

The Rt Hon James Cleverly
Co-Chairman of the Conservative Party
28th November 2019

Intimidation in Public Life: Joint Standard of Conduct

Dear James,

Thank you for your letter of 20 November 2019. We share your belief that we all have a duty to tackle the worsening levels of abuse and intimidation experienced in and around politics and public life.

It would seem from your letter that a misunderstanding may have arisen around the nature of the Joint Standard of Conduct that we are facilitating with political parties. While the CSPL report *Intimidation in Public Life* originally envisaged that parties work together to develop a joint Code of Conduct, the position has evolved since the publication of that report in December 2017. Following meetings the CSPL held with political parties in November 2018 and March 2019, we have instead been working towards a high-level common statement on the minimum standards of behaviour expected from all political party members. Our dealings with your party and predecessor the Rt Hon. Brandon Lewis (and your colleague James Morris) on this work have to date been constructive and positive.

The Joint Standard of Conduct is a shared, positive statement of principle that reinforces a baseline of minimum standards of behaviour that all party members can get behind, regardless of political allegiance. We want to be clear that the Joint Standard will not replace individual party codes of conduct and enforcement matters will remain for the jurisdiction of each party.

The leaders of the Labour party, the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and Plaid Cymru, have all now approved the joint standard in principle and we are now at the stage of individual party negotiations on the content. The Conservative party is the only party of those who held seats in Westminster prior to the election being called, that has not to date committed to the principle of the Standard.

We hope we have reassured you and clarified the purpose and intention of the Joint Standard, and that the Conservative Party can join the other parties in taking forward this work. We are looking forward to working with you closely.

Yours sincerely,



Jacqui Smith

The Rt Hon. Jacqui Smith, Chair, The Jo Cox Foundation



Jonathan Evans

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