



SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY STANDARDS COMMISSIONER

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From the Commissioner

PRESS NOTICE

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COMPLAINTS DATA PAINT REASSURING PICTURE

The number of complaints against MSPs dropped from 31 to 14 in 2005/06, according to the Annual Report of the Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner, Dr Jim Dyer, published today. Only one of the 14 related to financial interests, and it was found inadmissible. Dr Dyer notes in his report that he has now completed his first term of 3 years; he was recently reappointed by Parliament for another 3. The report is able to present 3 years pooled data, giving a better picture of the nature and number of complaints. On average, 25 complaints have been received per year and around 5 of these go on to full investigation annually. Commenting on the data, Dr Dyer said:

“Overall, the complaints data provide a reassuring view of standards of conduct of Parliamentary duties in Scotland.”

The report notes that, 7 years on, developments are now taking place in structures and processes set up in the early days of devolution, and it documents the Commissioner's involvement in the Parliament's own legislation on Members' Interests, review by the Standards and Public Appointments Committee of the Code of Conduct for Members and inquiry by the Finance Committee into governance and accountability of ombudsmen and commissioners in Scotland.

Dr Dyer notes that over a half of those complaints which fail to progress to full investigation do so wholly or partly because they are not relevant. He said:

“This suggests that there is more work to do in making the public aware of my role and the complaints process. I will be reviewing how best to do this. I have said in this report as one of my future priorities that I am happy to accept invitations from groups and organisations to speak on these issues. I would also invite people to visit my website at www.spsc.co.uk.”

Note for Editors

The Commissioner will be available on 07909 872726 between 1500 and 1700 on 21 September to answer questions on his report.