

HOT TOPIC: PASC INQUIRY FALLOUT

THE QUESTION: Is the end of self-regulation inevitable?

Francis Maude MP last month piled the pressure on the government to respond to the PASC report into lobbying, and warned that if the industry fails to self-regulate effectively, it "should be prepared for intense pressure for Parliament to legislate to ensure greater accountability"



ROBBIE MACDUFF

CHAIRMAN, ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL POLITICAL CONSULTANTS (APPC)

Francis Maude has called for PA firms to publish all client lists and the names of full- and part-time staff. Under the APPC self-regulatory code of conduct members are required to do this quarterly, as well as disclose freelancers.

The APPC welcomes his call for greater transparency across the industry as a whole and particularly welcomes his call for amendments to the Solicitors' Code of Conduct to ensure that solicitors' firms that do PA work disclose their lobbying clients.

He also said that "if the industry fails to self-regulate, it should be prepared for legislation that will ensure greater accountability".

The APPC, PRCA and CIPR, along with independent experts, have been working on a new self-regulatory model for the whole industry – consultancies, in-house teams and all who engage with the institutions of government. Soon the Public Affairs Council Working Party will publish a position statement, based on a consultation, which will propose the establishment of an umbrella organisation for the self-regulation of all lobbyists. It will be a key objective of the PAC to promote universality, namely the opportunity to join for all organisations that carry out lobbying or advise on lobbying.

I believe that the industry can self-regulate more comprehensively and effectively, and that in establishing the PAC we will demonstrate to government, Parliament and the PASC our commitment to improving self-regulation. The end of self-regulation is not inevitable.