

Office of the Registrar of Consultant Lobbyists

Summary of investigation

July 2017 to October 2018

Organisation or person investigated: New Statesman

Matter(s) investigated: possible unregistered consultant lobbying by New Statesman

Registrar's decision: New Statesman did not meet statutory criteria for consultant lobbying in relation to the activities in question

Summary of rationale for decision: Explicit confirmation from New Statesman that the event in question did not go ahead, and that they do not communicate with Ministers about Government business and on behalf of sponsors. Accordingly, New Statesman did not meet the statutory definition of consultant lobbying in relation to the activities in question.

Chronology*:

12 July 2017	Indicative information received from third party (anonymity requested) of possible unregistered consultant lobbying activity by New Statesman in relation to organising an event that a Minister would be invited to attend.
21 July 2017	Letter from Registrar to New Statesman, drawing attention to requirements for registration, stating evidence had been received of possible consultant lobbying, and seeking response.
18 September 2017	In absence of reply, Registrar writes again to New Statesman, using alternate contact details.
23 November 2017	In absence of a reply, statutory Information Notice issued to New Statesman.
15 January 2018	Reply received by ORCL stating simply that New Statesman do not believe they act as consultant lobbyist and don't therefore need to register (no reasoning given to support that). Further set of contact details provided for any future correspondence on the matter.
31 January 2018	Further letter from Registrar to New Statesman, using the further set of contact details, advising that a more substantive response to the Information Notice would be required.

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6 August 2018	In the absence of a response, Registrar issues statutory Notice of Intention to issue a civil penalty for failure to reply to a formal Information Notice.
21 August 2018	Email from New Statesman asking for further information about the evidence held by the Registrar, and what information they need to provide in response.
3 September 2018	Letter from Registrar to New Statesman, providing further details of specific alleged consultant lobbying activity, and restating the information required in response.
10 September 2018	Substantive reply from New Statesman, explicitly stating that the event in question did not go ahead, and that the New Statesman in any event does not communicate with Ministers recommending adoption of modification of policies, or awarding of government business, that would be beneficial to sponsors.
Mid-September 2018	Transfer of case papers to new Registrar
End September 2018	Consideration of all available information by new Registrar
5 October 2018	Letter from Registrar to New Statesman notifying decision that the activity in question in this case did not amount to consultant lobbying.

*= not listed are multiple instances of the Registrar's Office emailing the New Statesman to chase a response to previous substantive communications from the Registrar and Office.