

Standards Committee

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Report Title	STANDARDS FOR ENGLAND - BULLETIN NO 48
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Date of Meeting:	18 October 2010
Directorate:	Borough Solicitor
Ward(s)	All

1. Summary

- 1.1 To inform the Standards Committee about the Standards for England (SfE) August 2010 Bulletin which includes sections on the Coalition Government's proposals to abolish the Standards Board Regime, an update on monitoring returns, acceptance of complaints by SfE and the reappointment of Independent members.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the Bulletin.

3. Report Background

3.1 The future of Standards for England and the Standards Framework.

As mentioned in an earlier report, the Coalition Government have announced they are to abolish the Standards Board regime.

- 3.1.1 Therefore the section in the August Bulletin on the Coalition Government's proposals to abolish the Standards Board Regime has to a large extent been updated by the September announcement by the Coalition Government and any doubt about the abolition of the Standards Board regime has been removed by the September announcement.

- 3.1.2 The bulletin emphasises however that, until the new legislation abolishing the Standards regime is in place, the local standards framework still exists and standards committees and monitoring officers have an obligation to keep the system operating.

3.2 An update on Monitoring Returns.

The section in the Bulletin on monitoring returns confirms that SfE have suspended any requirement that authorities file quarterly or annual returns and these procedures are not

expected to be reintroduced. SfE say that they will shortly be publishing an online report of the annual return information collected for 2009/10. This includes an introduction to the data, a key figures page, a summary of the findings and a full list of all the most common responses to each question.

3.3 Acceptance of Complaints by SfE.

SfE say they have reviewed the factors they take into account when assessing if they will accept cases in the public interest when SfE are considering the acceptance of complaints referred to them by local standards committees for investigation. They say they have not made any changes to the factors or criterion. However, when considering whether to accept cases they will have to have regard to the resources they have available (bearing in mind the impending abolition of the standards regime) and take account of the relative importance of cases.

3.4 The reappointment of Independent Members.

SfE confirm the circumstances that must exist for an authority to extend the term of an independent member for a further period.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance and those using the service and where such implications are material they have been described in the body of this report.

4.2 Legal

None other than those mentioned in the body of the report. Standards Committee is the appropriate body to consider the matters set out in this report.

4.3 Other Implications

This report has also been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service and where such implications are material; they have been described in the text of the report.

5. Background Papers

SfE August 2010 Bulletin attached as Appendix 1

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