

Terms of reference for Standards Committee of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Remit

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) has a Standards Committee to oversee, maintain and strengthen high standards of conduct by its members.

The Standards Committee has a range of functions relating to the Members' Code of Conduct. Unless business dictates otherwise, the Committee will meet at least twice per year.

Composition

The Standards Committee will be composed of two Authority Members and four independent people who are not Members or Officers of the Authority, one of whom will chair the committee. Representation on this committee is not required to bear the same proportionality as the political composition of the whole Authority (Section 53(10) Local Government Act 2000).

Term of office

Independent Members' term of office is for a period of not less than four years nor more than six years, and they are eligible for re-appointment for a second period of up to four years. An Independent Member may therefore serve for between 8 and 10 years.

For the Authority members of standards committees, their term of office is four years or the period until that member's appointment as a member of that authority ceases, whichever is the shorter. Such a member shall cease to be a member of that standards committee if that member ceases to be a member of the relevant authority concerned.

Chair and Deputy Chair

The roles of Chair and Deputy Chair must be undertaken by the Independent Members. Appointments will be made in the first meeting of every financial year. The period of election for the Chair and Vice Chair should be the shorter of either their remaining tenure or 4- 6 years.

Role and function

To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the authority.

To assist members of the authority to observe the authority's code of conduct.

To advise the authority on revision of the code of conduct.

To monitor the operation of the authority's adopted code of conduct.

To train authority members and advise on conduct matters generally.

Where statute so permits, to arrange dispensation to speak and/or vote where a member has an interest.

To receive and implement advice from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and or recommendations from any adjudication panel or case tribunal.

Where statute permits, to receive reports and complaints in relation to members, to conduct or oversee appropriate investigations and to make appropriate recommendations to the authority.

To receive reports from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in relation to allegations of maladministration or allegations of breach of code of conduct and make appropriate recommendations.

To exercise such powers or duties as may be given or imposed on standards committees from time to time by legislation.

Powers delegated to the Committee

To determine Stage 3 Service complaints in accordance with the Authority's Complaints Procedure.

Delegated powers in relation to any matter within the terms of reference of the committee except where this involves expenditure for which there is no approved budget.

Quorum

The quorum shall be at least:

- (i) three members are participating in the meeting, including the chair (or person presiding at the meeting if the chair is not present); and
- (ii) half the members participating in the meeting including the chair (or person presiding at the meeting if the chair is not present) are independent members.

Voting

Decisions of the Committee shall be decided by a majority of votes cast by the members present at the meeting. In the case of an equality of votes the person presiding at the meetings shall have a second casting vote.

Frequency of meetings

Unless business dictates otherwise, the Committee will meet at least twice per year. The meeting will be attended by the Monitoring Officer or nominated representative.

Minutes of meetings

Minutes of all meetings will be recorded and signed by the Chair. All decisions will be recorded, including the reason for such decisions and any declarations of interest made.

Reporting

The Committee will prepare an annual report to be presented to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Revision of these terms of reference

These terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis

(As provided by the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001; and The Standards Committees (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006).