

Twenty second report to the Sixth Senedd under Standing Order 22.9

July 2025



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About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddStandards

Current Committee membership:



Committee Chair:
Hannah Blythyn MS
Welsh Labour



Mick Antoniw MS
Welsh Labour



Tom Giffard MS
Welsh Conservatives



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Plaid Cymru

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1. Introduction

1. The terms of reference of the Standards of Conduct Committee (“the Committee”) are set out in Standing Order 22.¹ In accordance with the functions set out in Standing Order 22.2, the Committee must:

“investigate, report on and, if appropriate, recommend action in respect of any complaint referred to it by the Commissioner for Standards.”²

2. This report is made to the Senedd under Standing Order 22.9 and paragraph 8.23 of the Procedure for Dealing with Complaints against Members of the Senedd (“the Procedure”)³ in relation to a complaint made to the Commissioner for Standards (“the Commissioner”).

3. This report sets out the details of the complaint and the way in which the Committee arrived at its recommendation.

4. The Procedure requires the Committee to anonymise reports from the Commissioner in those cases where a complaint has been ruled admissible but no breach has been found. In such cases, rather than redacting information, the Committee produces a summary of the relevant parts of the Commissioner’s report and the Committee’s consideration of it.

5. Despite the Committee’s finding that no breach of the Code of Conduct had taken place, in his written representation to the Committee, Alun Davies MS asked to waive his right to anonymity and to have his name included in the summary report.

¹ Standing Orders

² Standing Order 22.2(i)

³ The Senedd’s Procedure for Dealing with Complaints Against Members of the Senedd

2. Consideration of the Complaint

- 6.** The Commissioner received a complaint about statements made by Alun Davies MS on social media and on the floor of the Senedd, which related to allegations of bullying and staff not being paid at a particular organisation. The Complainant asserted that these statements were false and that the Member had misrepresented certain facts. The complainant also accused Alun Davies MS of failing to engage constructively about their concerns.
- 7.** The Commissioner stated in his report that he did not investigate the complaint about failure to engage constructively as the Code of Conduct does not apply to the “standard of service and outcomes received from a Member”⁴ but was satisfied that the other aspects of the complaint were admissible.
- 8.** The Committee met on 23 and 30 June 2025 to consider the Commissioner’s report and reach its conclusion in respect of this complaint.
- 9.** This report sets out the details of the complaint and the Committee’s deliberations in arriving at its decision.
- 10.** A copy of this report has been provided to Alun Davies MS and the Complainant.

⁴ Code of Conduct on the Standards of Conduct of Members of the Senedd, Part 1, paragraph 7(iii)

3. Committee's Consideration of its Decision

- 11.** The Committee considered whether Alun Davies MS was in breach of Standing Order 22.2(i).
- 12.** In considering whether a breach took place, the Committee reviewed the findings of the Commissioner as set out in his report.
- 13.** The Member provided a written representation to the Committee, which was considered at its meeting on 30 June.
- 14.** After establishing the facts of the complaint, the Commissioner noted the allegations made by the Complainant that Alun Davies MS had falsely asserted that staff at the organisation in question had not been paid and had been bullied. It was also noted that the Member accepted he had made these assertions, but contended that they were true.
- 15.** In relation to making false statements, the Commissioner set out in his report that he considered it unnecessary for him to decide which of these irreconcilable accounts was correct and that resolving such issues would more appropriately done via litigation proceedings. The report went on to state:

“... simply making an incorrect statement would not amount to a breach of the Honesty Principle in Rule 1 of the Code (duty to uphold the Overarching Principles) or Rule 2 (duty to act truthfully) or of any other relevant provision. As the Committee has found in relation to other complaints, dishonesty and untruthfulness both require a degree of moral turpitude and there is no evidence of it in this complaint.”

- 16.** In the Commissioner's assessment:

“The Member based his assertions on what he had been told by at least two individuals whose credibility he had no reason to doubt. Further, the other assertions made by those who approached him were accurate and have been accepted by the Complainant. I am satisfied that the Member made adequate enquiries before making his assertions and that he had good reason to believe that they were accurate. I am not satisfied that the Member was untruthful or dishonest when he asserted that staff had not been paid and had been bullied.”

17. In relation to the Complainant's assertion that Alun Davies MS had misrepresented certain facts about who was responsible for the contracts in question via a social media post, the Commissioner found:

"That assertion was plainly incorrect and should not have been made."

18. However, two days later during a Plenary session, Alun Davies MS made a statement which clarified that he was attributing his views to those responsible for the contracts – and not those who were referred to incorrectly in the social media post.

19. On this matter, the Commissioner found:

"Whilst the attribution in the post was incorrect, I am satisfied, given the very early and public correction made by the Member, that it did not amount to breach of any relevant provision."

20. On the facts established, the Commissioner concluded:

"... the conduct complained of did not amount to a breach of any relevant provision."

Having considered the information available, and all the representations, the Committee agreed with the conclusion of the Commissioner that there was no breach of the Code of Conduct.

4. Matters of General Principle

- 21.** The Committee has noted in a number of reports during the course of this Senedd, that the volume of complaints relating to the conduct of Members on social media has increased significantly. The Committee is looking at this issue as part of its wider inquiry into Individual Member Accountability⁵, as well as considering ways of introducing a formal process for Members to correct the record in a timely and transparent way. We intend to make proposals in these areas before the end of the Sixth Senedd.
- 22.** The Committee recognises the role of Members to represent their constituents and raise matters of concern on their behalf, however, the matter in this report serves as a useful reminder to Members about the need for ensuring factual accuracy when making statements on social media.

⁵ The Standards of Conduct Committee: Inquiry into Individual Member Accountability