

PAN-ISLAND COMMISSIONER FOR STANDARDS



Commissioner for Standards Annual Report 2024, Guernsey

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is my second report for Guernsey since taking up the role of Pan-Island Commissioner for Standards in May 2023.
- 1.2 This report is submitted in accordance with Paragraph 8 of The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 2022. It provides information on complaints received in Guernsey from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 including analysis of the number of complaints, summary of investigation reports, other work carried out during this year and resources associated with the Office.

2 Functions of the Commissioner

- 2.1 The functions of the Commissioner are set out in The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 2022 and may be summarised as follows:
- to investigate a complaint to the Commissioner that a breach of the code of conduct has occurred,
 - to initiate an investigation if the Commissioner believes that a breach of the code of conduct may have occurred,
 - to report to the Committee on the outcome of any investigation
 - on the Commissioner's own initiative or, if requested by the Committee, to give advice on any matter relating to standards of conduct of elected members of the States, including proposals to change the code of conduct, and
 - all such other functions as may be assigned to the office of the Commissioner by Resolution of the States, or under any other enactment.
- 2.2 Part 2 Paragraph 7(1) of the The Reform (Guernsey) (Amendment) Law 2022 states that "The Commissioner may make and publish a statement of the manner in which he or she proposes to discharge his or her functions under this Schedule and any other enactment."
- 2.3 In accordance with the 2022 legislation, I drafted a provisional statement which outlines the complaints and investigation process. My updated statement has now been published and a copy is available online.

3 Complaints Overview

- 3.1 A total of 18 complaints were received during this reporting period up to 31 December 2024. Of the 18 complaints received, 17 were inadmissible (94%). Table 1 shows a breakdown of complaints received.

Table 1. Complaints overview 2024

| | May 2023 to December 2023 | January 2024 to December 2024 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Complaints submitted | 5 | 18 |
| Complaints by member of public | 5 | 16 |
| Complaints by a Member | 0 | 1 |
| Commissioner Own Investigation | 0 | 1 |
| Inadmissible | 5 | 17 |
| Admissible | 0 | 1 |
| Discontinued | 0 | 0 |
| Ongoing | 0 | 0 |

- 3.2 Reasons for inadmissibility include complaints being outside the scope of the Code of Conduct and that a prima facie case was not made out to satisfy me that a breach had occurred.
- 3.3 I successfully carried out preliminary assessments and investigations through remote interviewing, obtaining legal advice when necessary.

4 Summary of Investigated Cases

- 4.1 In March 2024, I launched an own investigation following evidence received which suggested Deputy Christopher Blin sent a confidential States email to an external third party. Forwarding a private email to a third party without Members' knowledge or consent breached the requirements of the Code of Conduct relating to confidentiality.
- 4.2 I was of the view that Deputy Blin should provide an apology as this was careless rather than intentional; however, an apology was not an available sanction in the context of this complaint. Therefore, I had to recommend Deputy Blin be "formally reprimanded".
- 4.3 I recommended that the SACC review the legislation regarding sanctions to enable the Commissioner to recommend the sanction of an apology in cases that are beyond "minor" in nature. I await this review by the SACC.

5 Other Work

- 5.1 In addition to considering in-year complaints and carrying out preliminary assessments, I also attended internal and external meetings and provided advice to members when requested.
- 5.2 I visited Guernsey in August 2024 and visited Sark and Alderney with the Greffier to introduce the Office of the Pan-Island Commissioner for Standards.
- 5.3 The Pan-Island Commissioner website went live in February 2024. The website was set up with the aim of engaging with the public, explaining the complaints processes and creating a space to promote awareness of the importance of standards in public life.
- 5.4 Throughout the year, I complied with the Code governing my conduct and registered all relevant financial and other interests and all hospitality received.

6 Resources

Table 2. Commissioner Pay 2024

| | 2023* | 2024 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Casework | 2,500 | 10,000 |
| Administration | 7,500 | 6,000 |
| Visit to Guernsey | 1,500 | 2,750 |
| Report Writing | 0 | 750 |
| Total | 11,500 | 19,500 |

* May 2023 - Dec 2023

- 6.1 In 2024, there was a 70% increase in the Commissioner's pay. This increase was primarily attributed to a rise in the number of complaints received and considered throughout the year, as well as 2024 accounting for a full 12 months of activity compared with only 8 months in 2023.
- 6.2 Casework costs relate to preliminary assessment which includes initial consideration of complaints, letters of acknowledgement, letters to Complainants and Members, review of written responses and evidence for cases and interviews relating to my preliminary assessments, among other things as required. It also includes investigation work on admissible complaints.
- 6.3 Administrative costs relate to meetings, research, letters and requests for advice, emails, website, WorkPro (complaints software), and other administrative issues arising.

7 Acknowledgements

I am grateful to all of those who have provided me with assistance and support over the past year including Simon Ross and Eliot Gallienne in the States' Greffe as well as the H.M. Procureur (Attorney General) and the legal officers for providing advice when needed. I have also been fortunate to have had support from Standards Commissioners across the UK for which I am extremely grateful.



Pan-Island Commissioner for Standards
18 February 2025

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The Commissioner for Standards website can be accessed at <https://pi-cfs.org/> and the Commissioner can be contacted by email at commissioner@pi-cfs.org.
