

Lord Jonathan Evans of Weardale
Chair of Committee on Standards in Public Life
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United Kingdom

Send via email to:

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2nd June 2021

Dear Lord Evans,

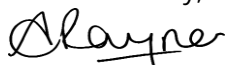
I write to make you aware of an Opposition Day Motion due to take place on Tuesday 7th June. We will be urging Members across the House to vote in favour of endorsing and urgently enacting the recommendations in your report *Upholding Standards in Public Life, Final report of the Standards Matter 2 review*. Following changes to the Ministerial Code enacted by the Prime Minister, Labour shares concerns expressed by experts across the field, as well as the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Interests and yourself, that cherry-picking recommendations from your report sets a low bar ambition on strengthening standards in public life. By failing to respond to your report, the Government has overlooked a plethora of important recommendations required to restore trust and integrity in our democracy.

In my speech, I intend to outline the range of robust recommendations which your Committee have put forward, including the need to put the Ministerial Code on a statutory footing, and the series of urgent reforms required to lobbying rules and the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA). When we look across the globe, Britain is now lagging behind our allies when it comes to rules on upholding ethical standards. I note President Biden has committed to setting up a Commission on Federal Ethics, while plans by the Australian Labor Party will create a Commonwealth Integrity Commission to investigate corruption in the public sector. In Canada, the Ethics Commissioner enforces and reports on breaches of the laws covering ministers and other public office holders.

As you rightly outlined, it is imperative that these mutually dependent recommendations are considered in detail and urgently enacted as an important first step to strengthening standards in public life. While we remain in a situation where the Independent Adviser still requires the Prime Minister's permission to launch an investigation, we will be unable to restore public trust in ethical standards at the heart of government. Public distrust and suspicion about the way in which the Ministerial Code is administered will continue to rot the heart of ethical standards in British democracy.

I would encourage you to engage with the Opposition Day in any way you see appropriate. Thank you for your continued work in this area and please do not hesitate to get in touch with me or my team if you have any further questions about the Opposition Day or wish to discuss any of the issues I have raised in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

The Labour Party


Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
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