



Liam Byrne: Overhaul of employment system needed after MP's suspension

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GMB, the union representing MP's staff, has called for a major overhaul of the employment system after a senior Labour MP was suspended.

Member of Parliament for Birmingham Hodge Hill Liam Byrne has today been found to have committed "serious breaches" of Parliament's Bullying and Harassment Policy and suspended from the Commons for two days.

GMB, which represents Mr Byrne's former staff member David Barker, welcomed the judgement but stated sanction is 'far beneath what is needed to address the abuse'.

The former Government Minister was found to have 'abused his position of power' in a report by Parliament's Independent Expert Panel.

His bullying behaviour included ostracising his staff member for months; not showing care for his health and wellbeing; and removing access to online accounts needed to carry out his duties.

The incidents took place from February to July of 2020, yet the final report and sanctions have only been released after a nearly two-year investigation the Independent Complaints and Grievance Scheme (ICGS).

Mr Byrne has been instructed to apologise to Mr Barker, undertake training to address his behaviour and weakness in management, and will be suspended from the House of Commons for two sitting days.

Jenny Symmons, Chair of the GMB Branch for Members' Staff, said:

"We resoundingly condemn the despicable behaviour of Liam Byrne MP, who showed David a complete lack of respect or regard while in his employment.

"GMB welcomes the decision to uphold our member's complaint of serious bullying and harassment.

"However, the sanction of an apology, a recommendation for training and a suspension of just two days is far beneath what is needed to address this kind of abuse.

"The experience Mr Barker had while working for Liam Byrne MP was horrendous, but sadly not uncommon.

"MPs have a duty of care for their staff which we see violated time and time again.

"It's time we removed the responsibility of employment from MPs for good and give staff the safety and security at work they deserve."

