an established real life job. It will also be necessary to be more specific about the MPs' work requirements including amount of time spent on legitimate parliamentary and constituency work, the percentage of votes attended, the amount of holidays and outside speaking events taken when parliament is sitting and the issue of forfeiture of MPs salary commensurate with time spent on other consecutive salaried work. All of

these requirements would start to bring MPs' terms of employment in line with other public service workers and most private sector workers.

The last public poll taken on whether MPs should have more than one job was overwhelmingly against this. However the public has also indicated that it dislikes the notion of career politicians with little real life experience. These are two separate issues although much of the commentary I have heard on this matter, including an interview with Lord Bew, has conflated the two issues. I would urge the committee to ensure that the two issues are kept separate and would point out that under the pretext of a second consecutive job enriching an MP's experience and understanding the majority of these jobs actually serve as financially lucrative or self serving ventures which do little to enhance the quality of parliament and nothing to enhance respect for parliamentarians. However I think exceptions to MPs having some restricted additional job could be valuable if it could be proven to enhance parliamentary knowledge, for example many volunteer roles in schools, hospitals, food banks, benefits centres, social services departments and libraries etc. Placing a cap on the amount of time spent on this work and the financial advantage it confers would also be welcome.

I look forward to hearing more about the committee's enquiry and hope that the public as consumers of parliament are given an active and meaningful role in it.

Meryl Chetwood

## SUBMISSION 19

Dear Committee on Standards in Public Life,

In view of George Osborne's numerous jobs, could you please tell what is considered to be the maximum number of occupations any MP should hold? In addition, what would the committee judge to be a fair number hours per week for an MP to work as a Public Servant in the role of "Member of Parliament".

I accept they have two roles, one as a consultant for when they "work" at their local surgery and the other to represent the views and concerns of their constituents when attending the House of Commons. I would expect an equal amount of their time would be spent at each depending upon the issues of the day.

I am a retired Engineer and when in employment it was accepted that a full time job would be considered to be about 40 hours a week.

Is the so-called honourable position of "Member of Parliament" a full time job or is it looked upon as temporary employment, or possibly a "zero hours contract"? This would explain how someone like George Osborne could have the time to hold down the reported six jobs.

By the way, I use the word "honourable" in a sarcastic manner; it is extremely hard to show the correct intonation in a written email.

I do not expect a reply as I find this type of question is usually ignored and filed away in the proverbial recycling-bin, but will you rise to the challenge and proof me wrong?

Yours sincerely  
Mr Phil Bird



Dear Sir,

Regarding the above matter we need to have recognition that MPs are civil servant if they cannot have a second job then neither should MPs.

Furthermore to have a full clear and transparency in democratic processes we need across the UK:

- + Term limits for MPs - maximum of 3 terms - no jobs for life.
- + Compulsory voting for all those entitled to vote.
- + All ballot papers having a NOTA (Non of the above box) so all candidates are capable of being rejected.
- + No employment of any relative in any position within an MPs office.
- + Any secondary housing investment associated with their role as an MP to be bought via the state so there is no personal benefit to the MP. Limited to Average 2 bed flat price in London + 15%. These properties could then be passed onto MPs after their terms end.
- + All expenses to be reported monthly and available for scrutiny online.
- + MPs and their immediate families to disclose to the public their tax returns during their time in office. Includes wife children or designated partner.

It is widely accepted that MPs treat their constituents with contempt as shown by Osborne and others in failing to accept that being an MP is a full time role.

Taken with the expenses scandal where no real and in depth penalty applied the general view of the public is that we are best to ignore MPs who are for the most part liars and charlatans more interested in making a name for themselves to support a TV career or using their roles for financial gain.

It is against this background that the current issue of Osborne needs to be taken. Sadly, this problem afflicts all parties and so throws the whole parliamentary circus into disrepute. Until the swamp is drained and reformed this issue will remain a running sore corrupting British democracy.

Dear Sir

I understand that you are canvassing public comments about MPs having second jobs. So I would like to offer my view on the subject.

George Osborne had the job of Chancellor of the Exchequer for six years without anyone complaining it interfered with his work as a Member of Parliament.

