

Press release: Intimidation of Parliamentary candidates: CSPL publishes terms of reference and calls for evidence

The independent Committee on Standards in Public Life has today published the terms of reference for its review on the intimidation of parliamentary candidates, MPs and other public office holders, and invited anyone with an interest to submit evidence.

The Committee was asked to look at this issue by the [Prime Minister](#) and has today opened the call for evidence for the review. The review will:

- Examine the nature of the problem and consider whether measures already in place to address such behaviour are satisfactory to protect the integrity of public service; and whether such measures are (a) effective, especially given the rise of social media, and (b) enforceable;
- Produce a report for the Prime Minister, including recommendations for action focused on what could be done in the short- and long-term and identifying examples of good practice.

The Committee will also consider the broader implications for other candidates for public office and other public office holders. The review will recognise the important role of legitimate scrutiny of those standing for public office by the public and the press.

The Committee has published its [call for evidence](#), and invites submissions from anyone with an interest in these issues. The Committee will also be contacting campaigning organisations, political parties and social media companies to ask for their views on how best to address these issues.

Lord Bew, Chair of the Committee said:

The intimidation of candidates, MPs and other public office holders matters to everyone, not just those who have been subject to it. Public life and parliamentary democracy needs people from a diverse range of backgrounds to be willing to step forward. Abuse and intimidation cannot be acceptable within our political culture; we want to hear views on how to address this without stifling the robust debate or differences of opinion that are fundamental to our democracy.

The Committee will be considering all evidence we receive and intend to produce a report with recommendations before Christmas.

Notes to Editors

1. Interview requests and media enquiries should go to Maggie O'Boyle on 07880 740627.
2. The Committee on Standards in Public Life advises the Prime Minister on ethical standards across the whole of public life in the UK. It monitors and reports on issues relating to the standards of conduct of all public office holders.

[News story: Prime Minister Reappoints National Heritage Memorial Fund/Heritage Lottery Fund \(NHMF/HLF\) Trustee](#)

Perdita Hunt OBE, DL has been reappointed by the Prime Minister as a Trustee of NHMF/HLF for a term of three years, ending on 21 July 2020

Perdita was, until recently, Director of the Watts Gallery Trust where she spearheaded the restoration of Watts Gallery and the Watts Studios and created an Artists' Village in the Surrey Hills. She is currently undertaking a number of projects in the arts and heritage sector. Perdita is a Tutor on The Recess College – a leadership programme for senior executives, Consultant for Leadership Insight, a Deputy Lieutenant for Surrey, member of Arts Council England's South East Committee, Chairman of Surrey Hills Arts Advisory Committee and Trustee of the Baynards Zambia Trust. Perdita is also a member of the National Trust Advisory Committee on Acquisitions and Collections. Perdita is a trained arts administrator. She has worked in senior positions at the Arts Council, HLF and WWF-UK. Prior to this she worked as Theatre Projects Co-ordinator at Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff, Marketing and Development Director at the Aldeburgh Foundation in Suffolk and Press Advisor to Suffolk Crafts Society.

The role is remunerated at £6,560 per annum. This reappointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. It is a requirement of the Code that political activity by those appointed is declared. Perdita Hunt has declared no such political activity.

News story: Explosion inside an equipment case, Guildford

At around 14:37 hrs on Friday 7 July, an explosion took place inside an under-floor equipment case on the 14:37 hrs Guildford to London Waterloo service, as the driver applied power to depart from Guildford station.

There were no reported injuries. However, debris, some quite sizable, was deposited on public platforms and the car park.

The train comprised two four-car class 455 units coupled together and the explosion took place under the third carriage of the leading unit.

Class 455 trains are undergoing a programme of retrofitting new traction equipment, which started in May 2016. The traction equipment involved was of the new design and the mechanism which caused the explosion was believed to be understood by the industry parties involved. Similar, smaller explosions, have occurred on at least two previous occasions where debris scatter was much more confined. The previous occurrences had been attributed to a manufacturing defect, leading to a build-up of explosive gas within the traction equipment. Industry parties were in the process of devising possible solutions to the problem at the time of the 7 July accident and are continuing to do so.

Since the immediate cause of this accident is already understood, our investigation will focus on:

- the change management processes that were applied to the retrofitting programme
- the response to the previous similar incidents
- the adequacy of any risk control measures that had been implemented
- any other relevant underlying management factors

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry or by the industry's safety regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

Press release: Business Secretary to establish UK as world leader in battery technology as part of modern Industrial Strategy

- Business Secretary announces first phase of its £246 million investment in battery technology as he launches Industrial Strategy's landmark 'Faraday Challenge'
- first phase includes launch of £45 million 'Battery Institute' competition to establish a centre for battery research to make technology more accessible and affordable
- Business Secretary to give keynote Industrial Strategy speech later today in Birmingham where he will also outline cutting-edge energy plans to break down barriers to new technologies and business models

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark will today (24 July 2017) announce in a keynote speech on the Industrial Strategy the launch of the first phase of a £246 million government investment into battery technology to ensure the UK builds on its strengths and leads the world in the design, development and manufacture of electric batteries.

