

Ceredigion County Council

Ethics & Standards Committee

Group Leaders Reporting Duty

1. Group leaders are subject to two new statutory duties:
 - i. To take reasonable steps to promote and maintain good standards of behaviour amongst their group members
 - ii. To co-operate with the Standards Committee in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.

Local Government & Elections Wales Act 2021: S62

2. Group leaders could be deemed to be bringing their office into disrepute under the councillors' code of conduct by not fulfilling the duties;
Duty does not make group leaders accountable for behaviour of their members.
3. The Ethics & Standards Committee is under a duty to:
 - a) monitor compliance by leaders of political groups on the council with their duties, and
 - b) to advise, train or arrange to train leaders of political groups on the council about matters relating to those duties.

Local Government & Elections Wales Act 2021: S63

4. The Ethics & Standards Committee is also under a duty to prepare an annual report which:
 - a) must include the committee's assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the council have complied with their duties, and
 - b) may include recommendations or comment on levels of compliance with these new duties

Local Government & Elections Wales Act 2021: S63

5. The draft guidance issued by WG in relation to the new duties suggests the steps that could be taken by Group Leaders to fulfill these obligations;
"Reasonable steps" and "good standards" are not as yet defined.
6. Group leaders must take the WG Guidance into account

7. Group Leaders already take some steps to prevent matters escalating/nip issues in the bud. These are informal & confidential and so should not be publicly or individually reported;
8. The template below is based on examples in the WG Guidance to prompt group leaders on the matters to be covered in their reports;
9. So that the Ethics & Standards Committee retains independence from operational matters it will ask Group Leaders to report once per year.
10. The Ethics & Standards Committee Chair may wish to meet group leaders periodically to review behaviour generally. The Chair may also seek the views of the Monitoring Officer.
11. If additional matters of importance, or matters which might be raised by the Ethics & Standards Committee, such as seeking assurance from Group Leaders, arise during the year, these can be reported to the Monitoring Officer who will inform the Ethics & Standards Committee;
12. Group Leaders will prepare their report for the first available Ethics & Standards Committee meeting after 1st April each year;
13. The report will not mention specific cases and will refer to the type of actions undertaken;
14. The Committee will thereafter meet with each group leader informally to explore their report. The Committee may also seek the view of the Monitoring Officer.
15. The Committee may give informal feedback to group leaders
16. The Ethics & Standards Committee Chair' annual report will contain:
 - a) short summary of steps taken by group leaders to fulfill the duty,
 - b) its opinion on whether sufficient has been done,
 - c) any recommendations as to what may be done by group leaders to fulfill their duties,
 - d) any recommendations as to what may be done to evidence the group leaders' actions,
 - e) any recommendations as to what may be done to improve the reporting mechanism,
 - f) what additional training if any is required,
 - g) any future pieces of work that might be undertaken etc.

17. The Ethics & Standards Committee Chair' annual report will be presented to Council at the next available meeting following consideration by the Ethics and Standards Committee.

Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct

To be completed by Monitoring Officer

| | | | |
|------------------|--|----------------------|--------|
| Report by: | | | |
| Political Group: | | | |
| No. of members: | | No. trained on Code: | X (Y%) |
| For the period: | | | |

Number, Source and Level of Complaints

| | Informal | Local Resolution | | | PSOW/APW |
|-------------|----------|------------------|--|--|----------|
| | | | | | |
| Public | | | | | |
| Officers | | | | | |
| Councillors | | | | | |

Steps taken to Promote Compliance
(To Be Completed by Group Leader)

Include matters such as:

- demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee;
- setting an example
- using their influence to promote a positive culture

- promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings;
- address issues as soon as they arise
- promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Ethics & Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer to achieve local resolution;
- promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;
- attend a meeting of the Council's Ethics & Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;
- attend periodic meetings with the Monitoring Officer and other group leaders
- attend meetings between the Monitoring Officer and members of their group relating to Code of Conduct matter, as necessary

- work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;
- work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.
- Work constructively with the Ethics & Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer to identify training requirements for themselves and their members.