The purpose of a Member of Parliament is to hold the Government to account. There is no obstacle to Osborne doing so whilst he also has other jobs. When he was Chancellor of the Exchequer however, he was possessed of a fatal conflict of interest, as to discharging that duty, as are the 100 or so MPs currently on the Government's payroll.

Several MPs currently work as Barristers, GP's and various other things etc, and they are better MPs for it. I would much rather have an MP who was also a part time GP, than someone who had no skills whatsoever except making speeches or was working as a Government Minister.

According to my calculations the Tax and National Insurance Osborne will pay on his job as a Newspaper Editor, and the Employers' NIC the Newspaper Publisher will pay to employ him, will, alone, amount to at least four times the Gross Salary we have to pay him to be an MP.

I would therefore have thought that he represents good value for money to the Nation. If his constituents don't like it they can vote him out. This is nothing to do with the Public Standards Committee.

One compromise suggestion I do have however, is that MPs who do other jobs earning more than (say) £20,000 a year might forfeit some of their MP's Salary at the rate of (say) £300 for every £1000 they earn elsewhere above that sum, until all that's left of their MP's salary is (say) £20,000

The system could be administered by HMRC who examine their income when preparing their tax assessments and the sum can be deducted before tax is calculated, and the amount remitted back to whoever pays their MP's wages.

Such an arrangement would involve us getting some MP's services for £20,000 plus the cost of their expenses, and many others for much less than we presently pay them.

The public would be delighted and the MPs concerned probably wouldn't complain much, as being an MP, let alone Ex Chancellor helps them earn money elsewhere because of their name recognition.

Regards  
Ronald Olden

Dear Sir or Madam,

I believe the standards of employment for MP's once more evidence that some of their lives are far removed from the people they represent.

I am a local authority employee and work full time. I have to seek my employers approval if I wish to take on additional employment and evidence to them that it will not impact on my employment with them. I have previously been advised that full time employees are unlikely to gain approval for other permanent jobs to run parallel with their main job for a number of reasons, working time directives, duty of care to employees and duty of care to service users.

I am a qualified nurse, midwife, social worker and mental health officer. I have always had a public sector job for 36 years, except for a period of three years when I worked in the Middle East as a midwife. My salary is less than half of an MP's salary and it's a struggle every month to make ends meet. I realise that people have different priorities and standards of living and would uphold people's rights to be able to earn higher salaries. However an MP is supposed to be a public servant and the job is full time so I want them to be held to the same accountability as other public sector workers.

I agree people should bring different life and skill mix experiences to the role of MP however I fail to see how having more than one full time job achieves this. Surely the experience should come from their lives before politics, perhaps then we would actually get a government that truly represents the people rather than an elitist set that only ever work for their own advantage.

I find it truly obscene that an MP can think it is acceptable to hold down more than one full time job, being paid more in one year than some earn in a lifetime.

Additionally some of their constituents struggle to find appropriate employment and are scapegoated when claiming state benefits yet it would seem there are the "chosen few" who can walk into a senior position without the necessary qualifications or time served experience and "just fit that in with the day job"!

I need someone to stand up for "the people" and evidence how "we are all in this together". This may not be your remit but as a public sector worker I am asking that you apply the same standards across the board.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Yours faithfully,  
Debra Waud.

Dear Sir/madam,

Surely being an MP is and should be a full time job, it is paid well with public money, and has a pension scheme to rival any in the public sector.

How can it be right, for example, for an MP to work 4 days a week for a newspaper (plus various other outside jobs) and still claim an MP's salary? Can an MP's job be done in one day or less?

I would suggest rules should be changed; if an MP wishes to take on a job that would involve working within the core working week of 9 to 5 Monday.

They should:

- a) Resign as an MP or
- b) Trigger a by election to see if those he represents approve of his or her additional role or not.

If they claim they can perform an extra role outside working hours this should be independently monitored and if they do not comply they should be required to do (a) or (b) above.

Yours Sincerely

John Newton

Dear Lord Bew,

I understand that your Committee is to review its guidance on MP's taking second jobs, whilst in office, in the wake of George Osborne's appointment as the editor of the London Evening Standard, in addition to his other documented roles. You have invited comments from people outside Westminster and I am happy to provide my feedback in this respect.

