

ETHICS AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Ethics and Integrity Commission is to promote the highest standards in public life.

2. Responsibilities

The Ethics and Integrity Commission will:

- A. Promote and safeguard the Seven Principles of Public Life;
- B. Conduct research and thematic inquiries and make recommendations on changes to present arrangements to help ensure the highest standards in public life;
- C. Advise public authorities on the development of clear codes of conduct with effective oversight arrangements, in line with the planned forthcoming obligations of the Public Office (Accountability) Bill;
- D. Examine current concerns about standards of conduct of all public office holders, and report annually to the Prime Minister on the health of standards in public life;
- E. Engage and inform the wider public on the values, rules and oversight mechanisms that govern standards in public life;
- F. Convene ethics and standards bodies in central government (and parliamentary standards bodies, with their agreement) to share best practice and identify and address areas of common concern.¹

3. Remit

The Ethics and Integrity Commission may:

- A. Examine any systems in place to uphold ethical standards across public life in England, including those relating to conduct, and the financial activities and commercial endeavours of a public office holder;
- B. Examine any arrangements relating to the funding of political parties, elections, and referendums;
- C. Not inquire into matters relating to the devolved administrations, except with their agreement;

¹ [Link to list of bodies attending on EIC website]

D. Not investigate individual cases.

"Public life" includes the following:

- E. Ministers, civil servants, and special advisers; and non-ministerial office holders in central government;
- F. Members of Parliament and Peers sitting in the House of Lords;
- G. Members and officers of all public bodies; and members and officers of other bodies discharging public functions;
- H. Elected members and officers of local authorities, including directly elected Mayors;
- I. Private and voluntary sector organisations involved in the delivery of public services, when commissioned by public bodies or paid for through public expenditure.

4. Leadership and Membership

- A. The Commission is comprised of an independent chair, six additional independent members², and political members nominated by the leaders of the three largest political parties in the House of Commons.
- B. The chair and independent members are appointed by the Prime Minister to serve a single non-renewable five-year term. The appointment of the chair and independent members are regulated by the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The role of the chair has been designated as a significant public appointment.
- C. Political members are appointed by the Prime Minister for a renewable three-year term.³

5. Governance

² The Commission currently has an independent Chair and three additional independent members. The Government will be recruiting three further independent members.

³ There are currently four political members on the Commission. Following the 2024 General Election, the Liberal Democrats became the third largest party and were invited to nominate a political member. The SNP nominated Ian Blackford in 2023 and, at the end of his term in June 2026, the Commission will revert to three political members.

- A. The Ethics and Integrity Commission is an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body of the Cabinet Office.⁴ It is sponsored by the Cabinet Office through its senior sponsor, the Director of Propriety and Ethics.
- B. It publishes a code of conduct that sets out the values and standards of behaviour expected of members of the Commission.
- C. The Cabinet Office provides an annual budget and secretariat to the Commission. The Ethics and Integrity Commission will have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Cabinet Office, which it will publish on its website.

⁴ In line with this governance arrangement, the Cabinet Office may review these terms of reference annually.