

Powys County Council

Standards Committee

Group Leaders' Code of Conduct Health Check

Promoting compliance with the Council's Code of Conduct

Support and Guidance for Group Leaders

Last Updated: February 2025



Section 1 | Items to consider

The purpose of this document is to assist Group Leaders in completing their annual Code of Conduct Health Check Return. Together with the Council's Code of Conduct, you are encouraged to use this guidance alongside, any documentation, rules and advice supplied by your own Party or support mechanism.

Preparation

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Group Leaders are advised to consider:

- What has gone well in their Group during the past 12 months.
- What has gone not so well during the past year.
- Any external factors and/or pressures that may have an impact on their members within the context of the Code of Conduct.
- Areas for improvement or ongoing development.

Writing the report

Group Leaders are encouraged to keep to the parameters of the report:

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- **Column C** asks you to provide a “one word” personal assessment as to whether you are meeting the particular Compliance.
- **Column D** then requests that you provide examples or evidence to substantiate your “one word” personal assessment.
- **Column E** is not mandatory, but provides the opportunity for the Group Leader to provide a SMART description of a task or area of improvement to be considered during the forthcoming year. i.e. **Who** will be responsible **What** is being proposed? and **When** will it be completed?
- **Column F** then asks you again for a “one word” response to indicate the level of priority to be given to the new idea or initiative.

Meeting with the Standards Committee

Group Leaders are advised to consider:

- Who will attend with them such as their Group Whip.
- What will be the main points they wish to get across at the meeting.
- Whether it is best to attend in person or online.

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Group Leaders are also encouraged to consider this meeting as:

- A time of mutual benefit
- An opportunity to share concerns, and
- How they and the Standards committee can work better together.

Section 2 | Background Information

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (The Act) imposes requirements upon Political Group Leaders to promote compliance with the Code of Conduct amongst its members, and to report the steps taken to do so to the Standards Committee.

The guidance issued by Welsh Government in relation to the new duties outline the steps that could be taken by Group Leaders to fulfil these obligations. These can be summarised as follows:

The role of Group Leaders during this task

Group Leaders are subject to two statutory duties under the Act

- To promote good standards of behaviour amongst their group members
- To co-operate with the Standards Committee

Group Leaders could be deemed to be bringing their office into disrepute under the councillors' Code of Conduct by not fulfilling the duties.

Group Leaders:

- Should prepare their report in time for the scheduled meeting in April/May of the Standards Committee;
- Already take some steps to prevent matters escalating. These are informal & confidential and so should not be publicly or individually reported.

Furthermore, the report should not mention specific cases and will only refer to the type of actions undertaken as set out in Section 1 of this Guidance Document.

The role of the Standards Committee during this task

The Standards Committee is under a duty to prepare and submit an annual report to Full Council at the meeting following the AGM (typically in June or July) in which it must comment on levels of compliance as set out in the new Act.

The Standards Committee in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer and Group Leaders have developed a template to enable Group Leaders describe areas of good practice as well as those areas or areas of concern they consider to require further development.

To enable the Standards Committee to retain independence from operational matters it will ask Group Leaders to report once per year. However, if there are urgent matters during the year, these can be reported to the Monitoring Officer, who will liaise with the Committee Chair.

The Committee will meet with each Group Leader in private to consider their report. The Committee may also seek the view of the Monitoring Officer.

Group Leaders may consider it appropriate to include their Group Whip when preparing their return as well as inviting them to attend the meeting with the Standards Committee.

The Standards Committee's annual report will contain a short summary of the steps it has taken to fulfil its duty and will provide an opinion on whether sufficient action has been undertaken to meet the expectations of the new Act. Where appropriate, the Committee may recommend future tasks to be undertaken etc.