Before doing so, I am led to understand that Members of Parliament are Office Holders and are not employees of the House of Commons. Furthermore, there is no statutory job description for MP's that I can see. Firstly, is this correct and secondly, is this acceptable?

MP's receive a generous salary, pension and other perks of office if one takes into account the average salary here in the UK.

Much has been said of the need to rebuild trust in politics and for MP's to rebuild trust with the electorate and/or the general public. This matter should be viewed in this light. The expenses scandal was a case in point previously. Now, we have the ability of MP's to hold down numerous other jobs. This will create friction with the electorate (who do not have that luxury) and it will be viewed, once again, as MP's having their snouts in the gravy train; in effect, they are seeking to enrich themselves and for no other reason. The risk here is i) one of perception by the electorate and/or the general public and/or ii) what they believe to be the case. This same principle applies to conflicts of interest too.

The key litmus tests in my view for your Committee are:

1. In the private sector, an employee would have a detailed contract of employment setting out what is required of them in terms of hours committed, performance and standards of behaviour. If Mr Osborne was employed in the private sector, would this be tolerated or permitted by an employer? The answer is clearly no, so why should MP's be treated any differently as Office Holders?
2. I am attaching a booklet, issued by the House of Commons and headed "Members of Parliament as Employers - A Good Practice Guide". On page 14, for example, it states in respect of MP's employees: "Hours (the standard full time week is 37.5 hours net of lunch breaks. However, from January 2009 flexibility was introduced to allow a full-time working week of up to 42 hours". The important point here being that i) there is one rule for MP's and ii) one rule for their staff. How can this be right?

MP's are elected to serve their constituents and should do so for a minimum 37.5 hours per week in the same way as everyone else in employment (e.g. doctors, nurses, teachers). Moreover, how can Mr Osborne justify receiving his MP's salary when he is actually not in the office, nor at work and being paid by someone else? The answer is quite clear, it cannot be justified.

The rules need tightening and whilst your inquiry is underway, Mr Osborne's recent appointment as editor of the London Evening Standard should be barred. Should he choose to resign as an MP, then he is free to take on the role subject to observing appropriate guidelines in place.

I trust that you will find this feedback of interest.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Calliafas

## **SUBMISSION 27**

Your web site asks for comments about the above issue.

In my opinion only part time roles, which have no conflict of interest should be allowed.

In local government the rules are clear and adhered to so there is inconsistency in what should be expected of MPs.

Also, if a Council employee over a certain grade is not permitted to seek election to another authority that is also another example, albeit a political one, to suggest that MPs should not place themselves in a potential position of conflict.

Application of the Nolan principles is another test.

Andrew Good

Dear Committee Secretary

I heard on the radio today that is considering an enquiry into second jobs for MPs following George Osborne's announcement last week. I am writing because I think that remuneration should be an issue in such an enquiry and I haven't heard anyone comment about this so far.

I think that if an MP wants to have a second or third job or contract, their salary as a MP should be cut in proportion to the reduced time they will spend carrying out MP duties. If it is argued that they use their full MP salary to employ other people to carry out MP duties on their behalf but under their supervision, this can only apply if the voters in the constituency have voted for the MP knowing about such arrangements.

The essential principle is that an MP has in effect a contract with their voters, and it should not be up to the MP alone to change that contract.

Regards

Phil Sheppard



Dear Lord Bew,

I welcome your invitation for the electorate to send you their views on MPs taking on additional jobs outside of their parliamentary and constituency responsibilities. Whilst I don't have a problem in principle, I do feel quite strongly about certain aspects of choices made by certain MPs.

1. If an MP has a role with a commercial entity, I do not think it is appropriate for that MP to be voting on issues, which can financially benefit that commercial entity. There is a conflict of interest or, equally damaging, a public perception of one. An example is private companies in the health sector that benefitted from the GPs funding reforms, who also employ MPs who voted the original reforms through.

Those conflicted MPs should abstain from such votes or resign their external role.

2. The MPs' Register of Interests is very useful tool and promotes transparency. If, however, an MP sets up a private company and works through that company, only the clients are listed on the Register. The hours worked and the income derived remain secret. This defeats the object of the exercise.

The same level of detail should be disclosed, regardless of whether the external work is undertaken by the MP in an individual capacity or through their company.

