

5th Annual Report

July 2022 – June 2023

parliament.uk



**Independent
Complaints
and Grievance
Scheme**

Foreword	3
1. Supporting our service users and potential complainants	5
1.1 The ICGS helpline	5
1.2 Supporting users' wellbeing	8
1.3 Outreach	8
2. Delivering independent, high-quality, and timely investigations	10
2.1 Our investigators	10
2.2 Case data	11
2.3 Investigations by the House of Lords Commissioners for Standards	13
2.4 Keeping confidentiality	13
2.5 Improvements made in the last year	13
3. Working with others to improve Parliament's working culture	15
3.1 Embedding the Behaviour Code	15
3.2 Sharing learnings	16
4. Looking ahead	17
4.1 Upcoming external ICGS review	17
4.2 Interim assurance arrangements	17
Annex A: Budget & financial information	18
Annex B – Further Investigations Data	19

Foreword

This is my first annual report, having joined the team in March 2023. My time only accounts for three months of the period this report covers, and I cannot take credit for the considerable progress made in that year. I therefore start by paying tribute to Jo Willows, the former Director who, together with a committed and skilled team have managed to make improvements in almost every aspect of ICGS work under a high level of scrutiny.

The recruitment, training, and induction of a new pool of investigators, from a variety of backgrounds and skills, has been a considerable success – and is beginning to bear fruit – seeing a reduction of time taken in investigations by over a month. The range of guidance for service users has been increased to detail various aspects of the process, five new guides were published this year. 32 out of 33 of Alison Stanley’s 18-month review recommendations have been fully implemented¹.

While there is more work to be done, I have inherited a good and committed team with some good foundations on which to build. The team and all stakeholders have welcomed me and supported my first few months. I have felt a will for success, and I am most grateful.

Reflections from my first three months in role, new to Parliament – is that I have moved into a complex landscape. The culture of Parliament, variety of employment practices and bodies give explanation to why it is sometimes necessarily complex, but not always. The more complexity we bring in, the more removed we become from the opportunity to properly make our work trauma informed. It is imperative we listen to the experiences of those in the parliamentary community and those who have been involved in our processes – as a complainant, respondent, or witness. This will help further shape and improve the service we offer.

With that in mind I have three key priorities for the coming years:

- **Supporting our service users and potential complainants**
- **Delivering independent, high-quality, and timely investigations**
- **Working with others to improve Parliament’s working culture**

Our work in these areas is underway and includes improving how we collect feedback and take action based on what people said about their experiences. We have also brought in a number of additional assurance measures, and activities designed to speed up investigations. Underpinning this work, we are developing a Quality Assurance Framework and performance reporting framework, to bring more transparency to our work.

In recent months there has been renewed focus on the culture of Parliament and the role the ICGS plays within that. In particular, the length of time to complete investigations has been criticised. There are a number of factors that contribute to the length of time investigations take – which means there is no silver bullet to resolve the issues. But there is a large amount of work underway making improvements that we can influence to decrease the time taken.

Later this year, there will be another external review of the ICGS. This will be a good check and balance on some of the initiatives we have started and an opportunity to further improve the workings of the ICGS.

While we cannot comment publicly on individual cases, the ICGS has provided resolution, confidential support, and robust investigations for a number of colleagues. Be assured. We are listening, we are taking action on the things within our control, and we are beginning to create more transparency about our work. The ICGS is there for everyone, please use it.

Thea Walton, ICGS Director

¹ [icgs-18-month-review_final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#) The remaining relates to governance, though an interim assurance group was established and met in July 2023. Governance of the ICGS will be considered again in the upcoming external review.

1 JULY 2022 - 30 JUNE 2023 STATS

479 HELPLINE CONTACTS

REASONS FOR CONTACT



48.2%



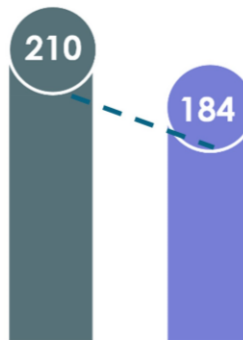
Seeking Advice
(Info Only)

46.1%



Individual
(Own Experience)

INVESTIGATION STATS



ACHIEVEMENTS



New Behaviour Code seminar rolled out to **677** new staff and Members.

