



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Lobbying register – second annual report

29 October 2020

Reference: SPCB(2020)Paper 057

Executive summary

1. The SPCB has been engaged by parliamentary officials at regular intervals on the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 and Lobbying Register, since 2017. This included a paper and discussion for last year's inaugural annual report.
2. The second annual report has now been produced, inclusive of data for the first 2 years and 3 months of the Register (from 12 March 2018 to 12 June 2020).
3. The report is not a statutory requirement but produced to help provide public information about the progress and operation of the Register, as well as to update the SPCB and appropriate committees of the Parliament. As such, the report is attached to this paper, for further discussion with the SPCB.
4. The report provides information up to 12 June 2020 on activity by registrants (i.e. any company, organisation or other eligible individual such as sole trader, likely to engage in regulated lobbying). This includes the numbers, and composition of, current registrants by type and sector; the numbers of information returns published by registrant type and sector; and updates on the work undertaken by the Lobbying Register Team in that past year.
5. As mentioned within the report, the reporting cycle to 12 June each year means this data is only just starting to touch on the ongoing impact caused by COVID19, since mid-March 2020. These impacts will be more apparent in next year's analysis.
6. The Lobbying Register Team is however working with registrants in full knowledge that many are currently operating in very difficult circumstances, particularly those with trading status concerns or which have lost or furloughed key staff. The team has been very active supporting those organisations affected, whilst recognising the Parliament has a statutory responsibility to continue to operate the legislation.
7. A copy of the report will be provided to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee, which has lobbying within its remit.
8. This year a copy will also be sent to the Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee, which is currently undertaking its statutory review of The Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. It is hoped this report will help to assist that review.
9. The Corporate Body is aware that the provisions within the Act mean that the Lobbying Register is the responsibility of the Parliament and that it is administered by parliamentary staff. Although this statutory review by the Committee is still in its early stages, the Corporate Body will wish to be aware of it, in terms of any tracking any possible outcomes for parliamentary resources as it progresses.

10. Officials will be happy to answer any questions on the report or any other issues relating to the ongoing administration of the Act at the meeting.

Publication Scheme

11. This paper will be published in accordance with the SPCB's publication scheme.

Decision

12. The SPCB is invited to note this paper and the annual report.

Lobbying Register Team

Engagement & Communications Group

October 2020