

Firefighters' Scheme Advisory Board (England)

Code of Conduct Policy

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Policy statement

The Public Service Pension Act 2013¹ introduced the framework for the regulatory oversight of the governance and administration of public service pension schemes.

The Scheme Advisory Board (“the Board”) is responsible for providing advice:

- In response to a request from the Secretary of State on the desirability of making changes to the Scheme and any connected scheme
- To scheme managers and Local Pension Boards in relation to the effective and efficient administration and management of the Scheme and any connected schemes.

The behaviour and actions of members of the Board must be governed by the principles set out in this Code of Conduct. It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with, all the relevant provisions of the Code.

This policy:

- Formalises the expected conduct and behaviours of members of the Scheme Advisory Board.

Scope

This policy applies to those individuals appointed as members of the Scheme Advisory Board by the Secretary of State.

The seven principles of public life

As a member of the Scheme Advisory Board, regard will be given to the following seven principles of public life²:

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/25/crossheading/governance>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

General principles and obligations

Respect for others

Members should promote equality by not discriminating against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the LGA's statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to uphold the law

Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship

Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that the Scheme Advisory Board uses its resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Confidentiality

Members must not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature. Regard should be given to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)³ in relation to personal data. However, the Board is not considered to be a data controller or data processor.

³ <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

Decision making

When reaching decisions on any matter members must have regard to any relevant advice provided to them by relevant officers or advisers. Members must give reasons for all decisions in accordance with any statutory requirements and any reasonable additional requirements imposed by the Secretary of State.

Pecuniary interests

On appointment to the Scheme Advisory Board, members who are also councillors of a local authority must notify the Secretary of State of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by the Localism Act 2011⁴, where the pecuniary interest is theirs, their spouses or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom they are living with as a husband or wife, or civil partner.

Further matters

The Scheme Advisory Board will have an equal number of employer and member representatives⁵ to ensure that there is a fair and transparent balance of skills, experience, and representation.

The Secretary of State will consider the mix of skills and experience needed on the Pension Board so that the Board can operate effectively and can exercise their responsibilities without prejudice and with independent judgement.

Links to other documents

In June 2019, the Government issued the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies setting out the personal and professional standards expected from non-executive board members of UK public bodies [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies/june-2019](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies-june-2019)

The Pension Regulator Code of Practice number 14 – Governance and Administration of Public Service Pension Schemes sets out standards of conduct and practice expected of those who exercise functions in relation to legal requirements for public service schemes. <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/document-library/codes-of-practice/code-14-public-service-pension-code-of-practice/#e6e12897999d45e5bc8ead7983fd15b4>

Other related documents include the Scheme Advisory Board Conflict of Interest policy [LINK].

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Board secretariat.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/part/1/chapter/7/enacted>

⁵ <http://www.fpsboard.org/index.php/about-the-board/board-membership>



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