Known as the Faraday Challenge, the 4-year investment round is a key part of the government's [Industrial Strategy](#). It will deliver a coordinated programme of competitions that will aim to boost both the research and development of expertise in battery technology.

An overarching Faraday Challenge Advisory Board will be established to ensure the coherence and impact of the challenge. The board will be chaired by Professor Richard Parry-Jones, a senior engineering leader with many decades of senior automotive industry experience and recently chaired the UK Automotive Council for 6 years.

At a speech hosted by the Resolution Foundation in Birmingham, Greg Clark is expected to say on the need for an Industrial Strategy:

At its heart is a recognition that in order for all our citizens to be able to look forward with confidence to a prosperous future, we need to plan to improve our ability to earn that prosperity.

To enjoy a high and rising standard of living we must plan to be more productive than in the past.

Economists have pointed to what they have called a productivity puzzle in Britain. That we appear to generate less value for our efforts than, say, people in Germany or France. In other words, we have to work longer to get the same rewards.

It's not that we want – or need – people to work longer hours. It's that we need to ensure that we find and seize opportunities to work more productively – as a country, as cities and regions, as businesses and as individuals. If we can do so, we can increase the earning power of our country and our people.

We have great strengths. Our economy has been extraordinarily good at creating jobs. When we look at our closest neighbours, we can be truly proud of the fact almost everyone of working age in this country is in work and earning.

Greg Clark is expected to say on the government's approach:

Our strategy will create the conditions that boost earning power throughout the country – its people, places and companies.

If every part of Britain is to prosper in the future we need to ensure that we have the right policies and institutions in place to drive the productivity – which is to say, the earning power – of the economy, and the people and places that make it up.

I want to thank all of the organisations across the UK for the formidable response to the consultation that we have undertaken on our green paper 'Building our Industrial Strategy'. The response has been extraordinary.

Over 1,900 written responses – full, thoughtful and creative. From all parts of the United Kingdom; from new start-ups to big businesses; from organisations as diverse as the Premier League to the Wellcome Trust and the Women's Engineering Society.

Later in the year we will respond formally to the consultation with a white paper. But the shape of it is already becoming clear.

One of the strengths of an industrial strategy is to be able to bring together concerted effort on areas of opportunity that have previously been in different sectors, or which require joining forces between entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers, industries, and local and national government.

So as part of our I am today launching the Faraday Challenge, which will put £246 million into research, innovation and scale-up of battery technology.

The first element will be a competition led by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to bring the best minds and facilities together to create a Battery Institute.

The most promising research completed by the Institute will be moved closer to the market through industrial collaborations led by Innovate UK.

And the Advanced Propulsion Centre will work with the automotive sector to identify the best proposition for a new state-of-the-art open access National Battery Manufacturing Development facility.

The work that we do through the Faraday Challenge will – quite literally – power the automotive and energy revolution where, already, the UK is leading the world.

The Faraday Challenge's competitions are divided into 3 streams – research, innovation and scale-up – designed to drive a step-change in translating the UK's world-leading research into market-ready technology that ensures economic success for the UK:

- **Research:** To support world class research and training in battery materials, technologies and manufacturing processes, the government has opened a £45m competition, led by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), to bring the best minds and facilities together to create a virtual Battery Institute. The successful consortium of universities will be responsible for undertaking research looking to address the key industrial challenges in this area.
- **Innovation:** The most promising research completed by the Institute will be moved closer to the market through collaborative research and development competitions, led by Innovate UK. The initial competitions will build on the best of current world-leading science already happening in the UK and helping make the technology more accessible for UK businesses.
- **Scale-up:** To further develop the real-world use and application of battery technology the government has opened a competition, led by the Advanced Propulsion Centre, to identify the best proposition for a new state-of-the-art open access National Battery Manufacturing Development facility.

Today's announcement follows a [review](#), commissioned as part of the Industrial Strategy green paper, by Sir Mark Walport in which he identified areas where the UK had strengths in battery technology and could benefit from linkage through this challenge fund.

The Faraday Challenge forms 1 of 6 key challenge areas that the government, together with business and academia, has identified through its flagship [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund \(ISCF\)](#) as being one of the UK's core industrial challenges, where research and innovation can help unlock markets and industries of the future in which the UK can become world-leading.

Ruth McKernan, Innovate UK Chief Executive said:

By any scale, the Faraday Challenge is a game changing investment in the UK and will make people around the globe take notice of what the UK is doing in terms of battery development for the automotive sector.

