



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Complaining about Assembly Members' Standards of Conduct - How to do it

The National Assembly for Wales has a Committee on Standards of Conduct which is responsible for the investigation of complaints referred to it by the Assembly's Commissioner for Standards about an Assembly Member not complying with the Assembly's:-

- adopted Standards of conduct, and
- requirements to register and declare certain financial and other interests.

Commissioner for Standards

The Commissioner is an Independent person appointed by the Assembly to investigate complaints against Members and to advise the Assembly generally on issues concerning Standards of Conduct.

If I have a Complaint what should I do first?

Consider the nature of the complaint and what may be the most appropriate means of pursuing it. If the matter concerns the actions of an Assembly Member (in the course of their duties), it is likely that this is a matter for the Commissioner for Standards who will consider whether to refer the case to the Committee on Standards of Conduct.

Examples of the sorts of things the Commissioner can refer to the Committee are:-

- Members not declaring they could gain from a particular decision of the Assembly.
- Members who do not register certain financial details.
- Members who use their allowances in an improper manner.

Though the remit of the Committee is broad, the Commissioner cannot investigate everything. For example, complaints about an AM's performance as a constituency AM would be a matter for the electorate and not the Committee. In some cases therefore he may suggest someone else is better placed to consider your complaint (see "Other means of complaint").

What do I do if I think that this is something for the Commissioner to Consider?

Put the facts of your complaint in a letter and send it to:

*National Assembly Commissioner for Standards
National Assembly for Wales,
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA*

To help the Commissioner decide what action to take try to put in as much detail as possible and include any supporting evidence.

If I make a complaint what happens then?

The Commissioner will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and consider whether it is admissible. If he decides it is, he will carry out a more detailed investigation.

If the Commissioner does not feel that your complaint is admissible, you will be notified, and will receive an explanation of his decision.

If the Commissioner does decide to carry out a formal investigation, you will be informed. At this stage the Commissioner may be obliged to inform the Assembly Member against whom you're complaining. This will mean that both the details of the complaint and the person complaining (i.e. you) will be given to the Member.

If you do not wish your details to be released you must specify this. However, in some cases this may prevent the continuation of an investigation.

The Investigation

The Commissioner will investigate the complaint and will present a report to the Standards Committee setting out the facts he has been able to establish, and any conclusions he has reached, on whether the Member has breached the Assembly's codes of standards. The Committee will normally hold a hearing to consider the complaint. The Committee may invite you to attend (though you do not have to do so if you do not wish) and you will be informed of the outcome.

Full details of this complaint procedure are available from the Commissioner for Standards at the above address. Or on the Assembly website at: <http://www.assemblywales.org/memhome/mem-commissioner-standards.htm>

Other Means of Complaint

This leaflet sets out how you can make a complaint about some matters. If you have grievance about issues that are not covered by the Committee on Standards of Conduct there are other means by which your complaint can be heard and investigated. These may be able to help:-

*Permanent Secretary, National Assembly for Wales
Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
Parliamentary Ombudsman (UK)*

Commissioner for Standards: June 2009