3. MPs have a very wide choice of sectors and geographic areas in which to secure an additional job. Quite why some choose to associate themselves with parts of the world most definitely not renowned for their high standards in public office and corporate governance, and less than transparent financial arrangements, is a mystery.

MPs should not take on additional roles linked to corrupt regimes, particularly in the Middle East and Africa; nor should they associate themselves with certain controversial industry sectors, such as armaments manufacturing and export. If they choose to do so, they should publicly explain why it is necessary. In other words, comply or explain.

4. APPGs - there are many that do excellent work, but there seems to be an increased blurring of lines. MPs who sit on APPGs and sub-committees etc should not have remunerated roles in the associated private sector. In spite of the restrictions over tabling of motions, the risk of a conflict of interest and accusations of lobbying are completely justified.

No money should change hands, however indirectly, as a result of a position on a committee or in an APPG.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my opinion and hope you will consider taking on board the points I have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Vanessa Goss

Dear Lord Bew,

I believe you chair the Committee on Standards in Public Life and therefore will be reviewing second, third and other jobs for MPs.

I am now retired but all my working life my employment contracts expressly stopped me from having a second job. Very sensible as if I was to do justice to my employer I should be focusing my time and attention to my full time paid job.

An MP's role should be as full time as any job and they get well paid for the work so should deliver the goods on servicing their constituents not out feathering their nest and earning a fortune with all kinds of side lines.

Obviously George Osborne becoming a newspaper editor is a massive conflict of interest and should not be allowed. He cannot realistically say he can adhere to his party cause and give fair opinion on topics as an editor. I cannot see how the editor job will not infringe massively on his time to give his constituents the service they expect and for which they voted him in as their MP.

Too many MPs do too little of the 'day' job as they see lucrative ways of earning more by having other jobs. Enough is enough.

Please amend the rules to STOP any MP having any other paid employment. To ensure they stay in touch with the real world there are plenty of charities always looking for Trustees, which would let them gain insight into some of the real problems of the country.

Yours sincerely,

S A Reeves

Dear Paul

I have been contacted by one of my constituents regarding MPs taking jobs outside of Parliament.

My constituent asks how George Osborne can remain as an MP following his appointment as editor of the Evening Standard, as well as other appointments.

Whilst it is of course up to Mr Osborne to decide whether he stays as Member of Parliament for Tatton, I would be grateful to hear more about the discussion the Committee had about MPs' outside interests at your recent meeting, so that I may respond to my constituent.

Thank you in advance for your assistance

Yours sincerely,

**SARAH OLNEY**

Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Richmond Park and North Kingston

Dear Lord Bew,

I understand the Committee on Standards in Public Life is to review its guidance on MPs taking second jobs.

I feel very strongly about this matter and had recently created a petition to government calling for such a review. I'm pleased one will now take place, but it must do more than pay lip service to the questions at hand.

This is an extremely serious matter with potentially grave consequences and I can assure you, sentiment among voters is furious.

Public confidence and trust in politicians is already very low, following the expenses scandal and the lies told during the 2016 referendum campaign. How can it be right for a public servant, paid £74,000 – nearly three times the average UK wage – to sideline their duty to their constituents in order to take on other work? Is the job of an MP intended to be a full-time one, or not? £74,000 is an awful lot of money for a 'part-time' salary. We need concrete rules as to what hours and responsibilities we expect MPs to undertake for their pay. Clearly, constituents in some areas are being short-changed if their MP feels s/he has enough spare time to take on other paid work. How hard your MP works for your area should not be a lottery of personal conscience, but transparently and consistently regulated.

On a related point, two MPs recently resigned in order to accept other work, triggering by-elections. Meanwhile, the MP for Tatton has at least three other jobs, in attrition to his role in parliament. Was it necessary for these by-elections to take place, or has public resource been wasted, and two perfectly fit MPs been lost?

In addition, why has the MP for Tatton been allowed, repeatedly, to ignore the due process around second jobs, announcing his acceptance of his various outside posts before giving the relevant bodies the chance to make a recommendation on the public's behalf? He should be sanctioned for his disregard for standards in public life, and for bringing parliament into disrepute

On the subject of disrepute; we need clarity on employment that creates a conflict of interests for elected representatives. How can it be acceptable for a serving MP to edit a newspaper? They surely forfeit any pretence of journalistic objectivity, and in doing so lower standards in both parliament and our media in one fell swoop. Would we find it acceptable for a serving MP to have such a powerful job for a television network? What about the ability of our press to remain neutral and hold the State to account?