99% said the seminar encouraged them to reflect on the role they had to play in building a respectful working culture.

Over **40** outreach events delivered reaching circa **4500** people across Parliament!

1. Supporting our service users and potential complainants

Making any complaint can be hard, and but it is especially difficult to come forward about poor behaviour like bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct experienced in the workplace. Recognising this, we have a host of support options for everyone considering making a complaint, and for those involved in investigations. These are:

- The independent ICGS helpline, run by the charity Victim Support
- Independent Sexual Misconduct Advisors offered to complainants
- Tailored wellbeing support for complainants, respondents, and witnesses
- A Parliament-wide outreach programme adapted to vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups and managers

1.1 The ICGS helpline

Delivered by the independent charity Victim Support, the helpline is the gateway into the ICGS. It provides support, advice and signposting to users and is the first step to making a complaint². All contacts, whether via email or phone, are answered by highly trained staff, knowledgeable about the parliamentary context.

Number of people contacting the helpline³

This year⁴, there were 479 contacts to the helpline, 167 (35%) phone calls and 312 (65%) emails. In 2021/22, there were 701 contacts. Since the Scheme began, the average is 669 contacts per year.

Until recently, contacts had remained relatively consistent. 2022/23 has seen a decrease of 32% in the number of contacts made. However, this has not impacted on the number of complaints made, which were in line with last year. We keep an open mind about what may lie behind these changes and will continue to monitor levels of use of the scheme during the current reporting year, alongside the external review.

Chart 1 - Total calls and emails to the Helpline



² Complaints about Members of the House of Lords or their staff can also be made directly to the Lords Commissioners for Standards

³ The helpline reports on a quarterly basis, and many callers wish to remain anonymous. So, if the same person contacts the helpline across different quarters, it's possible that they will be double counted

⁴ To see helpline statistics since 2018, visit [Independent Complaints and Grievances Scheme proactively published statistics - UK Parliament](#)

Number of unique contacts to the helpline

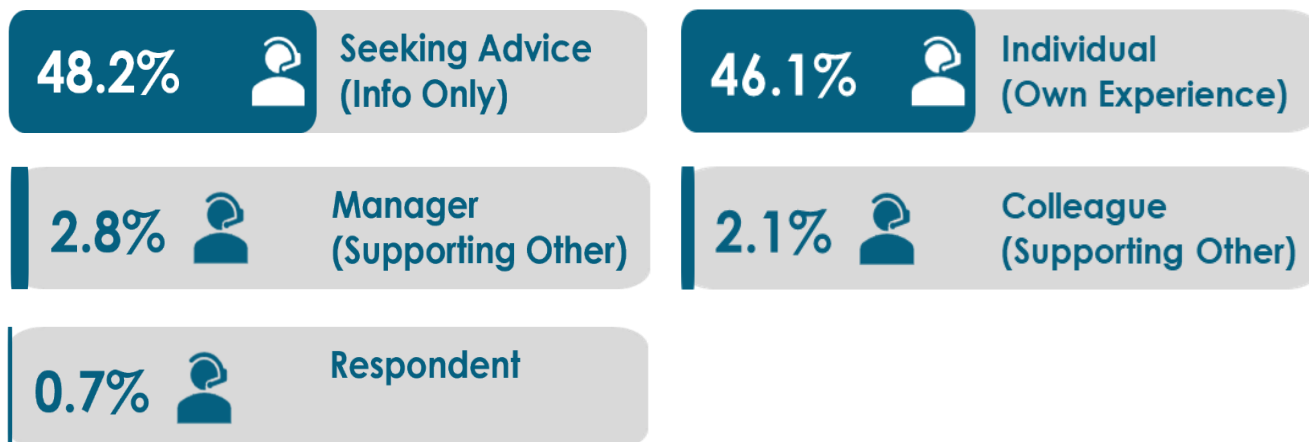
From 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023, a total of 234 different people (unique contacts) contacted the ICGS, compared with 327 the previous year – a decrease of 28%. Similarly, this reduction in unique contacts has not had an impact on the number of complaints made.

