

Case summaries

Case 1 Three-month ban for Portsmouth councillor

A city council member was disqualified from being or becoming a councillor for three months at a hearing of the Adjudication Panel for England. The ban follows an investigation by the Standards Board into allegations that the councillor had failed to treat others with respect by being aggressive and threatening during a meeting. He also used threatening language in an email before the meeting that undermined the professionalism of council officers.

When the councillor became aware that he was the subject of a Standards Board investigation, he wrote to the council's monitoring officer threatening to email every member of the staff on the council warning them to 'have no faith' in the complainant and her department and demanding to know why the council still employed her.

The independent Adjudication Panel for England concluded, among other matters, that the councillor had breached the Code of Conduct by failing to treat others with respect and bringing his office and authority into disrepute. The councillor told the Adjudication Panel that he is now attending anger management classes.

Case 2 Eighteen-month disqualification for Great Yarmouth councillor

A former borough council member has been disqualified for 18 months after a case tribunal found that he had failed to treat others with respect and brought the council and the office of councillor into disrepute.

The councillor submitted a council officer to accusations of professional misconduct and incompetence, and also complained to the Local Government Ombudsman, misusing this legitimate route to continue to make an accusation that had been demonstrated to have no substance. On another occasion the councillor made a serious accusation of criminal behaviour, but stopped short of reporting his allegation to the police.

After the investigation, the Standards Board's ethical standards officer referred the case to the Adjudication Panel for England for determination. The case tribunal agreed that the councillor's actions were in breach of the Code of Conduct and disqualified him for 18 months with immediate effect.

Case 3 Five-year ban for former council leader

A former council leader who accessed child pornography on a computer owned by a borough council has been banned from office for five years following a Standards Board for England investigation.

The Standards Board's ethical standards officer considered that although the offences were committed in the councillor's own home, in his own time and using his own internet connection, the fact that the computer belonged to the council brought his conduct out of his private capacity.

The ethical standards officer also noted that the councillor was the leader of the council when he committed the offences and, more than any other member, could be considered by the public to represent the authority.

The councillor resigned from his position as leader in February 2006 after he was interviewed by police and resigned fully as a councillor upon being convicted. He will now be unable to stand for re-election for five years from 6 November 2007.

Case 4 Councillor disqualified after fraudulently claiming benefits

A former council member was banned from being or standing for election as a councillor for four years by the Adjudication Panel for England.

The Standards Board investigated allegations that the councillor had brought his office or authority into disrepute after he pleaded guilty to charges of fraudulently claiming payments over a number of years.

After his conviction the councillor was eventually ordered to pay back the £1,100 he had claimed and given a 200-hour community punishment order. The Adjudication Panel for England agreed that the councillor had brought his office and authority into disrepute by making a number of false claims over a prolonged period in his official capacity as a councillor, at the expense of the taxpayer and for his own benefit.