

Gillian Peele

Ethical regulation and the role of the Committee on Standards in Public Life: some reflections

The last twenty years has seen a major growth in the scope of ethical regulation in British public life. Much of this growth and development has been the result of the work of a small body the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Although not itself a direct regulator, its reports have prompted the creation of new regulatory bodies in different sectors of the political system and its monitoring activities have produced a series of health checks on ethical standards throughout the public sector. The first part of the paper looks at the whole area of ethical regulation and asks what is distinctive (and problematic )about it in terms of subject matter, design, implementation and accountability. The second part of the paper looks at the changing role of the CSPL and raises questions about the likely future of ethical regulation in the current political and administrative climate.

Gillian Peele is Fellow and Tutor in Politics at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. She is the author of many books and articles on British and American government and politics. She has published on conflict of interest in relation to both the United Kingdom and in comparative context. She is currently finishing a study of ethical regulation in the United Kingdom with David Hine.