Chart 2 - Unique contacts to the helpline



Why are people contacting the helpline?

Of the 141 calls which fell within our remit⁵, most people were seeking advice or information (48.2%), closely followed by people wishing to talk about their own experience (46.1%). These proportions are very similar to the previous year. Only 0.7% of contacts came from respondents; this is consistent with previous years. Respondents, who are only notified after an initial assessment of the complaint by an investigator, are offered other support services directly.

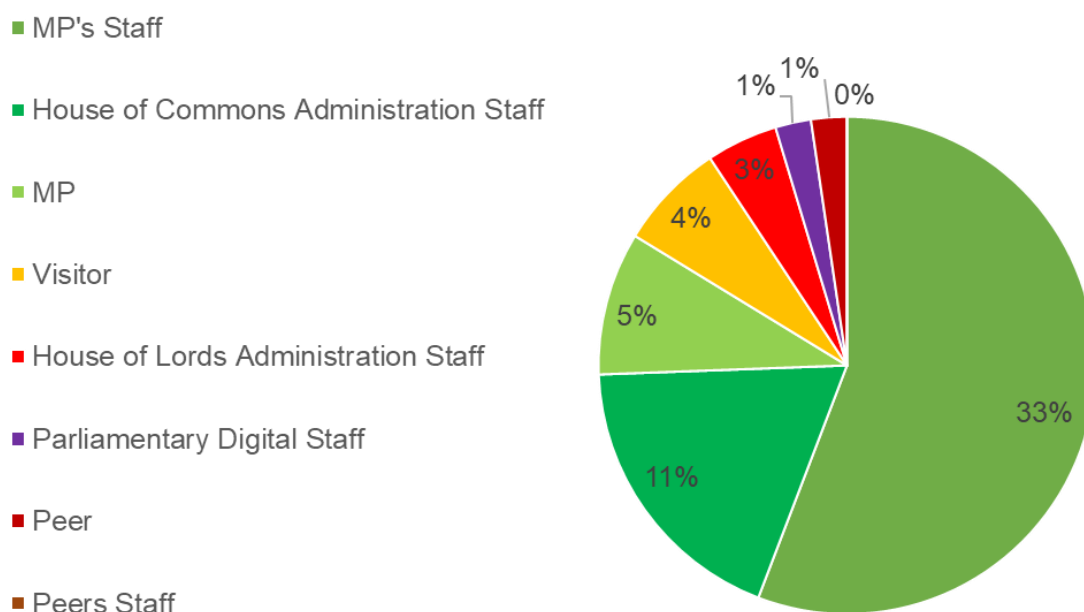


⁵ The helpline also receives calls that are out of the remit, e.g. from members of the public wishing to express their opinion on their MP's political stance. 45.6% (118) of the contacts made this year were out of remit. This is consistent with previous years.

Which groups are contacting the helpline?

The ICGS helpline is available to any member of the parliamentary community or visitors to the parliamentary estate to seek advice and information. It is important to note that the position of the caller is not always disclosed and so there may be groups in the chart below which are over or under-represented.

Chart 3 – Breakdown of groups contacting the helpline



Sexual misconduct services: Independent Sexual Misconduct Advisors and 'Pathway 2'

The helpline offers an Independent Sexual Misconduct Advisor (ISMA) to all complainants reporting sexual misconduct. ISMAs are specially trained to provide support throughout ICGS investigations. If a complaint is made to the police, the ISMA also offers support through the criminal justice process, including court visits and trial processes. This year, four complainants received ISMA support.

"Pathway 2" is an informal resolution route for complainants reporting sexual misconduct. They can request informal resolution without needing to make a formal complaint through the ICGS team. It is facilitated by the helpline. This year, one case was informally resolved through Pathway 2, up from zero in previous years.