The competitions opening this week present huge opportunities for

UK businesses, helping to generate further jobs and growth in the UK's low carbon economy.

Professor Philip Nelson, Chief Executive of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), said:

Batteries will form a cornerstone of a low carbon economy, whether in cars, aircraft, consumer electronics, district or grid storage. To deliver the UK's low carbon economy we must consolidate and grow our capabilities in novel battery technology. EPSRC's previous research investments mean we are in a world-leading position.

The Faraday Challenge is a new way of working. It will bring together the best minds in the field, draw on others from different disciplines, and link intimately with industry, innovators and other funders, such as InnovateUK, to ensure we maintain that our world leading position and keep the pipeline of fundamental science to innovation flowing.

Richard Parry-Jones, newly appointed Chair of the Faraday Challenge Advisory Board said:

The power of the Faraday Challenge derives from the joining-up of all 3 stages of research from the brilliant research in the university base, through innovation in commercial applications to scaling up for production. It will focus our best minds on the critical industrial challenges that are needed to establish the UK as one of the world leaders in advanced battery technologies and associated manufacturing capability.

In April, the government announced £1 billion of investment through the fund in cutting-edge technologies to create jobs and raise living standards. Other areas receiving government support through the ISCF in 2017 to 2018 include cutting edge healthcare and medicine, robotics and artificial intelligence, and satellite and space technology.

Richard Scudamore, Premier League Executive Chairman, welcomes the opportunity for business to work with government to shape policy:

Even economically successful sectors could contribute more to the UK's economic growth in the right public policy environment, especially as we approach Brexit. Elite sport is one of the UK's great international success stories but its economic impact has often been under-estimated. That is why the Premier League welcomes the Industrial Strategy as an important opportunity for enterprises like us to help shape government policy.

Simon Gillespie, Chief Executive of the British Heart Foundation (BHF) welcomes the government's commitment to a modern Industrial Strategy:

We are pleased to see the government recognising the importance of scientific research as part of the Industrial Strategy. This research has not only boosted the UK economy but has also led to the development of treatments and technologies that have transformed millions of lives around the world.

Medical research charities play a particularly important part in this success: the BHF funds more than half the UK's independent research into heart and circulatory diseases. We look forward to continuing to work with government to deliver an Industrial Strategy that supports world-leading research that improves the lives of patients across the UK and globally.

The Business Secretary will also be confirming today the launch of the third Connected Autonomous Vehicles research and development competition, with £25 million of funding being made available to new projects.

For the first time the government is making funding available to off-road driverless innovation, with investments earmarked for cutting-edge projects that will grow the commercial potential of off-road driverless technology and develop technologies that will increase productivity and improve mobility in a range of sectors including construction, farming and mining.

Government has already invested more than £100 million of research and development funding in over 50 connected and autonomous vehicle projects across the country to help UK businesses and Universities take advantage of the huge commercial opportunities in this area.

Press release: Tax credit renewal – one week to go

With one week until the 31 July renewal deadline, HMRC is urging the remaining 960,000 customers to renew now or risk having their payments stopped.

The online renewals system is now easier and more accessible. It allows customers to track the process of their renewal, receive email confirmation once submitted, and removes the need to scan or type in the barcode number from the back of the renewals pack.

Last year 410,000 customers had their payments stopped or altered because

they missed the deadline to inform HMRC of changes to their circumstances. These include changes to working hours, income and childcare costs and can be done through GOV.UK or via the HMRC app.

Rachel McLean, HMRC's interim Director General of Customer Services, said:

We've made some really helpful improvements this year to our online and app services to support our customers. We know life can be hectic so the start and stop feature allows customers to begin and complete their renewal on a day and time convenient for them.

It's fantastic that 32,000 have used our app and 733,000 customers have already renewed their tax credits online. I urge customers who have yet to renew their tax credits to do so as soon as possible, thereby avoiding having their payments stopped. The 31 July deadline is fast approaching.

Online help and information on renewing tax credits is available on GOV.UK and via HMRC's customer service Twitter feed @HMRCcustomers. Support is also available on the tax credits helpline.

1. The deadline for people to renew their tax credits is 31 July 2017. Failure to renew before the deadline will mean payments are stopped and customers may have to repay the money they have received since April.
2. Claimants can get help and information on renewing tax credits:
 - On [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)
 - By tweeting [@HMRCcustomers](https://twitter.com/HMRCcustomers) or posting on our Facebook page with general queries
 - Using HMRC's app, which is available on the App Store or Google Play Store
 - Through HMRC's webchat help service
 - By calling the tax credits helpline: 0345 300 3900
3. A video clip, suitable for broadcast TV and web, is available for download at [here](#). Please display 'Clare Merrills, HM Revenue and Customs'. No credit necessary.
4. An audio clip, suitable for radio, is available for download [here](#). The speaker is Clare Merrills of HM Revenue and Customs
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