

Code of Conduct for the Chair and Members of the IPSA

1. Background

1.1. This Code of Conduct applies to the Chair and the Members of the IPSA.

2. General principles

2.2. IPSA's values are independence, honesty, openness, accountability and fairness. These values underpin the behaviour expected of the Chair, Members of the IPSA.

2.3. In adhering to IPSA's values, the Chair and Members of the IPSA undertake at all times to:

- observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in carrying out of their duties and responsibilities;
- act in good faith and in the interests of the IPSA;
- not disclose any confidential information without lawful authority;
- comply fully with the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- not misuse information or opportunities gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purposes, or to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, businesses or organisations;
- declare in a register of interests any political, financial, personal and business interests; and
- comply with the IPSA's rules on claiming expenses and the acceptance of gifts and hospitality;
- observe the Seven Principles of Public Life as established in the First Report of the Committee for Standards in Public Life under the headings: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership.

2.4. No code of conduct can cover every eventuality and Members of the IPSA should raise any queries or concerns with the Chair of the IPSA for his consideration. The Chair should direct his own queries or concerns to the Chief Executive, who will commission advice as necessary.

3. Political Activity

3.1. The Parliamentary Standards Act 2009 states that the Chair and Members of IPSA cannot have been a member of the House of Commons at any time within the last five years, except for the Parliamentary Member, who must be a person who has been (but is no longer) a member of the House of Commons.

3.2. For IPSA to perform effectively the functions given to it by Parliament, it must command wide confidence that it is independent of government and of political parties.

3.3. It is important that the Chair and Members of IPSA provide full details of any activities that might lead to claims that they are, or have been, an active supporter of one political party or another, or of a particular policy which is associated with the objectives of a political party. To this end, a register of interests will be completed by the Chair and Members of IPSA on which they will declare any such information.

3.4. Membership of a political party, by itself, will not be a bar to appointment but the Chair and Members of IPSA must not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of IPSA. With regard to the Parliamentary Member, it is accepted that they will be, or will have been, an active supporter of one political party and may be, or may have been, a supporter of particular policies. The Member will declare these interests, but they will not be a bar to being appointed. Upon being appointed to the IPSA Board, the Parliamentary Member may continue to be a member of a political party, but must not hold any paid or high-profile unpaid office in that political party, nor engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of IPSA.

4. Register of Interests

4.1. The Chair and Members of IPSA must declare any financial, personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities to IPSA. These will include both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests which members of the public might reasonably think could influence the judgement of the Chair and Members of IPSA.

4.2. The Chair and Members of IPSA not participate in the discussion or determination by the Board of matters in which they have a direct pecuniary interest.

4.3 When an interest is not of a direct pecuniary kind, the Chair and Members of IPSA will consider whether participation in the discussion or determination of a matter would raise a real danger of bias: that is either the Chair or a Member of IPSA might unfairly regard with favour, or disfavour, the interests of someone who is a party to the matter under consideration. In considering whether a real danger of bias exists in relation to a particular decision, the Chair and Members of IPSA will assess whether they, a close family member, a person living in the same household as the Chair or Member, or a firm, business or other organisation with which they are, or have recently been, connected, are likely to be affected more than the generality of those affected by the decision in question.

4.4. Where, in accordance with para 4.2, the Chair and/or Member of IPSA do not participate in the discussion or determination of a matter, they should withdraw from the meeting.

4.5. It is the responsibility of the Chair or Members of the IPSA to provide sufficient documentary evidence regarding any declared interests if requested to do so.

4.6. The register of interests will be published and updated quarterly.

4.7. The Chair and Members of IPSA are required to notify the Secretariat of any additions or changes to their declaration of interests as soon as this change is known, but at the most within one month.

4.8. All information in the register will be published on the IPSA's website, and a copy of the information in the register will be supplied on request.

4.9 If Members of the IPSA have any questions over what should be disclosed, they should raise these initially with the Chair. The Chair will direct his own queries or concerns, to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will commission advice as necessary.

4.10 The final decision on whether an interest compromises the independence of the Members of the IPSA rests with the Chair of the IPSA. As above, the Chair will direct his own queries or concerns to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will commission advice as necessary.

5. Policy on Gifts and Hospitality

5.1. The Chair and Members of IPSA must adhere to the IPSA's code on hospitality and gifts published separately.

6. Expenses and Claims for Travel and Subsistence

6.1. The Chair and Members of IPSA must adhere to the IPSA's code on claims for expenses published separately.

15 April 2010

Notes

1. Financial Interests

The List includes directly relevant interests held by a board member. It is not therefore a list of all financial interests including all investments or loans held by a board member. It indicates where financial interests are held in a blind trust, these are trusts which are held independently from the owner so that a board member is shielded from involvement in their management.

2. Directorships and Shareholdings

Shareholdings are not listed where they are de minimis in nature. For these purposes the de minimis value is £1,000 or 5 per cent of a shareholding, whichever is the lesser.

3. Investment Property

In line with the Registers of Interest in the Houses of Parliament, property owned and/or occupied by board members for their own use is not included in the list.

4. Sponsorship

5. Public Appointments

6. Charities and non-public organisations

7. Any Other Relevant Interest

8. Relevant Interests of Spouse, Partner or Close Family Member