All of these questions must be answered urgently and without equivocation to stem the possibility of corruption and before any further damage is done to the already fragile public confidence in our State institutions.

I understand that many argue that public life and the quality of our public servants benefit from the range of 'real world' experiences offered by MPs with second jobs. Some would argue that it is not desirable for our parliament to be populated with life-long politicians. However, we have the mechanism of regular free elections in which

those MPs deemed out-of-touch may be ousted. Conversely, constituents have no way of ousting an MP who takes on a new job early in a mandate.

If it is considered vital for MPs to demonstrate 'real-world' experience, perhaps they could use the summer recess to volunteer, or every ten years they could be forced to take a year's sabbatical in industry, or – why not – on the dole?

To be serious, I feel that only jobs in genuine public service, such as the charitable sector, the Forces, the NHS, or teaching, can be considered acceptable additional domains for MPs without them running the risk of becoming beholden to private interests. They would, of course, probably have to job share in order to carry out both jobs effectively. (Indeed, I rather doubt that any active teachers or nurse would consider it possible to do outside work, yet they are paid considerably less than £74,000 for their full time jobs). Meanwhile, any money earned from publishing while serving as an MP should be donated to charity.

A final suggestion: if MPs have so much spare time on their hands, which is the impression created currently, perhaps they could consider becoming a member of the 'Big Society' and giving some hours of their time to their local library or coastal lifeguard unit, instead of further lining their pockets, and our fish 'n' chips?

I have copied this letter to ACOBA; Ms Katharine Hudson; the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards; and the members of the Commons Committee for Standards. I very much look forward to a response from any, or all of you.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah O'Donoghue

**MPs' Outside Interests**

I wish to offer my views regarding Members of Parliament outside interests. My view is that whilst an MP should be able to make a working contribution to a company, any income should go to a defined charity.

My own MP, Mr Conor Burns, Bournemouth West, has the benefit of a "safe" seat. At the 2015 election he received 20155 votes. The candidate who came second received 7745 votes. I would argue that he doesn't have to worry too much about us, the voters.

According to his declaration of earnings, he is receiving an annual income of £65,000 per year in total from two south coast businesses.

My issue is this, if there was a conflict of interest, how would I (and other residents of this constituency) know that he would support us rather than his business interests?

Surely over a period of time, most people would adjust their lifestyle and financial commitments to rely on these extra earnings. This could result in a bias to the business interest if a conflict should arise. I would guess from his declarations that he is on a 3 month notice from each of these businesses so he could lose income quite quickly. Also, as I understand it, he does not have a home in this constituency, which means that he is not part of the local community.

Although I am not able to offer any proof, my belief is that he has only been able to secure this income because he is a member of parliament. This is likely to be the situation with many members of parliament.

My suggestion is this. Any outside business earnings should have to go to charity rather than to the MP. Of course, in this situation, the MP could claim out of pocket expenses from the businesses and these expenses should be on a public register. This would allow us ordinary members of the public to have greater confidence that our elected representative is actually working for us. The current system means that I cannot have the confidence today.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Selby

Dear Sir/Madam,

My focus is going to be on George Osborne, M.P., but he is just one of example of many.

It has been widely reported in the media that Mr Osborne now has 5 paid jobs, since being sacked as a Minister and returning to the backbenches. It is my belief that his conduct, (and that of others), is bringing the House into disrepute. I find his present position is highly problematic.

1) He was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in that role was privy to many National secrets regarding the workings of Government and the Treasury, including being involved in the development and implementation of economic policy. This knowledge may be described as 'intellectual property'.

To whom does this intellectual property belong: if it is in his head is it his? If his intellectual endeavours resulted in policy ideas, do these ideas belong to him?

Or is his individual input irrelevant in this situation, in that whatever work he conducted was supposedly done on behalf of the Queen and Country?

In the private sector if people work on particular projects and then take that knowledge elsewhere, (to competitors), they might well find themselves in court!

