



BRIEFING PAPER

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Apologies by MPs to the House of Commons since 1979

Compiled by
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This list attempts to capture all instances where an apology has been made on the floor of the House of Commons since 1979.

There are numerous reasons why an MP might apologise to the House. Where an individual has been the subject of an investigation and report by the Committee on Standards (or its predecessors), the Committee may recommend that an apology be made to the House. Instances where the Committee recommends that the Member apologises to the House in writing, through the Committee, are not included in this list. Other examples include apologies made for disorderly conduct or for the provision of inaccurate information during proceedings.

Committee on Standards

The [Committee on Standards](#) is appointed by the House of Commons to oversee the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The membership and remit of the Committee are governed by [Standing Order No. 149](#).

The Committee cannot take on complaints about MPs, these should be directed to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. The Standards Committee's webpage has [Information about the complaint process on the conduct of an MP \[pdf\]](#).

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

The role of the [Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards](#) is:

- to provide advice
- to investigate allegations that MPs have broken their Code of Conduct and its supporting rules
- to decide complaints from the parliamentary community about harassment, bullying or sexual harassment by MPs
- to keep the MPs' Code of Conduct under review
- to keep the Register of Members' Financial Interests and the three other Registers which the House requires.

The Code of Conduct and Guide to Rules

- [The Code of Conduct together with The Guide to the Rules relating to the Conduct of Members](#) | [The Code of Conduct together with The Guide to the Rules relating to the Conduct of Members \(PDF\)](#) HC 1882, 10 October 2019

Apologies by Members to the House of Commons

Parliament	Date	Member	Hansard ref	Reason for Apology	Standards/ Privileges Report*
2019	15-Dec-20	Chris Bryant	686 c143	Conduct during Prime Minister's questions on 9 December 2020	
2019	07-Dec-20	Ben Wallace, Secretary of State for Defense	685 c559	Alleging that the Ministry of Defence had blacklisted the media outlet Declassified UK	
2019	23-Nov-20	Chris Bryant	684 c640	Suggesting that the Government had tabled a motion without notifying the Opposition	
2019	03-Nov-20	Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP	683 c197	Inappropriate use of House stationery and using contact details for non-parliamentary purposes	HC 904 2019-21
2019	24-Sep-20	David Morris	680 c1182 [V]	Inadvertently breaching the paid advocacy rule	HC 771 2019-21
2019	22-Jun-20	Marcus Fysh	677 c1099	Failure to declare unremunerated directorships of companies and for late updating of the register	HC 231 2019-21
2019	11-May-20	Greg Hands, Minister for International Trade	676 c46	Breaching the rules for the use of stationery and post-paid envelopes	HC 211 2019-21
2017	06-Dec-18	Boris Johnson	650 cc1079-1080	Late recording of payments to the Register of Members' Financial Interests	HC 1797 2017-19
2017	19-Jul-18	Ian Paisley	645 cc588-9	Failure to register and declare two overseas visits	HC 1397 2017-19
2017	11-Dec-17	Dame Margaret Hodge	633 c67	Breaching the rules for the use of stationery and post-paid envelopes	HC 591 2017-19
2015	27-Mar-17	Andrew Bridgen	624 c31	Failure to declare a financial interest during debate on HS2	Rectification by Commissioner for Standards
2015	23-Mar-17	Nigel Adams	623 c698	Failure to register role as director of NGC Networks Limited and NGC Network Services Ltd	HC 1098, 2016-17
2015	15-Sep-16	Justin Tomlinson	614 c1054	Sharing a draft report by the Committee of Public Accounts regarding the regulation of consumer credit	HC 672, 2016-17

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2015	27-Apr-16	Naz Shar	608 c1464	Comments made on Facebook about Israel before elected as a Member of Parliament	
2015	04-Feb-16	Geoffrey Cox	605 c1108	Failure to register outside earnings within 28 days of their receipt	HC 803 215-16
2010	08-Apr-14	Charlotte Leslie	vol 579 cc237-8	Failure to inform the Register of Members' Financial Interests of financial donations to local Conservative party	
2010	03-Apr-14	Maria Miller, Secretary of State for Culture,	vol 578 c1033	Attitude towards the Commissioner's inquiries	HC 1179, 2013-14
2010	11-Nov-13	Nadine Dorries	vol 570 c661	Failure to properly register income from a television appearance	HC 806, 2013-14
2010	07-Nov-13	Simon Hughes	vol 570 c437	Failure to declare donations from local party in the Register of Members' Financial Interests	HC 805, 2013-14
2010	12-Mar-12	Eric Joyce	vol 542 c34	Behaviour in the Strangers Bar on 22 February 2012	
2010	20-Feb-12	Mark Simmonds	vol 540 c634	Failure to declare an interest in two debates	
2010	19-Jan-12	Jack Dromey	vol 538 c906	Failure to update the Register of Members' Financial Interests and to declare an interest in two debates	HC 1766, 2010-12
2010	09-Oct-11	Liam Fox	vol 533 c923	Meeting a potential supplier without an official present, in breach of the Ministerial code	HC 1887, 2010-12
2010	12-May-11	David Laws	vol 528 c1384	Renting accommodation from a partner and continuing to do so after a change in the rules	HC 1023-I, 2010-12
2010	07-Jul-10	Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education	vol 513 cc484-5	For the way information accompanying a statement on school funding was provided to the House	
2010	30-Jun-10	Theresa May, Home Secretary	vol 512 c863	Details of a Home Office statement on non-EU migration had been passed to the media before the statement itself was	
2005	29-Jan-10	Harry Cohen	vol 504 c1044	Wrongly claiming on allowances	HC 310, 2009-10
2005	29-Oct-09	Tony McNulty	vol 498 c455	Mistakes regarding mortgage interest and council tax claims	HC 1070, 2008-09

