

**ETHICS &
INTEGRITY**
Commission
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**MINUTES OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF
THE ETHICS AND INTEGRITY COMMISSION**

14:00 - 16:00, 19 FEBRUARY 2026

ATTENDEES

Members

1. Doug Chalmers CB DSO OBE (Chair)
2. Rt Hon Ian Blackford (Virtual)
3. Councillor Ruth Dombey OBE
4. Ewen Fergusson
5. Professor Gillian Peele
6. Rt Hon Michael Tomlinson KC
7. Lady Mary Arden

EIC Officials

8. Stuart Sterling OBE, Chief Executive
9. Nicola Iles MBE, Chief of Staff (Virtual)
10. Natasha Seward, Head of Reviews
11. Sarah Yarwood, Head of Public Engagement
12. Nicola Richardson, Senior Policy Adviser
13. Peter Kelleher, Head of Corporate Support
14. Hannah O'Donoghue, Office Manager
15. Amy Austin, Policy Adviser (Virtual)
16. Ceyda Ibrahim, Policy Advisor

External Advisers

17. Professor Mark Philp, Senior Academic Adviser
18. Maggie O'Boyle, Press Officer

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1. APOLOGIES

None

2. REGISTERS

The Chair invited Members to review the Register of Interests and consider if any additional individual interests require declaration. No additional interests were declared at the meeting.

The Chair announced an expansion of the Register of Interest to include External Advisors and the Chief Executive.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026 were agreed.

4. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair formally welcomed the engagement team, Natasha Seward and Ceyda Ibrahim, to the EIC Officials team.

The Chair thanked Sarah Yarwood and the engagement team for organising the morning's Members' Away Day, noting that the session proved highly productive.

Interviews for new Independent Members are ongoing.

The Chair then provided an update on recent and forthcoming engagements.

5. EIC OFFICIALS UPDATE

The CEO updated that a further two new staff members are set to join the Codes of Conduct team and the Reviews team in early March.

The Chief of Staff updated Members on the policy on correspondence.

6. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: NETWORK OF STANDARDS BODIES AND LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

The Members shared reflections on the roundtable hosted by the Institute for Government.

The team would continue to research themes for the annual letter to the Prime Minister.

7. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: THEMATIC REVIEWS

Terms of Reference and Call for Evidence for the EIC's forthcoming review on the Public Sector Ombudsman system were approved following minor technical edits. The review is scheduled for launch on 3 March.

8. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: CODES OF CONDUCT

Lady Arden led a discussion on the draft ToR and proposed timeline for the codes of conduct work. EIC's remit, under its own terms of reference, sets out that it can examine standards systems in England only and not inquire into matters relating to the devolved administrations, except with their agreement. It was agreed that the focus of this work will therefore be England. Notwithstanding that, it was also agreed that EIC would informally reach out to devolved nations for awareness.

9. WORKSTREAM DISCUSSION: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A proposal will be presented by the team at the next meeting for Members' comments and agreement.

10. CURRENT STANDARDS ISSUES

Members discussed current standards issues.

Members discussed the scope of their advisory role, how the EIC does not have a remit to investigate individual cases, and what this means for engagement on standards issues in the media.

The Chair clarified that while the EIC does not comment on individual cases, it reserves the right to comment on the issues raised by those cases.

It was agreed that members should route all press inquiries through the Chief of Staff to ensure compliance with EIC policy.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members agreed on the date of the next meeting.