

<u>Promoting Compliance With the Code of Conduct</u>					
Report by:	Cllr Jason McLellan				
Political Group:	Labour				
No. of members:	17	No. trained on Code:		100 (Y%)	
For the period:	01/04/2023 – 31/03/2024				
<u>Number, Source and Level of Complaints</u>					
	Informal	Local Resolution (Stage)			PSOW
		1	2	3	
Public					1 complaint reached the Ombudsman who declined to investigate as the conduct complained of was unlikely to amount to a breach of the Code
Officers					
Councillors					
<u>Steps taken to Promote Compliance (To Be Completed by Group Leader)</u>					

Include matters such as:

- demonstrating personal commitment to and attending relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- encouraging group members to attend relevant development or training around equalities and standards;
- ensuring nominees to a Committee have received the recommended training for that Committee;

As a group leader, and Leader of Denbighshire County Council I am aware of my duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 in maintaining high standards of conduct and promoting equalities. I take this duty very seriously. I remain a believer that local authorities should be more reflective of the diverse communities and people they serve.

The Labour Group is bound by standing orders drafted by the Labour Party and agreed by members which encourage and promote good conduct, diversity and equality.

I have a new Labour Whip for the group, Cllr James May. Cllr May has a background in the trade union movement, works for Unison and is completely dedicated to the promotion of equalities. I have a new Deputy Leader, Cllr Julie Matthews, who is also cabinet member who is responsible for equalities and HR. I am happy that these senior roles in the Labour Group are occupied by councillors who are completely dedicated to the promotion of equalities and good conduct.

The last year in Denbighshire has been dominated by discussions around budget cuts. Throughout this process every decision is filtered through an Equality Impact assessment as required. Cabinet decisions explicitly ask that members consider Well Being Assessments.

Members of my group and I have attended training on awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveler communities. Similarly, I have attended a Racism Awareness course. Both Courses were arranged by the WLGA.

I am WLGA spokesperson for Social Justice. In this role I had the pleasure of meeting Vicky Tennant UK representative to the UNHCR, to discuss a number of matters.

- promoting civility and respect within group communications and meetings and in formal Council meetings;
- promoting informal resolution procedures in the Council, and working with the Standards Committee and monitoring officers to achieve local resolution;
- promoting a culture within the group which supports high standards of conduct and integrity;
- attend a meeting of the Council's Standards Committee if requested to discuss Code of Conduct issues;

Within the Labour group itself harassment or intimidation of members for any reason, or on the basis of gender, age, sexual orientation and gender identity, race, religion or disability is unacceptable conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

Members of the Labour group must sign and abide by any codes of conduct as may be agreed by the local authority from time to time. All members must sign up to the local code within two months of it being adopted, or they cease to be a member of the council. Members of the Labour group must sign any other legal requirements relating to acceptance of office. Members must refer any wrong-doing by other members to the Group Whip and to the Local Government Ombudsman in Wales and/or local Standards Committee and the Group Whip should immediately consider appropriate action if any Labour councillor is referred to a Standards body.

There is an expectation that Labour leadership positions and in particular Labour cabinets should where possible reflect the diversity of the area represented by the local authority and to deliver at least a gender balance of leadership positions to reflect the make-up of the group. I am pleased that the cabinet is now five female members and four male members.

I am grateful that no Labour member has been referred to Standards, but if they were I as leader would ensure that they fully complied with all procedural aspects and any adverse findings would also be dealt with by the group and group whip. In respect of the issue that was referred to the Ombudsman there was a finding that there was no case to answer

- work to implement any recommendations from the Standards Committee about improving standards;
- work together with other group leaders, within reason, to collectively support high standards of conduct within the Council.