Facilitating Multiple Complaints

The Facilitating Multiple Complaints process means those who have reported behaviour but not made a formal complaint can be alerted if others come forward about the same respondent⁶. It was introduced in April 2022 to increase the confidence of individuals who might make a complaint if they knew that others were also coming forward. So far, it has not been triggered. Guidance on its use was published in June 2023 and we will be promoting it in our outreach programme and with other staff support mechanisms – such as the workplace equality networks.

⁶ A user guide explaining the process was published this year, [facilitating-multiple-complaints-guide-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

Moving forward

The helpline has been delivered by Victim Support for the last three years and has recently been extended for a fourth year until July 2024, after which the service will be re-tendered. As part of the extension, we have introduced some additional assurance measures to support the delivery that meets users' needs.

1.2 Supporting users' wellbeing

The ICGS recognises that going through the complaints process can be a challenging time for both the person making the complaint, and the person being complained about.

In January 2022, the role of the Casework and Inclusion Officer (now the Improvement and Inclusion Manager), was developed to provide ongoing support to those making complaints and those being complained about. The role was set up to signpost users to the various support services which are available to them, as well as to provide ongoing face-to-face empathetic support. The Improvement and Inclusion Manager will also answer any questions that users have and explain the different stages of the complaints process as well as explain what the users can expect from it.

The uptake of this support offering varies. Some users will actively engage every week, some will not engage throughout the entire process, and some will engage intermittently throughout the complaint process. Irrespective of the level of engagement from users, the ICGS Improvement and Inclusion Manager will check in at each key stage, or when a wellbeing issue has been identified.

In addition to support available through the ICGS Improvement and Inclusion Manager, users can access different levels of support through:

- The ICGS helpline, run by the charity Victim Support
- Employee/ Individual Assistance Programme (EAP/IAP)
- Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Service (PHWS)
- Onsite GP and nurse
- Trade Unions
- Guardians Network
- HR teams
- Members Services Team (MST)
- MPs Staff Wellness Working Group (WWG)

Continually improving our engagement and the support we offer users of our service is a priority in the coming year. We are looking to improve feedback mechanisms, undertake an end to end review of the experience of the process, and develop service user standards. All these initiatives are aimed at making sure the scheme is trauma informed and continually improving.

1.3 Outreach

The parliamentary community consists of over 15,000 people, covering a diverse range of employers and working arrangements. This year, the ICGS team undertook an extensive programme of 42 outreach events reaching over 4,500 people. Our outreach builds trust and confidence in the scheme by:

- Connecting with vulnerable and 'harder to reach' groups.
- Outlining the complaints process in simple terms
- Explaining key messages, e.g. confidentiality requirements and wellbeing support
- Sharing updates and recent news
- Listening, answering questions and gathering feedback

Our outreach events included:

- In-person and virtual presentations at all-staff town halls, departmental and team meetings across both Houses

- Constituency roadshows for MPs' staff
- MPs' staff new joiner meetings
- The House of Commons services fair
- Monthly information stalls in common areas in both Houses
- Engagement sessions with networks, including the workplace equality networks (WENs) and the Guardians
- The mass distribution and display of ICGS posters and business cards, including a mail-out to all constituency offices
- Face-to-face meetings for estate-based colleagues, including catering, security, and doorkeepers.

Recognising that the Lords Commissioners complaints process runs differently, the ICGS team have targeted specific teams within the Lords with tailored messaging, including their finance, property office, retail and catering teams. Outreach and engagement for the House of Lords is driven by a dedicated Lords Lead within the ICGS team.

2. Delivering independent, high-quality, and timely investigations

All eligible complaints are assessed by experienced investigators who are independent of Parliament. We aim for their investigations to be thorough and fair, and to be completed without delay. To achieve this goal, we:

- Recruit specialist investigators with diverse experience
- Benchmark investigations against quality assurance frameworks
- Track and report on complaint timescales and volumes
- Provide investigators with dedicated ICGS Case Managers and tailored resources
- Monitor and mitigate against commonly occurring delays

