**CSPL (21) 33**

**COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

**301st MEETING**

**HELD VIRTUALLY AT 16.00 ON TUESDAY 31 MAY 2022**

**MINUTES**

Present: Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL, Chair

Ewen Fergusson

Professor Dame Shirley Pearce DBE

Professor Gillian Peele

Rt Hon Dame Margaret Beckett DBE MP

Rt Hon Lord Stunell OBE

Rt Hon Sir Jeremy Wright MP

Lesley Bainsfair, Secretary

Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser

Aaron Simons, Senior Policy Adviser

Amy Austin, Senior Policy Adviser

Lesley Glanz, Executive Assistant

Maggie O’Boyle, Press Officer[[1]](#footnote-0)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Professor Mark Philp (Chair, Research Advisory Board)

**2. PURPOSE OF MEETING**

This special meeting was called to discuss the government statement on changes to the Ministerial Code, and to the terms of reference of the role of Independent Adviser on Ministers’ Interests. Lord True, Minister for the Cabinet Office, wrote to the Chair on 27 May about these changes.

3.The Chair replied to Lord True on 30 May, setting out the Committee’s response to the government statement.

4. The Committee noted that the Code now set out a range of sanctions for breaches of the Code, and an improvement in the process for initiating investigations - the Independent Adviser may now initiate an investigation, *before doing so, the Independent Adviser will consult the Prime Minister who will normally give his consent*.[[2]](#footnote-1) However, the Committee agreed this still fell far short of the necessary independence of the role of Independent Adviser called for by the Committee. The graduated sanctions and independence of the role of the Independent Advisor were mutually dependent recommendations.

5. The government had apparently ignored the Committee’s other recommendations which were part of an essential package to strengthen the independence of the role.

6. The government had also not responded to the recommendations in *Upholding Standards in Public Life* relating to the public appointments process, the Business Appointment Rules and transparency around lobbying.

7. Members discussed and agreed to publish a draft statement/blog which aimed to set out clearly the Committee’s view.

CSPL Secretariat

May 2022

1. Maggie O’Boyle provides part-time press support to the Civil Service Commission, the House of Lords Appointments Commission, the Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Committee on Standards in Public Life. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Revised Ministerial Code May 2022 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/1079310/Ministerial\_Code.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)