

About the Ethical Standards Commissioner



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- call 0300 011 0550
- email: info@ethicalstandards.org.uk
- or do it online at:
www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/contact-us

What does the Ethical Standards Commissioner do?



Ethical standards are the rules about what is right and wrong.

It means for example treating people the way you would like to be treated.



The Commissioner and their team are **independent**.

Independent means they do not work for the Scottish Parliament or Scottish Government.

The work the Commissioner does links with [Scottish Government plans](#) to make public services better.



We check **complaints** about the conduct of:

- Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs)
- local councillors
- and **board members of public bodies.**



A **complaint** is when a person says or writes that they are not happy about something.



A **Board** and its **members** look at the work an organisation is doing and check it is working well and following the rules.



Public bodies are organisations that work for the Government and give us public services. Examples of this include the police and health services.



These organisations follow a **Code of Conduct**.

A **Code of Conduct** is a set of rules that say how people should behave when they are at work.



We check **lobbyists** who have not put their name on a Government list.

A **lobbyist** is a person or group who tries to get an MSP to support a policy or campaign.



We check information from **whistle-blowers**.

A **whistle-blower** is a person who reports information about an organisation doing things that are against the law or are not safe.



We report honestly and clearly about what we find.



We check how Scottish Ministers make **public appointments**.

A **public appointment** is when a Scottish Government Minister appoints someone to the board of a public body.



We make a **Code of Practice** for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland.

The **Code of Practice** is a set of rules about how to appoint someone to the board of a public body in a fair way.



We investigate complaints when people or organisations have not followed the rules in the Code of Practice.



We tell the Scottish Parliament when this happens.



We give guidance and support to Scottish Ministers and boards to make sure they treat everyone who applies to be a board member fairly and boards are **diverse**.



Diverse means having a mix of different kinds of people:

- men and women
- young and old people
- people of different ethnic backgrounds
- people from both poor and more wealthy backgrounds
- disabled and non-disabled people.



- We make sure our office follows the rules of the **Principles of Public Life**.

The **Principles of Public Life** are a set of rules about how people working in public life should behave.

What we believe in



We will do all our work following the rules of what is right and wrong.



We will spend public money in a good way.



We will be honest and open about what we do.



We will treat every individual and organisation that contacts us with kindness and respect so they can trust us.

We will treat everyone fairly.



We want people to tell us when we get things wrong.



When we get things wrong we will show what we have learned and make our work better.

What we want to do



We will tell people about our rules and how we do our work.



We will make sure we have the staff, money and materials to do our work.



We will make sure our staff have what they need to do their jobs.



We will use computers and **systems** to help the way we work and to keep our work **secure**.

Secure means keeping our work safe.

A **system** is a way of doing something that follows a set of rules.



We will have a good complaints system that:

- works well
- helps us to learn
- makes sure people who work in public service have high standards



We will make sure that we are following our rules about how we do our work.



We will help keep an **ethical standards framework** that works well. We will do this by working with organisations like ours.

The **ethical standards framework** is a way of making sure that everyone keeps following the rules of what is right and wrong.

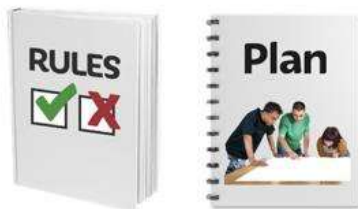


We will help to make sure boards are diverse and look like the communities they work with.



We will help make a public appointments system that follows our rules, is trusted and gets the best people for the job.

How we will do our work



If you would like to read our plan for doing our work from 2024-2028 click here:

<https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/strategic-plan-2024-2028-easy-read>