2.1 Our investigators

Independent investigators are contracted on a case-by-case basis from an approved pool. In mid-2022, the ICGS team interviewed, recruited, and trained a new cohort of independent investigators. Increasing the size and diversity of the pool of investigators ensures that complaints are swiftly allocated to an investigator with the most relevant experience. We now have a pool of 32 investigators from a range of professional backgrounds including:

- Current or former police detectives from police services across the UK
- Employment lawyers specialising in issues of harassment and sexual harassment
- Investigators for the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
- District judges for civil law cases
- Fitness to Practise Panel members and investigators for healthcare regulators including the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and General Medical Council (GMC)
- Investigators for the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman
- Investigators for the NHS or social care sector
- Complaints investigators for various government departments or arm's length bodies including the Department for Transport, Fundraising Regulator & Charity Commission
- Investigators for the Serious Fraud Office

The ICGS team delivered two-day inductions to new investigators, complemented by further training from an external provider. This covered:

- Operating context of the ICGS within Parliament
- Detailed exploration of the investigation process
- Interview techniques including PEACE methodology

Since May 2022, investigators have access to the "Investigator Portal", a SharePoint site which functions as a central system for all guidance and information.

2.2 Case data

Timescales

Our aim is for each investigation to take the minimum time required whilst being thorough, fair, and responsive to the needs of parties involved. This year, we reduced the average time taken across all investigations by over a month (26 working days). This is the lowest figure in three years. The reduction came mostly from the full assessment stage, initial assessments continued to take just over 40 days.

Chart 4 - Average time taken to complete an investigation



Reducing delays

We reviewed our work over the last two years to consider the factors that extend investigations. Our ability to allocate cases to investigators with the capacity to deliver in a timely manner was a contributing factor to delays in the past. However, the recent recruitment of investigators has changed this. More commonly, the delays tend to be attributable to the availability of parties involved in investigations, including ill health.

The delays were rarely attributable to one cause alone, but included:

- Lack of available investigators
- Mourning period due to death of the Queen
- Unavailable and unresponsive users
- Wellbeing and mental health issues
- Reinvestigation
- Extension requested from users
- Decision-making body availability
- Pauses while the complaints were going through other internal grievance or external legal processes

Our review has shown us that there are no quick fixes to deal with delays – more marginal gains. In the next year we are:

- Recruiting a Policy, Procedures and Guidance Advisor to support consistent approaches and speed up general processes
- Recruiting a Data and Analysis Lead to develop targets, and more transparent reporting on timeliness
- Recruiting a Senior Operations Manager to oversee the quality of all investigations and peer review evidence
- A new oversight arrangement in the Commons with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

- Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Parliamentary Health and Wellbeing Services to improve engagement with complainant and respondents through more regular occupational health assessments
- Providing additional resources, including multiple investigators per investigation to promote better quality, and increase timeliness
- Piloting different approaches to case management to further drive timeliness

Cases opened

We received 31 disclosures, which is roughly in line with 2018/19 (when we received 36 disclosures) and 2020/21 (when we received 34 disclosures). While it is difficult to determine the exact circumstances that influence the volume of complaints received, it is worth noting that the peak in 2021/22 was during a period featuring multiple high-profile incidents of poor behaviour.



From these 31 disclosures, we opened 35 cases. Eight cases were complaints made under the Sexual Misconduct Policy. 27 cases were made under the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

36 initial assessments were completed, 22 of which were progressed to a full investigation by the independent investigator's assessment of the complaint.

Ongoing cases

We carried over the lowest number of cases still open at the end of the reporting year than ever before:



Closed cases

In 2022/23, the ICGS team closed 20 cases:

- Informal resolution is more likely to rebuild working relationships and improve the working environment. Four cases were successfully closed through Informal Resolution.
- 16 went through a full investigation, seven of which were upheld and nine of which were not upheld
- Two complaints were withdrawn

Who is complaining about who?

House of Commons staff cases stayed about level (11) for a third year in a row. As is typical, staff complaints from both administrations were mostly made about fellow colleagues. The volume of cases submitted by MPs' staff (eight) were the lowest since the scheme began. Having identified MPs' staff (including constituency staff) as a particularly vulnerable group, the ICGS team are focusing outreach to these colleagues, to raise awareness of the ICGS and its processes. Consistent with previous years, the group within the parliamentary community subject to the most complaints was MPs (17).

