

First report to the Sixth Senedd under Standing Order 22.9

October 2021



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About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddStandards

Current Committee membership:



Committee Chair:
Vikki Howells MS
Welsh Labour



Andrew RT Davies MS
Welsh Conservatives



Heledd Fychan MS
Plaid Cymru



John Griffiths MS
Welsh Labour

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1. Introduction

1. The terms of reference of the Standards of Conduct Committee (the Committee) are set out in Standing Order 22.1. In accordance with functions set out in Standing Order 22.2 the Committee must:

“investigate, report on and, if appropriate, recommend action in respect of any complaint referred to it by the Commissioner for Standards...” .

2. This report is made to the Senedd under Standing Order 22.9 and paragraph 8.1 of the Procedure for Dealing with Complaints against Members of the Senedd (the Procedure).

3. This report sets out the details of the complaint and the way in which the Committee arrived at its recommendation.

2. The Complaint

4. The Standards of Conduct Committee received a report from the Commissioner for Standards (the Commissioner) relating to a former Member of the Senedd (Member). This report was pursuant to a referral from the Clerk to the Senedd to the Commissioner with regards misuse of Senedd resources.

5. The complaint relates to a member of support staff in the Member’s office inappropriately utilising the office cost allowance allocated to Members for items of stationery that were subsequently sold on. The Member concerned reported the member of staff immediately they were aware of the situation. Following a criminal investigation, the member of support staff was convicted of theft.

6. In addition to procuring and selling items of stationery, the member of support staff was also found to have been utilising Senedd resources for party political purposes.

7. The Commissioner concluded in both these instances he was satisfied that the Member:

“...did not authorise or have prior knowledge of the ordering and theft of the items by [the member of support staff] nor of ...use of the Commission ICT system for party political purposes”.

8. He concluded instead that:

“Both instances of misconduct by [the member of support staff] can properly be regarded as ‘rogue actions’ for which the Member of the Senedd was not responsible.”

9. Consequentially, the Commissioner dismissed the complaint.

The Committee considered the facts found in the Commissioner's report and agreed with the Commissioner's finding that there had been no breach of the provisions of the Code of Conduct relating to the use of Senedd resources.

10. As the Committee has found that there was no breach of the Code of Conduct this report has been anonymised in line with the requirement of the Procedure.

3. Matters of General principle

11. The Committee welcomed the Commissioner's finding that there has been a “fundamental change” in the system for the procurement of stationary by Members, which now provides:

“...a much greater degree of protection against dishonesty of the kind perpetrated [in this instance]”.