



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee

All MSPs
By email

Room CG.07
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2 March 2020

Dear Member,

The Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee recently re-examined the Rules in the Code of Conduct relating to lobbying and access to MSPs in order to assess whether there were any potential ambiguities in relation to Members working in any capacity for firms that primarily perform a lobbying or parliamentary advice role. This consideration responded to a request made by Gordon MacDonald MSP for the rules to be reconsidered to examine whether they should be tightened to ensure continued public confidence in the Parliament.

The Committee looked closely at the rules and concluded, on balance, that they provide sufficient clarity that Members cannot abuse their privileged position as Parliamentarians for financial gain and therefore declined to propose any changes at the time. However, the Committee did agree to keep the matter under review and remind Members of the relevant Rules relating to lobbying and access to MSPs.

The Committee would therefore like to take this opportunity to remind you of the Rules in Section 5 of the [Code of Conduct for MSPs](#). In particular, the Committee requests that you familiarise yourself with Section 5 and would like to draw your attention in particular to the following passages:

Section 5, paragraph 2:

A member should not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, act in any way which could discredit the Parliament.

Section 5, paragraph 7:

This section of the Code on General Conduct sets out the standards expected in relation to acceptance of hospitality, gifts and benefits. In addition to this and the statutory provisions in the 2006 Act, members—

- should not accept any paid work which would involve them lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients of a person or organisation;
- should not accept any paid work to provide services as a Parliamentary strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on Parliamentary affairs or on how to influence the Parliament and its members. (This does not prohibit a member from being remunerated for activity, which may arise because of, or relate to, membership of the Parliament, such as journalism or broadcasting, involving political comment or involvement in representative or presentational work, such as participation in delegations, conferences or other events.)

I am placing this letter, along with Gordon MacDonald's letter, on the Committee's webpage.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Kidd MSP". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Bill Kidd MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee