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# It's a mess, says Elphicke, as party fails to explain allegations MP hits at 'injustice' over mystery of his suspension

by Eleanor Perkins  
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"The whole area of reporting misconduct and managing allegations of misconduct is a mess."

That was a comment made by suspended Conservative MP Charlie Elphicke on Thursday when he revealed in a public statement that he still had not been told what allegations he faces.

The Deal and Dover MP said he had "absolutely no idea" when he received a call from a journalist just after 9pm last Friday.

The reporter had heard he was having the whip withdrawn "in time for the 10 o'clock news".

Minutes later he received a call from the Chief Whip telling him that serious allegations had been made against him earlier that week and that these had been passed to the police.

Mr Elphicke was not told what the allegations were. He was just informed that the Prime Minister had decided the whip should be suspended from him.

Before he knew it, the news was spread across the national media.

This new information came to light in a statement which Mr Elphicke delivered to the executive of the Dover and Deal Conservative Association at a meeting in Deal on Thursday night.

He discusses what the past fortnight has taught him, and



Charlie Elphicke, pictured at work in the House of Commons, faces unspecified allegations announced by his party

### 'INNOCENT UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE'

Keith Single, chairman of the Dover and Deal Conservative Association, said: "Charlie Elphicke is the best MP Dover and Deal has ever had. As far as we are concerned, he is innocent until proven otherwise."

"Charlie Elphicke is a hard-working, professional and dedicated MP who campaigns tirelessly for his constituents. "We have still not been told what these allegations are and will not be commenting any further at this stage."

is calling for a "fair proper process" for those who feel they have been harassed or abused as well as those facing allegations.

The statement says: "The fact is that this whole area of reporting misconduct and managing allegations of misconduct is a mess."

"I have every sympathy with people who have been harassed or victimised and feel they have nowhere to turn. That is a denial of justice."

"It is also a denial of justice when people who have had allegations made against them lose their job or their party whip without knowing what those allegations are."

"I believe this is fundamentally wrong. Wrong because it's an injustice to those who stand accused. But also wrong because it undermines our values as a country."

"We believe in the rule of law – that everyone, be they so very high or so very low, should be equal before the law."

"We believe in the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise. We believe in natural justice. So, I ask you: was it in line with our values as a country that the media were told of allegations made against me last week before I was?"

"Was it in line with our values that the presumption of innocence was undermined by the whip being suspended?"

"Was it in line with our values to cause prejudice and harm the chances of my getting a fair hearing?"

The MP was suspended from the party after "serious allegations" were made against him.

He denies any criminal wrongdoing and has vowed to clear his name.



Natalie Elphicke was critical of her husband's treatment

Picture: Alan Langley

## Wife reveals family's 'hurt and strain'

by Paul Francis  
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The wife of suspended Tory MP Charlie Elphicke has criticised the party for throwing her husband "to the wolves" after he was suspended.

Natalie Elphicke said her husband had been hung out to dry and pleaded with Prime Minister Theresa May to end the "desperate madness" of "kangaroo courts by political central offices."

In a newspaper article, she said her husband had the whip withdrawn before the police or party had a chance to review any actions.

She wrote: "As Conservatives we cannot stand by when injustice is heaped upon injustice. When wrong follows wrong."

"When one of our own is thrown to the wolves – is hung out to dry in this manner."

"I cannot begin to describe the hurt and strain, the confusion and fear for me and my family."

She urged Mrs May to set up an independent and non-political arbitrator for complaints.

"Rushing to judgment has led to the death of one man who lived to serve those who elected him. It must not be allowed to lead to any more," she added, referring to the death by hanging of Welsh Assembly minister Carl Sargeant.

Mrs Elphicke attacked the Chief Whip who ordered her husband's suspension.

She said: "By his actions, the new chief whip showed himself to be a man without any thought as to the welfare and wellbeing of my husband and our children."

### EVEN WHICH POLICE FORCE IS HANDLING COMPLAINT REMAINS UNCLEAR

Mr Elphicke told the executive of the Dover and Deal Conservative Association: "So what then is my explanation for what I am accused of?"

"I cannot give one. Because I do not know what I am accused of. I received a call from a journalist just after 9pm on Friday evening saying he had heard I was having the whip withdrawn in time for the 10 O'Clock news and asked me

what was going on. I said I had absolutely no idea. Minutes later I received a call from the Chief Whip telling me that serious allegations had been made against me earlier that week and that these had been passed to the police.

"I asked what the allegations were and he would not tell me. He only said that he and the Prime Minister had decided the whip should be suspended

from me. As we spoke, the news spread across the national media."

"And that is all I can tell you. Since then I have had no further information. And here we are."

"So, extraordinary as it may seem, I am no wiser now than I was on Friday evening when the Chief Whip called me."

By the time we went to press on Tuesday night, Mr Elphicke had still not been contacted

by police. It is not clear which police force is dealing with the complaint.

He added: "I have always done my best to work hard for our community – and will continue to do so. I have always put all my energy into fighting for the people of Dover and Deal – and will continue to do so. For me, the interests of the people of Dover and Deal will always come first."



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