

Standards Committee

AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Report Title	STANDARDS BOARD UPDATE
Date of Meeting:	17 December 2007
Directorate:	Chief Executive's
Ward(s)	ALL

1. Summary

The report provides an update on the current activities and advice from the Standards Board for England.

2. Recommendations

That the report be noted.

3. Report Background

- 3.1 The Standards Board Bulletins provide an update on the activity of the Standards Board together with advice and statistics.

Bulletin 36 has just been published and is accordingly attached for the information of Members.

- 3.2 ***The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*** is now law having been passed by Parliament on **30 October 2007**. The main provision of the Act were reported to the Committee at its meeting on 18 September 2007 but in essence it provides for a locally managed framework of compliance with the Code of Conduct and a new strategic/regulatory role for the Standards Board for England.

- 3.3 During the summer of 2007 the Standards Board for England piloted the local assessment of complaints with some 38 Standards Committees. All considered 12 real cases to enable data to be collected to assess how the system is likely to work in practice and to also consider a range of procedures and resources that were necessary for managing at a local level. The outcomes/statistics are detailed in the Bulletin.

- 3.4 A useful summary of matters to consider is provided on page 4 of the Bulletin . This includes:-

3.4.1 The size of Standards Committees (and effective practice)

- 3.4.2 Structure of Standards Committees (and effective practice).
- 3.4.3 Training (in the Code of Conduct, skills for conducting a hearing, chairing meetings and induction for new members).
- 3.4.4 Local Assessment Criteria (the development of Criteria, Guidance from the Standards Board).
- 3.4.5 Role of the Monitoring Officer in the new framework.
- 3.4.6 Local Assessment and Complaints Process.

(NB Some of these matters are subject to the making of further regulations).

- 3.5 The 2008 Standards Annual Assembly will take place on 13 & 14 October 2008 at the ICC in Birmingham.
- 3.6 Restriction on the political activities of certain staff under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which provides for the appointment of an independent adjudicator to grant dispensations for any such staff has been abolished under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the duties have been transferred to the Standards Committee. Further Guidance is awaited.
- 3.7 Clarification is provided on what a member can and cannot do if they are suspended. This is subject again to amendments to the Act (***the Local Government Act 2000***).
- 3.8 The number of allegations received has slightly increased compared to the same period in 2006. The referral and investigation statistics however have remained fairly static.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Resources and Risk

There will be significant financial/resource implications arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 that have not yet been qualified.

4.2 Legal

There will be significant implications arising from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 that have not yet been qualified.

4.3 Other Implications

None specifically at this stage.

5. Background Papers

Bulletin 36

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

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