

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

Role Description Independent Person

Office:	Independent Person
Allowance:	None
Responsible to:	Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority and Telford & Wrekin Council

Purpose of Role

The overall purpose of the role of the office holder is to assist the Fire Authority and the Council in promoting high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members and, in particular, to uphold the Code of Conduct, adopted by the Fire Authority and the Council and the seven principles of public office, namely selflessness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership.

Main Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the office holder are:

- To be consulted by the Fire Authority and the Council through the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards and Human Resources Committee before it makes a decision on an investigated allegation and to be available to attend hearing meetings of the Standards and Human Resources Committee for this purpose, if required
- To be available for consultation by the Monitoring Officer and/or the Standards and Human Resources Committee before a decision is taken as to whether to investigate a complaint or to seek local resolution of the same
- To be available for consultation by any elected Member, including a town or parish councillor, who is the subject of a standards complaint
- To develop a sound understanding of the ethical framework as it operates within the Fire Authority and the Council, its town and parish councils
- To participate in training events to develop skills, knowledge and experience and in networks developed for Independent Persons, operating outside the Fire Authority's and Council's area

- To attend training events organised and promoted by the Fire Authority's and/or Council's Standards and Human Resources Committee, if required
- To act as advocate and ambassador for the Fire Authority and the Council in promoting ethical behaviour

Liaison with

- Monitoring Officer
- Members of the Fire Authority's Standards and Human Resources Committee and the Council's Standards Committee
- Officers and Members of the respective authorities and Town and Parish Councillors within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin
- Other key stakeholders within the community

Accountability

The Independent Person will be accountable to the Fire Authority and the Council.

The tasks and duties outlined in this role description relate to the Member level activities of the Fire Authority.

When carrying out this role the Independent Person must have regard to the Fire Authority's Protocol on Member / Officer Relations, which can be found in Section 12 of the Members' Handbook.

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Skills and Competencies Independent Person

Essential Criteria

The Independent Person will have:

- A keen interest in standards in public life
- A wish to serve the local community and uphold local democracy
- The ability to be objective, independent and impartial
- Sound decision-making skills
- Leadership qualities, particularly in respect of exercising sound judgement

The Independent Person will:

- Be a person, in whose impartiality and integrity the public can have confidence
- Understand and comply with confidentiality requirements
- Have a demonstrable interest in local issues
- Have an awareness of the importance of ethical behaviours
- Be a good communicator
- Be contactable at all times during normal working hours by telephone or email
- Be available to attend hearings, which may be held in the day time and at a relatively short notice

Desirable Criteria

- Working knowledge / experience of local government or other public service and / or of large complex organisations
- Awareness of, and sensitivity to, the political process
- Knowledge and understanding of judicial / quasi-judicial or complaints processes

Eligibility for Appointment

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person, if they are:

- Or were within a period of 5 years prior to appointment, a member, co-opted member or officer of any other relevant authority (this includes parish, district, county and unitary councils and Police and Fire Authorities); or
- A relative or close friend of the above; or
- Actively engaged in local party political activity.