

## CSPL local government ethical standards 15 best practice recommendations

**1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Progress:** The code of conduct prohibits bullying and intimidation. More detailed definitions of bullying and harassment are contained in the Council's Equalities Policy.

---

**2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation, and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Progress:** The code of conduct requires councillors to comply with it, including any investigations.

---

**3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Progress:** The effectiveness of the code of conduct is considered as part of the Standards Committee's Annual Report to the County Council

---

**4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Progress:** Yes, in place.

---

**5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Progress:** Yes, in place

---

**6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Progress:** Yes, in place, at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer

---

**7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Progress:** Yes, in place

---

**8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Progress:** Yes, in place

---

**9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Progress:** The Sub-Committee that makes the decision has the discretion as to whether or not a decision notice should be published.

---

**10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Progress:** Yes, a straightforward guide is in place on the website. Individuals who submit a complaint will be given an estimated timescale.

---

**11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Progress:** Not applicable to a County Council

---

**12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Progress:** Not applicable to County Councils.

---

**13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Progress:** Yes, in place. Different members of staff from Legal Services can be involved as necessary.

---

**14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement, and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness, and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Progress:**  
Yes, in place

---

**15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

**Progress:**  
Meetings are ad hoc, as required.

---