

## **Committee on Standards in Public Life Advisory Board for Public Research**

### **Research Advisory Board**

1. In order to assist the Committee and the Secretariat, an Advisory Board was appointed in 2001 and has been involved in all of the key milestones of the research programme which led to the publication of the results of the first public survey in September 2004 (see below).
2. In 2005, the Committee decided to maintain an Advisory Board for the repeat survey and review of the Seven Principles, albeit with a smaller membership and placed on a more formal footing, with members paid a daily rate and expenses.
3. The Board is chaired by Dr Mark Philp, Professor, Department of History, University of Warwick. Mark attends Committee meetings to advise the Committee.
4. In practice, whilst Mark remains the Chair, the Board is not now a standing body, but now formed of academics called in as necessary.

### **Research into Public Attitudes towards standards of conduct in public life**

5. From 2004 - 2013, the Committee conducted 2-yearly surveys to keep in touch with current attitudes, in order to analyse the standards of behaviour the British public feel public office holders should be kept to, the extent to which these standards are believed to be upheld, and the perception of how well the systems put in place to enforce them are operating.
6. Following the recommendations in the Triennial Review, the latest public attitude survey published on 23 September 2013 was the final one published by the Committee.
7. The Committee now conducts smaller pieces of research where appropriate to support its work.

### **Review of the Seven Principles of Public Life**

8. The Seven Principles of Public Life were originally set out in the Committee's first report in 1995 and form the basis (whether in original or amended form) for virtually all the Codes of Conduct for public office-holders, elected and appointed, in the UK.
9. The qualitative and quantitative national research commissioned by the Committee and published in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2011 demonstrated that the Seven Principles broadly reflected the current views and priorities of the public. However, the language used to describe the Seven Principles was perceived (by the public) as somewhat arcane and inaccessible. In addition, the quantitative research indicated that the public placed a high priority on a much broader definition of "honesty" than described by the Seven Principles. The Committee therefore undertook to commission some exploratory qualitative research with members of the public to review the Seven Principles and their descriptions. The report on this research was published in 2006.
10. In January 2013, the Committee published new descriptors for the Seven Principles in its fourteenth report [Standards Matter](#).

11. Following evidence taken for the Committee's report [Upholding Standards in Public Life](#), November 2021, the Committee amended the descriptor for Leadership to read:

*Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

CSPL Secretariat  
November 2023