

## National snapshot of standards committees revealed

The findings of the first ever national study of standards committees and their work are to be revealed today in *Standards committees: a national snapshot* taking place at 2.15pm in Hall 1.

This thought-provoking research was commissioned by the Standards Board for England in partnership with ACSeS (Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors) in response to the shift towards local ownership of the ethical agenda. This shift will focus greater attention on the role of standards committees and monitoring officers, making this research both important and timely.



Dawn Hands, Research Director at BMG Research, will be presenting the study's findings at 2.15pm today.

The study was carried out by BMG Research, whose research director Dawn Hands will be discussing the results later today and

answering any questions.

The aims of the research were to discover views, experiences and activities; to both gather information on current practices and inform future direction. All standards committees and monitoring officers in England were invited to take part through a postal survey, and just over 3,000 questionnaires were mailed out. The overall response rate was excellent with over 60% of individual authorities responding.

The findings to be presented this afternoon will include information about: the number of local investigations undertaken; perceptions of workloads;

the extent to which members feel supported and valued; the impact of local investigations; and a profile of standards committee members.

The Standards Board believes that this work provides invaluable information with which to move forward towards the new ethical framework, adding greatly to the existing body of knowledge, and helping to inform debate and target future support. The Standards Board is currently considering the full implications of the findings — in the meantime a full report will be available from [www.standardsboard.co.uk](http://www.standardsboard.co.uk) by the end of November.

### Key areas targeted by the research:

- a national profile of standards committees
- recruitment of independent members
- training, activities and experience of standards committee members
- the impact of hearings, both positive and negative
- role, profile and qualifications of monitoring officers
- support needs of standards committee members

## Welcome to Bridging the Gap

We are delighted to welcome you to the Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, one of the most important events of the year for all those who work with the Code of Conduct.

The focus of this year's conference is on the challenge for local government to become the champion of high standards across public life, standards that the public rightly expects.

Leaders, elected mayors

and chief executives will need to be leading this challenge, actively supporting standards committees, their independent chairs and members.

Monitoring officers will need the resources and capacity to give consistent and robust advice, and to handle cases locally.

The prize, and the test, is a system that has bridged the gap — one that is both locally owned and driven, and that commands public confidence.

I hope that our speakers, sessions and your own contributions at this year's conference will help everyone move forward towards this goal. I hope too that you have an enjoyable couple of days here in Birmingham and benefit from the networking that this event provides.

Sir Anthony Holland, Chair, The Standards Board for England

## Meet your fellow delegates

This year's conference presents more networking opportunities than ever before. In particular, the facilitated exchange sessions, in which the discussion is largely delegate-led, give you the opportunity to meet your fellow delegates and share views and experiences. These are marked as sessions 1 and 2 on the agenda (right).

Outside of the sessions, you can use the designated networking area, open from 1pm today. Keep in touch via the message board and meeting point, and ask Standards Board staff any questions you may have at the special information desk.

Get to know other delegates over sit down lunches, and of course at tonight's dinner,

which will provide a relaxed networking opportunity. The evening begins with a drinks reception at 7.30pm, followed by a four-course dinner with wine and coffee at 8.00pm. There will be a cash bar available and the evening will be accompanied by live jazz music from the Al Gurr Quartet, featuring Sarah Coleman on vocals.

## Agenda

08.30 – 10.15	Registration
09.15 – 10.00	Getting up to speed
10.15 – 10.25	Welcome
10.25 – 10.40	Setting the standard
10.40 – 10.55	Bridging the gap: towards strategic regulation
10.55 – 11.25	What will an effective ethical environment look like?
11.25 – 11.45	Question time
11.45 – 12.00	Comfort break
12.00 – 13.00	SESSION 1 Implications of the revised Code and the future ethical environment
13.00 – 14.15	Lunch
14.15 – 15.15	Standards committees: a national snapshot
15.15 – 15.45	Comfort break
15.45 – 16.45	SESSION 2 How do you measure up?
16.45 – 17.00	Comfort break
17.00 – 18.15	SESSION 3 Bridging the gap: knowledge, techniques and skills
18.15	Close of day one
18.30 – 19.30	Fringe events (see <i>The Fringe</i> overleaf)
19.30 – 20.00	Drinks reception
20.00 – 23.00	Conference dinner



## THE BIG DEBATE

WHEN POLITICS BECOMES PERSONAL: IS LOCAL LEVEL GOVERNANCE THE PANACEA?  
17 OCTOBER 2006, 10.45, HALL 1

## CPD accreditation for solicitors and barristers

Last year's conference was the first at which solicitors could earn credits towards the Law Society's continuing professional development (CPD) scheme.

The Standards Board for England applied for accreditation to improve the learning opportunities at the conference for law professionals, and in response to feedback from previous delegates.

Now, at this year's assembly, barristers can also claim accreditation towards the General Council of the Bar's CPD scheme. This year the amount of credit available at the conference totals 11 hours.

