



Sir Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

27th April 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you as the General Secretary of Prospect trade union, the recognised union for workers in UK Security Vetting (UKSV). The recent controversy surrounding the appointment of Peter Mandelson as HM Ambassador to the United States has placed a spotlight on the work of our members in UKSV, and we are conscious that these dedicated professionals are not able to defend themselves in public.

We are extremely concerned that the initial narrative on this appointment from the Government, as set out by yourself and in the resignation letter from your former Chief of Staff, indicated that there had been a failure in the vetting undertaken by UKSV. Recent revelations have clearly demonstrated that this was not the case, as you set out in your statement to the House of Commons last Monday. We believe that blame was wrongly attributed to civil servants in UKSV in recent months, and would urge government to be clear on this point when discussing this issue.

As you said in that statement, you ordered a review of UKSV when you were under the impression that a failure of vetting had occurred. The terms of reference for that review have not been published, and you said in your statement that they had recently been updated and a chair appointed. Our members in UKSV will be unclear why this review is continuing when it is now the Government's position that UKSV did not fail to properly vet the appointment of Peter Mandelson. I am writing to ask that you publish the terms of reference, or a summary version if there are security concerns around publishing the full terms of reference, as soon as possible, along with an explanation of why it is still taking place. I am also writing to ask that there is a formal mechanism for staff at UKSV to feed into that review through their recognised trade unions.

Finally, Prospect is proud to represent thousands of professionals who have undergone vetting in order that they can perform the vital work they do on behalf of the nation. We are deeply concerned that the debate around this appointment has at times appeared to call into question the important principle that details of the findings of vetting processes should be kept strictly private. The integrity of the vetting process, and the willingness of individuals to undergo vetting, is dependent on this important principle. It is incumbent on all politicians to defend this principle, notwithstanding the specific argument in this case about the ability of the Foreign Office to disclose the UKSV recommendation to ministers. I would urge you to instruct all members of the Government to be extremely clear on this point when addressing this issue, in order that confidence in the confidentiality of the vetting process is not inadvertently undermined.

Prospect
100 Rochester Row
London
SW1P 1JP

0300 600 1878
info@prospect.org.uk
prospect.org.uk

Due to the considerable interest in this issue from our members, we will be publishing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Clancy

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Prospect General Secretary