

Standards in Public Life

What you need to know

Committee on
Standards in
Public Life

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The Committee on Standards in Public Life

The role of the Committee

- Established in 1994 to look into public concern about standards in public life (the 'Nolan' Committee)
- First Report in 1995 set out the basic standards infrastructure for public life in the UK, including the Seven Principles of Public Life
- CSPL is a standing, non-statutory Committee and its remit is general policy issues and not individual cases – **not** a Commons Committee responsible for determining whether standards have been breached; **not** the Commissioner for Standards.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

1: Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2: Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3: Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4: Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5: Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6: Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7: Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Headlines

“MP ordered to repay more than £11k”

**“..relied on a member of staff to describe
the rules to me at the time”**

“Cash for access”

The Rules and the Principles

- Know the rules
- Be alert to situations which might bring the rules into play
- Test your assumptions and your behaviour against the Seven Principles before you act
- Seek advice – and be prepared to defend your actions

**For further information or advice the
Committee can be contacted at:**

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