

MPs to transfer sanctions power to independent panel

Press release

Members of Parliament are to be asked to agree changes to Commons rules next week which remove their ability to determine the sanctions faced by MPs.



Members of Parliament are to be asked to agree changes to Commons rules next week which remove their ability to determine the sanctions faced by MPs in cases of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

A motion tabled for debate on Tuesday 23 June will establish an Independent Expert Panel empowered to determine the appropriate sanction in cases referred to it under the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS).

The changes bring about a fundamental break with the past in which sanctions were determined through the Committee on Standards, comprising Members of Parliament and lay members.

Leader of the House of Commons Jacob Rees-Mogg said:

This is an historic moment for Parliament. It is absolutely right that the process of handling complaints against MPs has been taken away from a parliamentary committee and handed to an entirely independent panel of experts.

We have now acted on all three of Dame Laura Cox's recommendations but there remains more we can do – which is why I will be keeping up the momentum for further cultural change in Parliament.

I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure that everyone working in Westminster is treated courteously and with respect.

The most severe sanctions imposed by the Independent Expert Panel, including suspension and expulsion, will require the formal authorisation of the House

of Commons.

In response to concerns that the findings of the Independent Expert Panel could be reopened or questioned by MPs, the Leader of the House is seeking an additional change to the Commons' rules on proceedings.

This change would prevent the name of the complainant and details of the investigation from being disclosed in the debate. MPs would not be able to call into question the determination of the panel's sanctions.

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