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Ed Procter
Chief Executive Officer, IMPRESS

**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

Tuesday 8 September 2020

Dear Ed Procter,

Intimidation in Public Life Review follow up

In December 2017, the Committee published its report on the subject of [Intimidation in Public Life](#). Three years on, we are following up progress made against our recommendations in that report with the intention of publishing a formal update by the end of the year.

During the review, we heard evidence of an increasing prevalence of intimidation in public life, including of Parliamentary candidates at elections.

Our report considered the role and responsibility of the broadcast and print media in this issue. Journalists, broadcasters and editors should consider how the content they create might incite intimidation by delegitimising someone's engagement in the political process, placing undue influence on their individual characteristics or using threatening language.

To that end, we recommended that Impress should extend its Standards Code to prohibit unacceptable language that incites intimidation.

When we met with Jonathan Heawood and Lexie Kirkconnel-Kawana in October 2018, they welcomed the Committee's report and shared the Committee's concerns about the overall climate of public debate. However, they told us that Impress had not reviewed the Code, as it had only been published in 2017 following a public consultation the previous year. We are glad to see that Impress have since updated their policy so that submissions can be made to the Code Committee on any aspect of the Code or Guidance. It is not clear whether a full review of the Code is planned to take place.

In advance of our review of progress made against our recommendations, I would be grateful if you could write and confirm any steps you have taken towards implementing this recommendation, before the 31 October 2020. This will ensure our follow up work is as up to date as possible.

If you would like to discuss this further, a member of my Secretariat would be happy to have a call at your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lord Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life