One of the companies George Osborne now has a position with is Black Rock, an American finance business. It has been reported in the press that an assistant of George Osborne's had meetings with Black Rock while Mr Osborne was Chancellor. I do not know if he did himself? It is claimed one of the Black Rock executives was excited at the changes to insurance/pensions that Mr Osborne brought in, suggesting that they could use this policy change to their own business advantage.

Is it appropriate for Mr Osborne to now be working for them?

2) Is being an M.P. not a full time job, (if done properly)?

3) Mr Osborne seemed to brag that he was a 'volunteer' for the Northern Powerhouse project. He is an M.P. for a Northern constituency, therefore although it might not be a written requirement as part of his job, surely being involved in the Northern Powerhouse might be seen by most of the electorate as pretty much part and parcel of the job of a Northern M.P.? I do not believe that the public will see this as a brownie point 'volunteering project'!!! His stance is unbelievably patronising!

4) Why is Mr Osborne, or indeed any M.P., allowed to hold so many positions purely from the time/money perspective, which is quite sickening when one considers that there are many in the general population, of far greater intellect and ability than Mr Osborne, who are having to endure long hours and little pay in dead end jobs, or are trying to develop businesses on a shoestring?!!!

5) Mr Osborne has also been shown to have spread lies and propaganda during the E.U. referendum. His scare stories became more and more manic the closer

we came to the vote. His constituents voted in the main to leave the E.U. but he has continued to speak out against us leaving.

6) Surely, Mr Osborne's conduct brings into question where his loyalties lie. For whom is he working? To me there are clear conflicts in his working life.

7) It is true that many of the electorate now hold the House of Commons and the political class in contempt. I think Mr Osborne's conduct is reinforcing this.

So, might I add, is the conduct of the majority of the Coalition Government. Most of those ex-Ministers have either gone off to large global corporations abroad, no doubt using their State secrets to their advantage, or have stayed in the House on the backbenches undermining the democratic mandate of the people.

If this carries on there will be a Tory backed revolution!!!!

Yours faithfully,

Amber Astron Christo

Dear Sir,

Further to my previous email outlining my concerns re George Osborne's 'out of House' activities, I find myself horrified

This surely cannot be allowed?

We now have him saying he can fit in his work at the House around this additional role (as well as the other jobs)!!!

This is a definite conflict of interest.

He has already indicated that he will use his position to be a 'Voice for London': we all know what that means--in other words a propaganda tool for those that wanted to Remain in the E.U.

He is not an M.P. for London.

If he wishes to crusade on behalf of the Global Elite, when he should be doing his day-job, then he should resign as an M.P. or be thrown out!!!

I am incredulous at what is going on in the Palace of Westminster. If this allowed then the role of M.P. and Parliament has truly become a joke!

We may as well all stop voting, and stop pretending we have any democracy left in the way this country is run.

Yours faithfully,

Amber Astron Christo



Dear Sir,

For some reason part of my sent email sent just now appears to have been deleted.

I was of course referring to being horrified at George Osborne's sixth job i.e. his announcement of an editorship at The Evening Standard.

A clear conflict of interest as far as I can see. This is not like writing the odd article; this is overseeing and influencing the whole tone and content of the paper.

Surely this cannot be allowed?

Yours faithfully,

Amber Astron Christo

## SUBMISSION 42

Dear Sirs

With regards to the request for public consultation on the subject of "MPs' Outside interests"

From a personal view, I feel that when someone enters Parliament as a Member, that has now become their employment! They have gone there in the full knowledge that they are entering public service and that they are not there to "feather their nests" by doing lucrative "second jobs" which in the main they have only got from their status as MPs'

Then no one can ever accuse an MP of having a conflict of interest!

George Osborne's recent job flurry, the massive amounts of money that has been declared for speeches, its just greed and no one in their right mind can say that his constituents are being served in the correct manner.

It is important that Members of the Houses of Parliament are deemed to be trustworthy and viewed with less scepticism, which will only happen when this obsession that the majority have with outside interests are brought to book

Your Sincerely

Corby Macdonald

## **SUBMISSION 43**

It is not a crime to have a second job. But being an MP and an editor of a newspaper seems to be a conflict of interest. But the fact he has so many is not right. How can he have time to do all of these at the same time. To me being an MP should be his first consideration and he can't give it much attention with all the other things. It also looks like that is the lower paid job so he should give that one up and then he won't be losing much by his standards. Most people are lucky to have one good job and others are greedy.