2.3 Investigations by the House of Lords Commissioners for Standards

Complaints about Members of the House of Lords or Lords Members' staff are investigated by the Lords Commissioners for Standards, with assistance from an ICGS investigator⁷. This year, there were two completed investigations of complaints of bullying, harassment or sexual misconduct by Members of the House of Lords. A separate complaint was also resolved by agreed resolution for the first time (equivalent to ICGS informal resolution).

2.4 Keeping confidentiality

Confidentiality is vital to the integrity of all ICGS cases. We take confidentiality extremely seriously, because breaches can seriously impact on peoples' wellbeing and reputation, the integrity of investigations, and trust and confidence in the scheme. While it is not always possible to identify the origins and reasons for breaches when they do occur, the team have conducted focussed work to address and further minimise the risk of confidentiality breaches. These include:

- Enforceable confidentiality statements signed by parties to an investigation with the expectation that they adhere to clearly outlined requirements
- Reinforcing these requirements at key stages of an investigation
- A breach may be taken into account as an aggravating factor and could affect the sanctions imposed
- The possibility that a complaint may be terminated

Next, we will be exploring further preventative measures including identifying breach risk factors, working with stakeholders to develop dedicated communications plans, and strengthening our policies and procedures.

2.5 Improvements made in the last year

We implement changes through continuous improvement, and periodically review each step of the process.

Feedback - The ICGS are keen to listen to and act on feedback where possible, and at the conclusion of an investigation complainants and respondents have an opportunity to provide feedback about their experience. As a result of meetings with investigators, complainants, respondents and witnesses a number of changes and improvements have been made over the last year. Some of these are highlighted below:

⁷ They are investigated under the Lords Code of Conduct and Guide to the Code using the same definitions of bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct as the ICGS. [House of Lords Commissioners Annual Report 2022-23.](#)

Case Management - In April 2023 the new ICGS Case Management System (CMS) came into use. This marks the completion of recommendation 13 of the ICGS 18-Month Review (para 117). The CMS now provides the ICGS with a secure tracking system which protects confidentiality and enables progress and timeliness of cases to be understood and challenged at any point. It also allows us to draw off reports and monitor progress throughout the reporting year.

Guides – Over the last year we have published five new guides based on different areas of the scheme. Following feedback from witnesses that they didn't fully understand their involvement in the ICGS, a guide was developed aimed specifically at witnesses. We have also produced guides about the Factual Accuracy Check (FAC) stage, a guide to requesting a review at Initial Assessment stage, a guide to the Facilitating Multiple Complaints process and a guide to informal resolution. All these guides are available via the helpline, via our SharePoint hub and our internet pages⁸

Securing evidence – Additional guidance has been developed for our independent investigators on identifying and securing relevant time sensitive evidence. While no evidence is looked at during the Initial Assessment phase, some evidence (such as CCTV footage or pass data) is time sensitive and therefore needs to be secured should it be required at Full Assessment phase. Our guidance clarifies the investigators' role in this and helps them ensure this aspect is considered.

Being kept updated – Following feedback from both complainants and respondents that they were not always kept up to date with the progress of investigations in the way they would like, we have changed our expectations, guidance, and processes to ensure that independent investigators communicate consistently with both parties throughout the investigation, while being flexible and adapting to any reasonable adjustments (for example varying the frequency or method of communication at key points).

⁸ [witness-guide-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)
[guide-to-factual-accuracy-checks-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)
[guidance-for-reviews-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)
[facilitating-multiple-complaints-guide-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)
[informal-resolution-guide-final.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

3. Working with others to improve Parliament's working culture

3.1 Embedding the Behaviour Code

Parliament's Behaviour Code sets clear expectations about how everyone should be treated. In 2018, a training programme 'Valuing Everyone' was rolled out across the parliamentary community to help everyone to understand, recognise and prevent bullying, harassment and sexual misconduct. The 18-month review of the ICGS⁹ proposed that this training should be refreshed and repeated at intervals. The ICGS has worked with teams across both Houses to develop a seminar for new Members and new staff joiners, "the Behaviour Code, why it matters", and a supporting awareness programme.

