

**Committee on Standards in Public Life**

**Room G07, 1 Horse Guards Road**

**London**

**SW1A 2HQ**

Debbie Abrahams MP

Caroline Lucas MP

Layla Moran MP

*Sent by email*

5 May 2021

Dear Debbie Abrahams, Caroline Lucas and Layla Moran,

Thank you for your letter of 5 May regarding ethics and truthfulness in public life in relation to the Ministerial Code.

As you rightly say, we are currently considering the institutions, processes and structures in place to support high standards of conduct in public life in our *Standards Matter 2* review. We want to assess what’s working well, where there are gaps and weaknesses, and how well public standards are currently upheld. The review is covering the operation of the Ministerial Code and the role and remit of the Independent Adviser on Ministers’ Interests.

As you will have seen from my correspondence with the Prime Minister, we recommended that the Adviser be granted the independent authority to initiate investigations under the Code. Although the Prime Minister did not implement this change, the role of the Adviser has been enhanced in relation to confidential advice on the initiation of investigations. As our review progresses, we will be assessing how far the new terms of reference for the Independent Adviser provide the degree of independence and transparency that the Committee believes is necessary.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss your suggestions and evidence on how we can help promote the highest standards of conduct across public life.

I am copying this letter to Simon Case CVO, Cabinet Secretary.

Yours sincerely,



Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL

Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life