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2005	12-Oct-09	Jacqui Smith	vol 497 c43	Claiming for the cost of films, alongside the cost of her broadband and cable connection	HC 974, 2008-09
2005	12-Mar-09	Bernard Jenkin	vol 489 c480	Believed he may have breached the new rules on the use of Commons dining facilities for political fundraising	
2005	26-Jan-09	Peter Hain	vol 487 c21	Failure to declare to the Registrar, within the time required, all the donations to his campaign for the deputy leadership	HC 183, 2008-09
2005	28-Jan-08	Derek Conway	vol 471 c21	Employing his son as a researcher and parliamentary assistant	HC 280, 2007-08
2005	11-May-06	Elfyn Llwyd	vol 446 c505	Failure to give the Secretary of State for Wales notice of intention to name him during Business Questions	
2005	01-Feb-06	Stephen Byers	vol 442 c319	Not saying sorry at the time of Personal Statement on 17 October 2005	
2005	17-Oct-05	Stephen Byers	vol 437 c639	Inaccurate evidence given to the Transport Select Committee regarding Railtrack	HC 854, 2005-06
2005	21-Jul-05	Tony Baldry	vol 436 c1429-30	Breaching the Code of Conduct for Members	HC 421, 2005-06
2001	23-Mar-05	Jonathan Sayeed	vol 432 c893	Improper use of Commons stationery and Additional Cost Allowance claims	HC 473, 2004-05
2001	08-Feb-05	Jonathan Sayeed	vol 430 c1463-5	Conflict of interest and misclassification of constituency assistant	HC 233, 2004-05
2001	29-Jan-04	Diane Abbott	vol 417 c405	Failure to declare work for the BBC in the Register of Members' Interests	HC 285, 2003-04
2001	17-Jul-03	Clive Betts	vol 409 c473	Error of judgement in appointing a staff member that might have exposed the House to a security risk or damaged the reputation of the House	HC 947, 2002-03
2001	20-May-03	Malcolm Wicks, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions	vol 405 c861	Announcement on housing benefit sanctions became public before Parliament had been informed	

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2001	20-May-03	Ben Bradshaw, Parliamentary Secretary, Privy Council Office	vol 405 c861-2	Inaccurate assertion that the Opposition had not taken up the full allocation of time to debate the Criminal Justice Bill	
2001	13-Feb-03	Michael Trend	vol 399 c1073	Improper use of the Additional Costs Allowance	HC 435, 2002-03
2001	07-Mar-02	Ben Bradshaw, Parliamentary Under- Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs	vol 381 c450	Remarks made on the character and conduct of George Galloway during a Westminster Hall debate	
2001	07-Mar-02	George Galloway	vol 381 c450	Using unparliamentary language to describe Ben Bradshaw during a Westminster Hall debate	
2001	13-Feb-02	Keith Vaz	vol 380 c213	Breaches in the Code of Conduct in his response to the investigation of allegations made against him, investigated by the Commissioner	HC 605, 2001-02
2001	31-Oct-01	Geoffrey Robinson	vol 373 c884	Failure to register a conditional contract in the Register of Members' Interests	HC 465, 2000-01, HC 297, 2001-02 (supplementary HC 377, 2000-01
1997	29-Mar-01	Roy Beggs	vol 365 c1120	Failure to register interests in land and property in his	
1997	28-Jun-00	Peter Lilley	vol 352 c921	Use of an improper word	
1997	10-May-00	Gareth R Thomas	vol 349 c841	Referring to an issue directly relating to Michael Fallon's constituency without giving Mr Fallon prior notification	
1997	10-Apr-00	Michael Portillo	vol 348 c33	Failure to declare a registered interest during conclusion of budget debate	
1997	23-Mar-00	Tony Baldry	vol 346 c1121	Not making clear to the Lord Chancellor's Department, when giving a reference for a person for an honour, that the	HC 369, 1999-2000

