



14 October 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

EDINBURGH COUNCILLOR FOUND NOT TO HAVE BREACHED CODE OF CONDUCT

At a Hearing held in Edinburgh on 14 October 2026, City of Edinburgh Councillor James Dalgleish was found not to have breached the Councillors' Code of Conduct in respect of an allegation he had breached its confidentiality provisions.

The Hearing Panel heard it was not in dispute that Cllr Dalgleish raised concerns with the Complainer's employer in early September 2025 and, in doing so, forwarded an email she had sent earlier that day. Having been provided with evidence that the Complainer's name, job title and email address were publicly available on a Staff List on her employer's website, the Panel did not consider Cllr Dalgleish's disclosure of this information to her employer amounted to a breach of the Code.

The Panel also considered whether any other information in the Complainer's email, and the fact that it had been sent, could be considered confidential. The Panel noted that the Complainer lived in the council area and, as such, was a constituent. The Panel agreed that an email between a councillor and a constituent seeking assistance with a personal matter could carry an expectation of confidence. The Panel noted, however, that in this case the email outlined the Complainer's political views and criticisms of elected members concerning a matter of education policy and local political debate. It did not include any request for advice or assistance.

While the Panel accepted the Complainer was not acting as an employee when sending her email and, further, that she may not have wanted her views and criticisms to be disclosed to her employer, it nevertheless noted:

- she had sent her email from her work email address, meaning it would be reasonable for anyone reading it to question whether there was any attempt to purport it represented the views of her employer;
- the email was not marked as confidential and contained no express request that it be treated accordingly; and
- it had been sent, in the first instance, to eight councillors. The Complainer then forwarded it to at least two other councillors (all of whom were able to see the entire recipient list).

The Panel considered, in light of the above points and the particular circumstances of this case, that the Complainer's email did not carry a sufficient expectation of confidence such that it should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential or private nature for the purposes of the Code.

As such, the Panel concluded that Cllr Dalgleish did not breach the Code in forwarding the Complainer's email to her employer.

The Panel also considered whether Cllr Dalgleish's conduct amounted to a failure to treat the Complainer with courtesy and respect, or amounted to bullying and harassment, contrary to the Code.

While the Panel accepted that the Complainer was upset by the Respondent's actions, it was not satisfied that the act of raising concerns to her employer and providing the email in support of those concerns amounted either to a lack of courtesy and respect or to bullying and harassment. In reaching this conclusion, the Panel noted it had found that the Complainer's email:

- was unsolicited and could be characterised, at the very least, as being robust in its criticisms of elected members;
- contained personal criticism of the Respondent; and
- had been sent to a number of elected members without any apparent restriction on its further use.

While the Panel considered it was evident the Complainer was expressing her personal views in her email, it again noted it was sent from her work email account and, therefore, could reasonably have been construed as an improper use of that resource, particularly given the contentious nature of its contents.

Having regard to these factors, the Panel could not conclude that, regardless of any motivations, Cllr Dalgleish had acted unreasonably in raising his concerns, or that raising them could be termed as vexatious, spurious or malicious in nature. In support of this conclusion, the Panel noted that Cllr Dalgleish's concerns were not dismissed out of hand by the Complainer's employer, which instead considered the matters he raised under its internal procedures.

The Panel therefore found no breach of the respect or bullying provisions in the Code.

A full written decision of the Hearing will be issued and published on the Standards Commission's website within 14 days.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Complaints about councillors are made to the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC). The Standards Commission and ESC are separate and independent, each with distinct functions. The ESC is responsible for investigating complaints. Following investigation, the ESC will refer its report to the Standards Commission for Scotland for adjudication. Email: info@ethicalstandards.org.uk, <https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/>
Tel: 0300 011 0550
2. The [Standards Commission for Scotland](https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/) is an independent public body, responsible for encouraging high standards of behaviour by councillors and those appointed to boards of devolved public bodies including in education, environment, health, culture, transport, and justice. The role of the Standards Commission is to encourage high ethical standards in public life; promote and enforce the Codes of Conduct; issue guidance to councils and devolved public bodies and adjudicate on alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct, applying sanctions where a breach is found.
3. The Codes of Conduct outline the standards of conduct expected of councillors and members of devolved public bodies. In local authorities, there is one [Code of Conduct](#), approved by Scottish Parliament, which applies to all 1227 councillors elected to Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.