The Behaviour Code: why it matters seminar

This new seminar has been designed to replace the previous Valuing Everyone training programme and is important learning for all new parliamentary staff, Members of both Houses and their staff. The seminar has been coproduced with key stakeholders including staff and Members of both Houses. Whilst core content is consistent, seminars offer tailored content for different groups. The seminars launched in autumn 2022 and are delivered by EW Group & Challenge Consultancy.

The objectives of the seminars are to:

- Demonstrate understanding of the Behaviour Code
- Understand everyone's role in contributing to a respectful working culture
- Recognise and learn how to address inappropriate behaviour
- Promote formal and informal sources of support

Who has completed the seminar?

Between autumn 2022 when the seminar was first rolled out and 30 June 2023, 677 people have completed the seminar.

Feedback

62% of attendees have provided feedback. Headline findings include:

- 99% said the seminar increased their awareness of key elements of the Behaviour Code
- 99% said the seminar encouraged them to reflect on the role they had to play in building a respectful working culture
- 99% said the seminar effectively signposted support services and sources of help available
- 94% of attendees said the seminar increased their confidence in calling out unacceptable behaviour

Wider themes and insights have also emerged from the feedback provided, including:

- Attendees valued the opportunity to share experiences in small groups
- Use of case studies allows participants to practically apply the Behaviour Code
- There is positive emphasis on the role of bystanders and appropriate ways to intervene
- Information is imparted in an engaging way by facilitators
- Seminars are delivered at the right length and tone

⁹ parliament.uk/contentassets/e3ed0297d92a400bb249c887a30aa59b/icgs-18-month-review_final.pdf

The Behaviour Code awareness programme

The awareness programme, developed by a bicameral working group of staff leading on culture, behaviour and communications, is the next stage of work to further embed the Behaviour Code. The programme is a refresher to those who undertook the original Valuing Everyone training, with tailored activities and communications for different audiences.

The Commissions of both Houses agreed to deliver the awareness programme once every Parliament, or every four years. It is being delivered in three phases, the first phase is being launched in the summer and autumn terms of 2023; the second phase will be delivered during the rest of the current Parliament and the third phase will be a refreshed programme for the new Parliament following the General Election, adapting the Behaviour Code seminars for new Members and MPs' staff.

We will be measuring the impact of the programme, including its reach and engagement.

3.2 Sharing learnings

Reviewing learning and insights from ICGS cases allows us to share knowledge with other teams supporting cultural change by monitoring trends and indicators that can inform wider cultural transformation programmes. So, the ICGS team reviewed 30 investigations that closed in 2021 and 2022. The following key trends were identified as part of this review:

Power imbalances

In most cases, there was a power imbalance between the complainant and the respondent. Most frequent were complaints from MPs' staff about MPs or complaints about line managers from their direct reports. Differences in power can make it difficult for individuals to complain against the people responsible for their work and ultimately their employment status.

In several cases, the imbalance was amplified where staff were in their first job or at very early stages in their career without previous experiences of other workplaces. In one complaint, a junior member of staff new to the role withheld making a complaint until several years later.

However, problematic behaviour can also be present outside of traditional dynamics; there were cases where managers were bullied by direct reports. A misconception that bullying can only occur in certain settings may make individuals feel that their case will not be taken seriously. The ICGS recognises that power does not always mean being in a position of authority and can include both personal strength and the power to coerce.

Blurred boundaries

In a number of cases, the blurring of personal and professional boundaries led to complaints about inappropriate behaviour. This was most prominent in complaints against MPs by their staff.

A lack of professional boundaries resulted in incorrect assumptions being formed about acceptable behaviours. Examples include invitations to events where the purpose or connection to parliamentary work may not be clear, overly frequent calls/messages and at unreasonable hours, and overly familiar behaviour. For example during one work-related evening event, a boss made unwanted physical contact and personal comments about their colleague's appearance. Even if the behaviour is unintentional, it does not mean it diminishes the potential impact.