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1997	20-Mar-00	Ken Livingstone	vol 346 c719	Failure to provide sufficient detail on outside earnings in the Register of Members' Interests	HC 342, 1999-2000
1997	16-Mar-00	James Gray	vol 346 c520	Using unparliamentary language	
1997	27-Jul-99	Don Touhig	vol 336 c149	Receiving draft report of the Social Security Select Committee	HC 747, 1998-99
1997	27-Jul-99	Kali Mountford	vol 336 c149	Disclosing a draft report of the Social Security Select Committee	HC 747, 1998-99
1997	13-Jul-99	Donald Anderson	vol 335 c165	Inaccuracies in a statement and letter about knowledge of disclosure of parts of Foreign Affairs Committee's report and	HC 607, 1998-99
1997	12-Jul-99	Ernie Ross	vol 335 c23	Premature disclosure of draft Foreign Affairs Committee report on Sierra Leone	HC 607, 1998-99
1997	20-May-99	Teresa Gorman	vol 331 c1226	Inadequate and incomplete entry in Register of Members' Interests	HC 458, 1998-99
1997	18-Nov-98	Geoffrey Robinson, Paymaster General	vol 319 c952	Late registration of shareholdings and directorships in the Register of Members' Interests	HC 1190, 1997-98
1997	02-Nov-98	Ron Davies	vol 318 c575-6	Error of judgement in failing to protect his personal safety and becoming a victim of crime	
1997	08-Jul-98	Peter Kilfoyle, Parliamentary Secretary, Office of Public Service	vol 315 c1096	Referred to a Member in debate without giving way to that Member	
1992	05-Feb-97	Rt Hon Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland	vol 289 c1067	Alleging incorrectly that another Member had visited Libya	
1992	15-Jan-96	Ann Widdecombe, Minister of State, Home Office	vol 269 c409	Misleading the House about concerns relating to Whittington on the handcuffing of prisoners who attend the Hospital	
1992	22-May-95	Jerry Wiggin	vol 260 c612	Tabling amendments to a bill in standing committee, in the name of another Member, without his consent	

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1992	15-Feb-95	Clive Soley	vol 254 c1010	Making allegations about the Secretary of State for Trade & Industry and Prince Bandar	
1992	18-Jul-94	Peter Hain	vol 247 c35	Giving inadequate notice of his intention to refer to certain Members during debate on Members' interests	
1992	25-May-94	Olga Maitland	vol 244 c342	Misleading the House about authorship of amendments to the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill (Apology received by letter to Speaker)	
1992	10-May-94	Rt Hon Nicholas Scott, Minister for Social	vol 243 c155	Stated wrongly that the DSS had played no part in drafting amendments to the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill	
1992	01-Dec-93	Andrew Faulds	vol 233 c1062	Rudeness when requesting an apology from Secretary of State for Education	
1987	05-Feb-92	Robert Hayward	vol 203 c287	Accidentally misleading several Members over his intentions, during 2nd reading of the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill	
1987	04-Dec-91	Geraint Howells	vol 200 c343	Leaving the Chamber after moving an amendment	
1987	20-May-91	Tony Favell	vol 191 c661-2	Using unparliamentary language	
1987	13-Feb-91	Douglas Hogg, Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office	vol 185 c855	Lack of notification given to a Member when questions are to be grouped	
1987	07-Mar-90	John Browne	vol 168 c889-92	Failure to declare certain interests	HC 135 1989-90 (Members' Interests Committee)
1987	22-Jan-90	Rt Hon Kenneth Baker, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	vol 165 c558	Allowing a party official to occupy the civil servants' box (Apology received by letter to Speaker)	
1987	07-Dec-89	Tristan Garel-Jones, Treasurer of Her Majesty's Household and Deputy Chief Whip	vol 163 c 569	Using unparliamentary language	

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1987	19-Jan-89	Tim Devlin	vol 145 c 494	Making allegations about the conduct of another Member	
1987	20-Dec-88	Martin Brandon-Bravo	vol 144 c298	Inaccurate allegations about another Member	
1987	27-Jul-88	Anthony Meyer	vol 138 c413	Comments made about another Member's chairmanship of the Welsh Grand Committee	
1987	19-Apr-88	Ron Brown	vol 131 c679-81	Throwing the mace to the floor	
1983	20-Mar-87	Willie Hamilton	vol 113 c21	Remarks on the personal conduct of certain Members during a debate on law and order	
1983	24-Feb-87	Andrew Faulds	vol 111 c161	Discourtesy and disregard for parliamentary conduct	
1983	23-Feb-87	Richard Hickmet	vol 111 c22	Remarks made outside the House which were critical of the Speaker	
1983	26-Jul-85	Nigel Spearing	vol 83 c1415	Causing embarrassment to a former Foreign Secretary via a Parliamentary Question to the PM, and for incompleteness in parts of his minority report	
1983	16-May-85	Ivan Lawrence	vol 79 c522	Asked a Parliamentary Question based on an erroneous press report about the activities of another Member in the	
1983	07-May-85	Dafydd Wigley	vol 78 c656	Damaging the Speaker's Chair during exchanges at the end of a debate	
1983	07-Feb-84	Peter Snape	vol 53 c772-3	Remarks made about British Rail Southern Region	
1979	01-Mar-82	Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards, Secretary of State for Wales	vol 19 c21	Suggested during a debate that another Member had been drinking	

Notes

[V] - Virtual contribution

*Where relevant - The Committee on Standards and Privileges was replaced on 7 January 2013 by two Committees:

[Committee on Standards](#)

[Committee of Privileges](#)

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