

ROLE DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:

INDEPENDENT PERSON OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

PURPOSE OF JOB

The purpose of an Independent Person is to help increase public confidence in ethical standards and provide a clear signal that the complaints process in relation to the Members' Code of Conduct is fair. The Independent Person will be asked to provide a view on all complaints that have been investigated, and this view must be taken into account by the Standards and Conduct Committee. In doing so, the Independent Person provides a check on vexatious or politically motivated complaints. The Independent Person may also be asked to provide a view by Members who are the subject of a complaint, who may feel victimised or pressured by a member or members of the council.

RESPONSIBILITIES

As an appointed Independent Person of Leeds City Council your responsibilities will be the following:

1. To consider and provide a view in relation to allegations of misconduct made against Members, co-opted members, or Parish Councillors;
2. To attend meetings of the Standards and Conduct Committee (as and when required) to answer questions in relation to their expressed view, and to provide any supplementary information; and
3. To respond to requests for advice from Members, co-opted members, or Parish Councillors who are subject to a complaint of misconduct.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Standards and Conduct Committee will be made up of seven Councillors. The postholder will also have regular contact with elected Members and co-opted members of Leeds City Council, Members of Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area, the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer.

LOCATION

Meetings of the Standards and Conduct Committee take place in Civic Hall. The Civic Hall is fully accessible to wheelchair users, including an adapted, unisex toilet. There are talking lifts with Braille markers, to all floors.

REMUNERATION

The payment to the Independent Person is likely to equate to the allowance currently payable to an Independent Member of the Standards Committee. This amount will be reviewed annually.

QUALIFICATIONS

To be eligible for the post:

- You cannot currently be a member, co-opted member or employee of Leeds City Council, or have held one of these positions within the five years before the date of appointment.
- You cannot currently be a member, co-opted member or employee of a Parish or Town Council in the Leeds area, or have held one of these positions within the five years before the date of appointment.
- You cannot be a relative or close friend of a member, co-opted member or employee of Leeds City Council or a Parish or Town Council in the Leeds area.
- You cannot be actively engaged in local party political activity.
- You must have filled in an application for the position.
- The appointment must have been approved by the majority of members i.e. the appointment has been ratified by a meeting of the Full Council.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Detailed below are the type of skills, experience and knowledge which are required of applicants applying for the post. The “Essential Requirements” indicate the minimum requirements, and applicants lacking these attributes will not be considered for the post. The points detailed under “Desirable Requirements” are additional attributes to enable the applicant to perform the position more effectively or with little or no training. They are not essential, but may be used to distinguish between acceptable candidates.

SKILLS	Ess	Des	MOA
Ability to consider appropriate legal advice	✓		A/I
Tact and diplomacy in handling sensitive matters	✓		A/I
Independence of mind, objectivity and impartiality	✓		A/I
Ability to efficiently analyse and comprehend facts and complex information, identify relevant evidence and reach reasonable and sustainable decisions	✓		A/I
Ability to interact positively with other members of the authority, build positive working relationships with members of the Standards and Conduct Committee and identify and deal with conflict	✓		A/I
Ability to listen and, if necessary, probe by asking questions in order to obtain clarification of issues	✓		A/I
Ability to use appropriate IT facilities and programmes, such as email and Microsoft Word	✓		A

KNOWLEDGE	Ess	Des	MOA
Knowledge of the Standards and Conduct Committee procedure for considering and deciding complaints of misconduct		✓	I
Understanding of the code of conduct adopted by Leeds City Council, and the codes of conduct adopted by Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area		✓	A/I
Knowledge of issues relating to standards in public life	✓		A/I

Understanding of the roles of political parties and groups in local government	✓		I
Knowledge of decision making structures and processes of Leeds City Council		✓	I

BEHAVIOURAL AND OTHER RELATED CHARACTERISTICS	Ess	Des	MOA
Available to commit sufficient time to the duties of the role (to be available to respond to Members who wish to discuss any complaints of misconduct against them within a reasonable timescale, to provide a view on complaints of misconduct which have been investigated within a reasonable timescale, and to attend meetings of the Standards and Conduct Committee as and when required)	✓		A/I
The successful candidate must possess appropriate IT facilities, including an email account which can receive confidential documents and is checked on a regular basis, or the candidate should be willing to purchase such equipment out of their allowance	✓		A
Willingness to undertake training on the interpretation of the code of conduct adopted by Leeds City Council and the codes of conduct adopted by Parish and Town Councils in the Leeds area, and other relevant issues	✓		A/I
Willingness to commit to and abide by the rules regarding confidentiality and exempt information adopted by Leeds City Council	✓		A/I
A professional approach and presentation	✓		I
An awareness of the sensitive and confidential nature of the work	✓		I

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT (MOA)	A = Application Form
	I = Interview