Pauline Metcalfe

## SUBMISSION 44

Dear Sirs

I should like to support the ability of MPs to continue to practice a profession on election to Parliament, not least because otherwise it would attract time-servers looking for a perch, and also probably encourage dubious Spanish practices.

There was an MP some years ago who was a European Bridge champion, who had to give up it up through lack of time when appointed a minister. MP plus one secondary occupation ought to be enough, although several consultancies instead would seem fair enough, as long as they are related to her/his field of expertise. A consensus on maximum time-input, everything openly declared, would be the requirement of this member of the public.

George Osborne's jobs seem to add up to at least eight days a week, unless someone will ghost-edit the Standard for him.

Yours faithfully

Jacqueline Castles

Dear Sir/Madam,

With regard to the committee's request for the views of the public on this issue, I feel that I should contribute something to the matter.

Due in no small part to the simplistic attitude of the mainstream media to this issue, I would suspect the majority of the public that contact you would be most concerned about the salaries involved in these second jobs. While it is hardly unimportant in the wider context of the issues I will touch on later, click grabbing headlines about the value of such work should not be the priority.

In my view, the primary issue is the potential conflicts of interest that arise from such outside interests, up to a point at least; as detailed ad nauseam in Private Eye, ACOBA is supposed to vet such interests and raise issues like conflicts of interest. However, on current performance, one could be forgiven the impression that ACOBA merely serves as a rubber stamping process rather than an actual regulatory body.

Thanks to the media furore surrounding the extra-parliamentary activities of the Honourable Member for Tatton, scrutiny is suddenly being placed on such arrangements that have previously escaped the larger public notice. My first recommendation, therefore, is to extend ACOBA to cover current MPs', as well as those leaving parliament, if that doesn't happen already. I would also recommend replacing the current committee with some less supine and more ethically aware members, who will stringently apply the standards that currently exist.

With regard to specific factors to take into account (term of reference 1), chief among them is experience, knowledge and influence in areas of expertise as a minister, committee member etc. that are subsequently of potentially sensitive advantage/exploitative natures. For example, a defence minister taking up work with a defence sector private company.

As is hopefully obvious, such behaviour basically amounts to backdoor lobbying, and while I do not begrudge (much) MP's undertaking some secondary paid work, my second point is that a register of interests for all MPs' that is regularly published, prominently in the public domain, with a significant, potentially retroactive, and scalable punitive measure for members that fail to declare such interests and fail to recuse themselves when conflicts of interest arise, is the way forward. Again, to reference the MP for Tatton, his speaking tours, with his experience as Chancellor, are lucrative, but not especially breaching conflict of interest ethics.

Of more concern is the editorship of the L.E.S, as his consultancy with Blackrock and potential influence as editor are at cross purposes, and no matter his honourable intentions, there will have to be questions of impartiality and editorial integrity asked.

The underlying point is that much more scrutiny must be done to determine members' interests, and I suspect by and large many MPs' will not be adversely affected by such scrutiny. Of great concern to me personally is the influence these interests can exert over our elected members.

For example, the influence that several large organisations (CND, various unsavoury anti-Israel groups in the Middle East) exert on Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of Her Majesty's Opposition, or the decidedly shady influence of The Kremlin over the Member for Moscow....er.. Shrewsbury (Atlantic Council Report, Nov 2016).

I hope that, whether you agree or disagree with my views, that a compromise can be found in restoring some respect for Britain's (much maligned, but not entirely without cause) MPs'

Kind Regards,

James Evans

One thing that is often not considered when looking at conflicts of interest is time. By that I mean if an MP has two pulls on their time, which one wins out.

This is best exposed with George Osborne jobs as both MP and editor of a newspaper. Major events can affect the need for swift attention in both these jobs; it could even be the same event. Which one wins?

To my mind MPs should be forced to put the needs of the people who voted for them first. So in George Osborne's case that would mean he attends to parliamentary duties, not to determining what should be on the front page of a newspaper.

