

Adherence to the Nolan Principles by members of the House of Lords

Request:

Please can you outline if members are held accountable to the Nolan Principles (the “Seven Principles of Public Life”), and if yes, how this works in practice. Which body is responsible for the oversight? Are regular checks conducted, or are they instigated in response to complaints? How are members measured against the seven areas?

Could you also please give a case study of when one or more members have been held accountable for failing to live up to the principles, the action taken, and the outcome.

Response:

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the FOIA”) provides a right of access, subject to specified exemptions, to recorded information held by a public authority. In the case of the House of Lords, the rights of access apply to recorded information held by the House of Lords Administration.

The House Administration holds some information relevant to your request. Responsibility for the Nolan Principles rests with the Committee on Standards in Public Life. A search of the Internet under “Nolan Principles” will find the following web pages on the Government’s website:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-committee-on-standards-in-public-life>

Questions relating to the above web pages should be addressed to the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Contact details are available on the web pages.

The House of Lords is not part of the Government, but these principles form part of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Lords. The Code of Conduct is published on the Parliamentary website here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/house-of-lords-commissioner-for-standards/code-of-conduct-for-the-house-of-lords/>

The House of Lords Commissioner for Standards (“the Commissioner”) has responsibility for investigating allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct. Information about the Commissioner’s work, including annual reports and reports on individual investigations, can be found here:

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-financial-interests/house-of-lords-commissioner-for-standards/house-of-lords-commissioner-for-standards/>