The presence and impact of alcohol

A number of the cases included the presence of alcohol and the culture of drinking in Westminster. Alcohol was a frequent factor in incidents in bars on the parliamentary estate (leading to intimidating behaviour like shouting and swearing), external functions connected to parliamentary activities, or where colleagues socialised at bars/pubs after such events. Alcohol affects investigations in other ways such as impacting the ability of witnesses to recall events when gathering evidence in an investigation.

4. Looking ahead

4.1 Upcoming external ICGS review

External reviews (at six and 18 months) were built into the ICGS, to provide an objective assessment of the implementation and operation of the new scheme. Such reviews provide assurance to stakeholders and the wider public, and another review is planned for autumn 2023.

The ICGS team have implemented 32 out of 33 recommendations from the 18-Month Review. The remaining recommendation (about governance) will be considered in the upcoming review, and an interim governance arrangement has been established.

The terms of reference for the upcoming review have been agreed by the Commissions in both Houses and have been published. We welcome the review, as it is an opportunity for further improvement and checks and balances on our plans.

4.2 Interim assurance arrangements

A key aspect of the upcoming ICGS Review is to consider the governance arrangements of the ICGS, how they can be clarified and improved and how decisions about changes to the ICGS can be made. To support this an interim assurance group has been set up for:

- Providing a sounding board for the external ICGS Reviewer
- Reviewing monitoring data about the ICGS
- Making recommendations to committees and boards of both Houses about any policy or process changes required to the ICGS; and
- Resolving or escalating any concerns about the operation of the ICGS that cannot be resolved by the Director alone

This group met for the first time in July 2023. The membership of this group includes:

Co-chairs:

- Commons Clerk Assistant
- Lords Clerk Assistant

Group members:

- Member representative from the House of Commons Commission
- Member representative from the House of Lords Commission
- Representative of the Lords Conduct Committee
- Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards
- Chair of the Independent Expert Panel
- ICGS Director

Annex A: Budget & financial information

The following figures highlight the total spend for each financial year, including external services (the helpline, independent investigators and Valuing Everyone training) and staffing costs:

- For the financial year 2022/23 (April 2022 to March 2023) the total spend for ICGS was £1,645,061 and by each House as follows: House of Commons £1,172,342 and House of Lords £472,720.
- For the current financial year 2023/24 (April 2023 to March 2024) the total budget is £1,870,047 and by each House as follows: House of Commons £1,324,863 and House of Lords £545,184

Annex B – Further Investigations Data

Complaints Progressing after Initial Assessment									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
Progressed	4	47	51	6	26	32	5	17	22
Not progressed	0	7	7	1	17	18	4	10	14

Complaints Upheld and Not Upheld									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
Upheld	4	16	20	4	11	15	3	4	7
Not upheld	0	28	28	2	6	8	2	7	9

Respondent Groups*									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
HoC Staff	3	13	16	0	17	17	1	9	10
HoL Staff	0	5	5	0	1	1	1	3	4
MP	3	13	16	6	23	29	6	11	17
MP Staff	0	8	8	0	5	5	0	4	4

Complainant Groups*									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
HoC Staff	1	12	13	0	12	12	2	9	11
MP	0	1	1	2	3	5	0	5	5
MP Staff	2	15	17	5	22	27	2	6	8

Average Time Taken to Complete Cases**									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
No. of Cases	4	44	48	6	17	23	5	11	16
Average (mean)	233	185	189	218	208	210	202	176	184

Average Time Taken to Complete Cases, Split by Respondent Group* **									
	2020-21			2021-22			2022-23		
	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total	SM	B&H	Total
No. of Cases	4	11	15	3	9	12	4	5	9
MP	233	200	208	227	263	254	214	140	173
No. of Cases	0	20	20	3	4	7	1	2	3
HoC Staff	0	152	152	208	163	182	151	101	118
No. of Cases	0	10	10	0	4	4	0	0	0
MP Staff	0	180	180	0	129	129	0	0	0

