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Lord Evans of Weardale KCB DL  
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life  
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*Sent via email*

20 July 2023

**Government Response to CSPL Report, *Upholding Standards in Public Life***

Dear Lord Evans,

I am pleased to enclose the Government's response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life's 23rd report, *Upholding Standards in Public Life*. The Government has been managing the response to this report together with reports from Nigel Boardman and the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee on similar themes.

In response to these reports, the Government is introducing a wide-ranging programme of reform to strengthen ethics and integrity in central government.

In particular, we will be introducing fundamental reforms to the Business Appointment Rules to modernise the system, improve its usability for applicants and - most importantly - ensure that the integrity of Government is protected. To protect and defend the principles of ministerial discretion and appointment by merit in the public appointments process, we will implement a number of recommended reforms to improve accountability and transparency. We are introducing comprehensive reforms to improve the quality and accessibility of departments' transparency returns, alongside linked reforms to the Register of Consultant Lobbyists. We are also clarifying our compliance arrangements across government departments.

You will have seen via the publication late last year of an updated Ministerial Code that the Government is maintaining the existing terms of reference for the Independent Adviser, which were developed following consideration of your recommendations. The Government does not believe that ethics bodies should be established in new primary legislation, as the position between the Executive and Parliament in relation to these scrutiny bodies is carefully balanced.

The Prime Minister entered office on a commitment to govern with integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level. With thanks to your Committee's recommendations, we are delivering on that promise.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Committee for this report and the work it does to ensure high standards across public life.

**Yours sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Dowden', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Rt Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP**  
**Deputy Prime Minister**