

“What is a public service without integrity?”

This question was asked by one of the participants in the two workshops held between 12 and 16 November and it perfectly sums up the focus of the discussions held. The workshops, which explored a range of integrity challenges, were organised by the Government of Montserrat HMRU and facilitated by Public Administration International (PAI) UK.

The first workshop posed the question ‘how important is integrity to my job?’ It was held over two days with 30 participants and explored the relevance of integrity to each of the participant’s job with the aim of assisting everyone present to integrate integrity and ethical working into their day to day work. Through presentations, real and current case studies and syndicate work those attending reflected on the integrity standards in different types of jobs, the importance of core values in every position and the ever-present risks of conflicts of interest.

The second workshop covered three days and focussed on how senior staff can promote integrity. The aim of this workshop was to assist participants in developing and introducing practical mechanisms for establishing, promoting and sustaining an ethical infrastructure in the public life of Montserrat. It encouraged those attending to lead by example and be willing to challenge unacceptable and unethical behaviour. During both events, the Montserrat Code of Conduct and the law creating a new Integrity Commission were shared and discussed.

The workshops were led for PAI by Neil McCallum. Neil has worked on issues of accountability, transparency and good governance in numerous countries and leads PAI’s integrity, anti-corruption and fraud prevention programmes in the UK which have been attended by public sector leaders from round the world.

Of his first visit to Montserrat he said, ‘It is clear the people of Montserrat are served by a public service which has many strengths. But none of us, anywhere, can be complacent about the many challenges to our integrity that our work can give rise to. That is why workshops of this kind are so valuable and I have been hugely impressed by the intelligence and energy with which the sensitive issues explored in these workshops have been discussed. I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to visit Montserrat and wish everyone who attended the workshops, and their colleagues I have not had the pleasure to meet, every success in preserving and enhancing the integrity of the Government of Montserrat’s Public Service.’

