

Committee on Standards in Public Life
Room G07
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ
chair@public-standards.gov.uk

Mr William Wragg MP
Chair
Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



**Committee on
Standards in
Public Life**

Sent by email

20 March 2024

Dear Mr Wragg,

I am writing to you about the Committee on Standards in Public Life's next review, which will consider accountability within public bodies.

The Committee's review will endeavour to identify ways in which public bodies might be able to improve their effectiveness at identifying and responding appropriately, in the public interest, to emerging problems.

As a Committee we have been struck by how, when failures occur within public institutions, it repeatedly seems to be the case that indicators of emerging issues were present, but missed, with the result that the window to respond appropriately, before problems escalate, has often also been missed.

Today, public service delivery is more complex than ever, implemented by a range of arms-length bodies and private sector companies. As public servants, knowing we are accountable to the public should guide our behaviour and our day-to-day decisions as we make them. Leaders throughout public life have responsibility for making sure that the processes and culture are in place within an organisation to facilitate good and timely decision-making in the public interest and submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

The draft terms of reference for the review are attached for your information. We intend to launch our review on Monday 25 March.

I have written in similar terms to the Prime Minister.

I am copying this letter to Darren Tierney, Director General, Propriety and Constitution Group, Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Doug Chalmers', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE
Chair, Committee on Standards in Public Life