

Independent Person (Governance)

Role profile

About the role

Sutton Council is comprised of 55 elected members and Kingston Council of 48. As part of the support provided to councillors, advice is given on matters relating to ethical conduct. In accordance with Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the council is also required to review and, in some cases, investigate complaints made against its councillors. To do this, we consult with Independent Persons who provide their independent, objective views on a complaint. Equally, councillors who are the subject of a complaint can discuss the complaint against them with our Independent Persons. We are seeking applicants who are keen to support local democracy and high standards of conduct by elected members. If you have even one hour to contribute per week then this could be the role for you.

About the role of the Independent Person

As an Independent Person: Governance for Sutton Council and Kingston Council you will support the council's Monitoring Officers by:

- Providing advice to the Monitoring Officers in considering allegations that a councillor/co-opted member has breached the council's Code of Conduct.
- Sharing your views on a complaint with the councillor against whom it has been submitted
- If necessary, attend meetings of the Code of Conduct Panel and council committees, for which reasonable expenses will be paid.

As an Independent Person, you will not be an employee of the council. However, you will work closely with the Monitoring Officer, their deputies, and other staff in reviewing Code of Conduct complaints.

As a voluntary position, you will not be expected to work to a specific schedule but will correspond with the Monitoring Officer and other officers via phone and/or email when your advice is sought. Travel expenses will be reimbursed when required.

Person specification

It is essential that you:

- Are familiar with the Seven Principles of Public Life (the “Nolan Principles”).

It is desirable that you:

- Have previous experience as an Independent Person.
- Are qualified or experienced in legal or governance matters.

An Independent Person cannot:

- be a member, co-opted member or officer of Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council, nor have been one during the last five years;
- be a relative or close friend of a person who fulfils the criteria above.
- be a councillor or officer of Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council or have been so in the preceding five years prior to appointment
- be related to, or a close friend of, any councillor or officer of Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council.
- have been convicted of any offence (the councils have the right to CRB check any independent committee members)
- be an undischarged bankrupt
- have significant business dealings with Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council
- have a formal connection with any political group
- have a proven history of vexatious and/or frivolous complaints against Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council.
- be the holder of a significant office in an organisation being grant aided/supported by Sutton Council and/or Kingston Council.

Other

You must:

- Have local connections to Sutton and/or Kingston, and either reside in the area, carry out the main part of your work in the area or have other recognisable ties to the area.

Remuneration

As a voluntary position, expenses are not paid for this role. However, should travel outside of the borough ever be required in this role, such expenses will be paid.