This is even more important when you consider his vote "in parliament" can decide the content of front pages around the world. That in itself a conflict of interest. No MP should miss a vote for a second job. No PM should cancel constituent duties for a second job either. So if George Osborne holds his surgery on a Wednesday for example and the newspaper have an emergency the same day, the surgery should not be cancelled.

Dave Langston

## SUBMISSION 47

My personal comments...

1. Payment and amount thereof is irrelevant unless it can be shown to be influencing comments or votes made in parliament.
  - a. An MP should be representing their constituency and constituents first.
2. Parliament comes first.
  - a. Does another 'job' or 'role' or 'speech' or even 'holiday' etc prevent them attending parliament or other related post for more than 25 days per year just like any other paid employee. ?

Regards,

Jason.



## **SUBMISSION 48**

My views as a member of the public are that no MP whether Minister or Back Bench should be allowed to take on any paid or unpaid work whilst being an MP.

It is acknowledged that this would cause financial hardship and as such an MP's salary should be reviewed and if necessary increased to properly reflect their work and responsibilities.

In addition and as part of such review a minimum level of attendance in Parliament must be set down.

I hope my views are taken into consideration as part of the current review.

Michael D Preston

**SUBMISSION 49**

Dear Sir

If an MP has enough free time to be able to take a second job, they are not doing a good enough job as an MP.

Yours Sincerely,

Peter Anderson

Dear sir/madam,

Following the consultation I have drawn a number of points that I believe would speak not only for myself, but many of my peers.

Members of Parliament already obtain an extremely high salary, more than double the average wage in real terms; however once this is added to the additional aspects such as staff, expenses, pensions, severance and so on. The package can begin to be nearing well in excess of £150,000 per year, now, nearly 6 times the average annual salary.

To add to this this staff can be members of family or good friends who are given excessive packages based upon the bias they will hold for their child, partner or friend.

With the grounding of what we are now dealing with, this "part time" position starts to become a very pleasant situation if you can fund and win a parliamentary seat. If, a MP can then turn and say they own a business or have taken on a number of other roles it is utterly sickening in terms of monetary value. However I believe this impedes their work, if they hold shares, personal interests in businesses or advise to a board - this gives that organisation a distinct advantage over others. In essence they are getting free lobbying, which should already be illegal.

To ask for the public's view, should take into account their view. There is no lawful reason any MP needs to hold a second, third or fourth job. They should be Members of Parliament and that should be their full time role. They should surrender and announce any holdings or pass them to another member of family and, if they support a bill that would benefit something they have a personal interest in. There should be a penalty.

We stand divided as a nation now, with significant hardship and uncertainty ahead. Yet there seems to be significant growth in the top levels of wealth and power.

Best,

Tom

## SUBMISSION 51

I believe, in answer to the four points.

1/ Being an MP should be a full time job. No other paid work should be allowed. If MPs wish to appear on a voluntary basis for a charity etc. it needs to be declared as an interest.

2/ All outside interests are potential conflicts of interest.

3/ There is not sufficient transparency. Most MPs will try to get away with what ever they can.

There are still streams of stories leaking out regarding abuse of expenses. MPs STILL do not seem to understand how angry we are about this. But they continue to do it because they generally either get away with it, or the punishment is so weedy it is still worthwhile to them.

4/ I don't believe there need to be new rules.

What is needed is to enforce the ones we have. It is essential that MPs do not decide on the guilt of their peers. They have repeatedly proved that they cannot be trusted to do so. Neither should they fix the penalties. The penalties need to be exemplary. Loss of pay, suspension, sacking etc. The same as in any other walk of life.

We want offending MPs to be properly punished and disgraced.

If they feel they are not sufficiently rewarded or challenged by being an MP they should go and do something else.

Alan Urie

## **SUBMISSION 52**

I would like to state my views on the above. I am absolutely against MP's having jobs outside of their work in the houses of Parliament. I believe that in order to represent us fully they should concentrate on the matters in the house, which can be extremely complex and also run surgeries in their constituencies to assist the people in them with specific matters of interest. In particular I do not think that they should have positions in the media as frankly that makes a mockery of democracy especially at an editorial level.

I believe that an MP's salary is more than sufficient for them to live upon and frankly if it isn't t then why have they stood in the first place.

Yours sincerely  
Jane Tim