

The Standards Committee's Annual Report and the new Group Leaders' duty

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, political Group Leaders now have duties in relation to standards of conduct.

A leader of a political group must:

- (a) take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group and
- (b) cooperate with the Council's Standards Committee in the exercise of its functions.

Group Leaders who fail to comply with the duty maybe regarded as bringing their office into disrepute, in breach of the Code of Conduct for Members.

In addition, the 2021 Act places a duty on Standards Committees to make an annual report to their council as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year (1 April-31 March). The report must be considered by the relevant council before the end of 3 months beginning with the day on which the council receives it.

The Standards Committee's annual report must include an assessment of the extent to which Group Leaders have complied with their duties (paragraph 1 above).

The Standards Committee requires information from the Group Leaders in order to do this.

Having regard to the requirements in the 2021 Act, a template report has been drafted to assist Group Leaders and remind them of the matters to be covered in their reports to the Standards Committee. This template is included in Appendix 1.

The template does not ask, and should not include, details of individual cases. The report focuses on the type of action which has been taken in relation to each matter.

Group Leaders are asked to produce these reports once a year; however, if issues of importance arise during the year, Group Leaders should consult with the Monitoring Officer, who will inform the Chair of the Standards Committee.

Completed forms are to be forwarded by Group Leaders to the Monitoring Officer by 31st March. The Monitoring Officer will report to the Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee will use appropriate information from the Group Leaders' reports to inform its annual report to Council. The Committee's annual report will contain a short summary of the steps taken to fulfil the duty, its opinion on whether what has been done is sufficient and any future pieces of work that might be undertaken etc.

Appendix 1

Report by Group Leaders (GL) to the Standards Committee in relation to their group leader duties.

Report by	
Political Group	
Period for which report applies	1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025
Number of Members in Group	

Steps taken by the GL to promote compliance with the Code of Conduct:

Appendix 2 includes the type of matters the Standards Committee expects the Group Leaders to pay attention to and the threshold that is used by the Committee to consider if you have taken steps in relation to your duty as Group Leader.

Please consider these matters and the 10 behavioural principals in public life that are in Appendix 3 when preparing your response.

Personal Commitment
Use your own words to complete this section. See Appendix 2 for more information

Encouraging Members
Use your own words to complete this section. See Appendix 2 for more information

Working with the Standards Committee and other Group Leaders
Use your own words to complete this section. See Appendix 2 for more information

Consideration for this year compared to last year

A copy of the form that was received by you last year has been attached. Below, please explain what matters have improved this year

A copy of the form that was received by you last year has been attached. Below, please explain what matters you think need further attention during the next year?

Statistics:

Number of Members in Group	Number who have attended Code of Conduct Training	Percentage

Number, Source and Level of Complaints

	Informal	Local Resolution (Stage)			PSOW
		1	2	3	
Public					
Officers					
Councillors					

Appendix 2

There is no need to include all the information listed below but these are examples of the type of information that you may wish to consider including as part of your response and based on the Statutory Guidance published by Welsh Government on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Personal commitment:

- demonstrated personal commitment by attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards, including the Code of Conduct;
- setting an example by demonstrating the principles of conduct in public life including specifically politeness and respect;
- used your influence to promote a positive culture;
- promoted a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;
- addressed issues as soon as they arose;
- promoted civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal meetings of the Council;
- worked to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;

Encouraging group members:

- encouraged group members to attend relevant development or training, particularly around equalities and standards;, including the Code of Conduct;
- ensured nominees to a committee had received the recommended training for that committee;

Co-operation with others:

- promoted informal resolution procedures, and worked with the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer to achieve local resolution;
- worked with the standards committee to recognise inappropriate behavioural patterns, give them consideration, and deal with these matters e.g., asking for, or suggesting appropriate training, asking to delete inappropriate message from social media pages or asking them to consider apologising.
- attended a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
- attended meetings with the Monitoring Officer and/or other Group Leaders as necessary to discuss matters of conduct;
- worked together with other Group Leaders to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council;

Appendix 3

Statutory Standards of Conduct in Public Life in Wales

- ♣ Selflessness
- ♣ Honesty
- ♣ Integrity and Propriety
- ♣ Duty to uphold the law
- ♣ Stewardship
- ♣ Objectivity in Decision making
- ♣ Equality and respect
- ♣ Openness
- ♣ Accountability
- ♣ Leadership