

Item 3

REPORT TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE

5TH FEBRUARY 2009

REPORT OF SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND - LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS - QUARTERLY STATISTICS - QUARTER 2

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report sets out the quarterly statistics which the Standards Board for England has compiled on the local assessment of complaints. This is for the period 8th May (commencement date of local assessment) to 30th September 2008 - Quarter 2.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Standards Committee be appraised of the report.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Standards Board for England required Monitoring Officers of Local Authorities to complete a quarterly return on the number of complaints received. The second quarter ended 30th September 2008.
- 3.2 From the data submitted the Standards Board had been able to compile the following statistics.
- 3.3 **Quarterly return submissions:** of the 473 authorities that were requested to submit a return, all 473 authorities replied. 458 returns did not contain any errors which equates to 97% of the total returns.
- 3.4 **Composition of Standards Committee:**

At the end of quarter 2 the composition of Standards Committees had slightly changed, as follows:

Size of Standards Committees:

- The largest Standards Committee comprised 20 members which was an increase of 2 members from quarter 1
- The smallest Standard Committee remained at 3 members
- The average size of a Standards Committee had increased to 10 members

Independent Members:

- The highest number of independent members remained at 9
- The least number of independent members remained at 1
- The average number of independent members had increased to 4
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Parish Representatives:

- The highest number of parish representatives remained at 7
- The least number of parish representatives was 1
- The average number of parish representatives remained at 3

General:

- 3 authorities reported that they did not have an independent chair.
- 2 authorities reported that the Standards Committee was made up entirely of independent members.
- All authorities with parishes had parish representation on their Standards Committees.

3.5 **Source of Complaint:** Monitoring Officers had reported a total of 1217 cases to the Standards Board for England. From the statistics provided the Board has indicated that members of the public and fellow councillors still remained the prevalent sources, with members of the public making up over half of all complaints.

3.6 **Referral Decisions:** a decision about whether to refer had not been made on 235 (19%) of cases received during the quarter. A breakdown of decisions for the other 982 cases was as follows:-

Not referred	465
Referred to Monitoring Officer for alternative measures	143
Referred to Monitoring Officer for investigation	298
Referred to the Standards Board	55
No decision	235

There had been one request for a review of a referral decision during the quarter.

3.7 **Timeliness of Decisions:** during the quarter, the average length of time a case took from date of receipt to referral decision had been 20 working days; however, 282 cases had taken longer than 20 days for a referral decision to be made, which equated to 23%.

3.8 A separate report will provide data upon local assessment cases at Sedgefield Borough Council.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No specific financial implications have been identified.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 The Standards Committee are appraised on this report.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 All material considerations have been taken into account in the contents of this Report. In particular, risks may arise unless Members of the Council are fully appraised on standards matters.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None apply.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES

8.1 None apply.

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Wards: N/A

Key Decision Validation: N/A

Background Papers

The Standards Board for England - Quarterly Statistics

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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