To claim credits, delegates who are barristers need to register their attendance at the enquiries desk. We would also remind all delegates who are solicitors or barristers to update their personal training records.

## Any questions?

If so, please drop by the Standards Board for England information desk in the registration area. Here, members of staff will be ready to answer any questions you may have about the Code of Conduct or the work of the Standards Board, and to respond to any of your feedback.

You will also find a question sheet in your conference delegate pack that you received this morning at registration.

Drop your completed question sheet into one of the many question postboxes situated around the conference centre, at any time during the next two days. Your questions will be responded to after the conference.

## THE FRINGE

Don't miss this year's extended programme of fringe events, taking place today at 6.30pm, following the close of the main conference sessions and before the evening drinks reception begins. Covering a range of topics of key interest to delegates, these optional sessions are organised and run independently of the main conference programme by a range of bodies from the local government family. This year's sessions are as follows:

- *Achieving excellence in local filtering: monitoring officers' perspectives* is an interactive session hosted by the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS).
- *Independent members gaining a voice* is the inaugural meeting of the Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce).
- *The ethical governance toolkit — how does your authority measure up?* Hosted by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), this session discusses issues such as how the toolkit works and future developments.
- *The future of local community governance and standards*, hosted by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), will be a discussion around the ethical framework of different models of community governance.
- *Leadership and governance and the Lyons Inquiry proposals* A discussion forum based on the key role for effective leadership and governance at all levels, especially at local level, as proposed by the Lyons Inquiry. Hosted by the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE).

## the Case Review

In your delegate bags you'll find a free, newly-published copy of the most recent *Case Review*. It focuses on the way that local issues have been dealt with at the local level and the Standards Board's role in supporting and regulating the overall framework, and includes

many more examples of local cases than in previous volumes. If you'd like to receive a regular in-depth analysis of significant cases by email, sign up to the *Case Alert* by visiting the Standards Board's website

[www.standardsboard.co.uk](http://www.standardsboard.co.uk)

## STEERING COMMITTEE 2006

**Thank you to all members of the 2006 Annual Assembly's steering committee for the commitment they have given to making this event a success. The committee plays an invaluable role in developing the format and content of the conference you are attending today.**

If you would like to volunteer to be one of our committee members for the Sixth Annual Assembly in 2007, please complete the application form enclosed in your delegate pack and submit it at the conference enquiries desk.

**Dennis Ball**  
Independent Member,  
Standards Committee,  
Blackpool Borough Council

**Lal Banerjee**  
Chair, Standards Committee,  
Royal Borough of Kingston  
upon Thames

**Christopher Borland**  
Independent Chair,  
Standards Committee,  
South Somerset District Council

**Councillor Geraldine Carter**  
Calderdale Metropolitan  
Borough Council

**Councillor Ian Evans**  
Vice Chair,  
Standards Committee,  
Broadland District Council

**Melanie Gibbs**  
Independent Member,  
Standards Committee,  
Gloucestershire County  
Council, and  
Independent Member,  
Standards Committee,  
Gloucestershire Police Authority

**Sara Goodwin**  
Former Monitoring Officer,  
Bassetlaw District Council

**Councillor Mandy Griffiths**  
Vale Royal Borough Council

**Michelle Grove**  
Monitoring Officer,  
Peterborough City Council

**Mark Heath**  
Monitoring Officer,  
Southampton City Council

**Eddy Marchant**  
Independent Chair,  
Standards Committee,  
Durham County Council

**Patrick O'Connor**  
Independent Chair,  
Standards Committee,  
London Borough of Tower  
Hamlets

**Jonathan Reed**  
Monitoring Officer, Mid Suffolk  
District Council

**Caroline Roberts**  
Independent Chair, Standards  
Committee, Leicester City  
Council and Leicestershire  
Police Authority, and  
Independent Member,  
Standards Committee,  
Leicestershire and Rutland  
Combined Fire Authority

**Peter Taverner**  
Vice Chair and Independent  
Member, Standards Committee,  
Teignbridge District Council

## KEY TO LANYARD COLOURS

The colour of delegates' lanyards (neck cords) can be used to identify their position or profession. Please wear your badge at all times.

### WHITE

Monitoring officers

### DARK GREEN

Standards committee members

### YELLOW

Independent members

### ORANGE

Chief executives

### BLACK

Council leaders

### RED

Speakers

### PURPLE

Conference steering committee members

### JADE GREEN

The Standards Board for England members

### BLUE

Others (delegates who don't fit in to any of the categories above)

## Recycle recycle recycle!

Recycling bins are situated around the conference centre for any of your unwanted papers, and you can hand back unwanted delegate bags to any member of conference staff in the registration area.

## Contacts



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# CONFERENCE DINNER

TONIGHT IN HALL 3

DRINKS RECEPTION 19.30 / DINNER COMMENCES 20.00