



the union of choice for senior managers
and professionals in public service

16 March 2018

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

Dear Mrs May,

Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff

On 12th March the Leader of the House of Commons, the Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom, updated the House on the work of the working group on an independent complaints and grievance policy. Following the allegations made in the BBC Newsnight investigation she indicated that she would be recommending that the House of Commons Commission lead a short, independent inquiry into the allegations of systemic bullying of parliamentary staff and whether the new independent complaints and grievance policy should apply to Parliamentary staff from day one.

As you know, the FDA represents a number of parliamentary staff including clerks, and as such some of our members may well come within the scope of the inquiry.

I am writing to express our unequivocal support for the launching of an independent inquiry and urging you as leader of your party to publicly back this initiative and seize the opportunity for these serious issues to be investigated.

We have consistently maintained that, for staff to have trust and confidence in a process for dealing with bullying and harassment by MPs, that process must be independent from MPs at all stages, including determining sanctions. Additionally, the process must be resourced effectively so that complaints can be investigated efficiently and quickly and must have the power to compel all parties to take part. If these principles are adopted we believe that this can lead to a change in the culture of the House with all staff being treated with dignity and respect.

This clearly would also have to be a feature of any inquiry launched on behalf of the Commission in order for it to have the trust and confidence of staff and its findings to be considered legitimate.

I would like to make clear that the FDA's position is that the Respect Policy must be replaced with a new policy that embodies the principles that were set out in the Cross Party Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy Report published on the 8th February and they should apply to parliamentary staff from day one.

I am interested to understand your position, as the leader of the Conservative Party, and hope that you support our view that party politics must be taken out of these matters and the process for dealing with bullying and harassment by MPs must be independent from MPs at all stages.

I have today also written to all the leaders of the other main political parties, the Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom and the individual members of the Commission, voicing our support for an independent inquiry and also our position that the Respect Policy must be replaced with a new policy that embodies the principles that were set out in the out in the Cross Party Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy Report.

I look forward to receiving your response to change the culture of the House so that every member of staff is treated with dignity and respect at work.

Yours sincerely

