

Leicester
City Council

Standards Committee

10 September 2008

Standards Board for England – Quarterly Return Submission Statistics

Report of the Monitoring Officer

One of the roles of the Standards Board for England is to ensure the effectiveness of local standards arrangements. In order to do this, the Board collects information about those arrangements on a regular basis. The information so collected establishes a national picture of local complaints handling, and helps the Board identify, and provide support and guidance to those authorities which are experiencing problems.

All local authorities in England are required to submit a quarterly return to the Standards Board, setting out the number of complaints received in that quarter, and what action has been taken in respect of them.

The first quarter ran from the inception of the new Conduct regime on 8 May 2008, to 30 June 2008.

In that period, Leicester City Council received no formally submitted complaints against Members, so a nil return was submitted.

National results

The following statistics were compiled from data submitted to the Board on quarterly return forms, covering the period 8 May to 30 June 2008.

98% of authorities accessed the quarterly return form and submitted information to us. Returns for 90% of authorities were complete, without any errors, and therefore are included in the following statistics for standards committees, cases, and decisions.

Quarterly return submission statistics	Number	%
Authorities a return was requested from	473	N/A
Authorities that submitted a return on time	464	98%
Returns that were complete and did not contain any errors	427	90%
Returns that were submitted on time but were incomplete or	37	8%

contained errors

Authorities that did not submit a return 9 2%

Composition of standards committees

The following statistics were compiled from data submitted on quarterly return forms, covering the period 8 May to 30 June 2008.

Size of standards committees	Number of members
Largest standards committee	18
Smallest standards committee	3
Average size of a standards committee	9
Average number of independent members	3

Independent members	Number
Most independent members	9
Least independent members	1
Average number of independent members	3

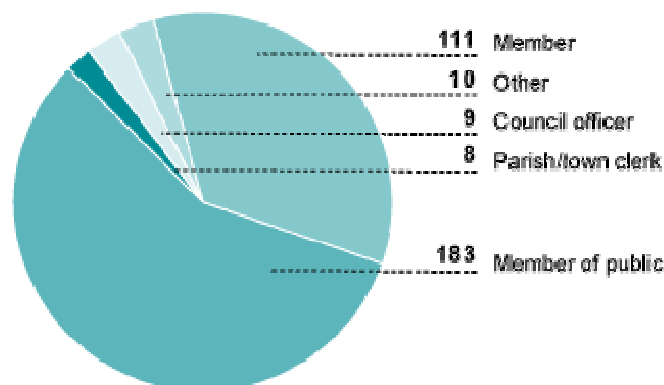
- 4 authorities reported that they do not have an independent chair
- 3 authorities reported that their standards committee is made up entirely of independent members

Cases received locally

The following statistics were compiled from data submitted on quarterly return forms, covering the period 8 May to 30 June 2008.

Monitoring officers have reported a total of 321 cases received between 8 May and 30 June.

The sources of these are broken down as follows:



Sources indicated in % terms:

Member of the public: 57%

Member: 34.5%

Other/officer/Clerk 8.5%

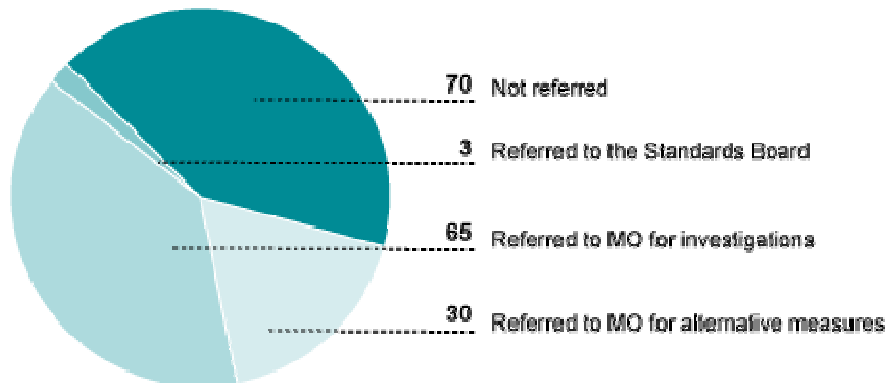
The split of cases by authority type is as follows:

Authority types	Number of cases	Average number of cases per authority
County Council	13	0.46
District Council	211	0.97
London Borough	13	0.43
Metropolitan Council	40	1.25
Unitary	44	1.05

The apparently disproportionate number of cases dealt with by District Councils can be attributed to the fact that District Councils' Standards Committees are responsible for assessing complaints against Parish Councillors within their boundaries.

Decisions made locally

A decision about whether to refer had not been made on 153 (48%) of cases received during the quarter. The breakdown of decisions for the other 168 cases is as follows:



In percentage terms this represents:

Not referred:	41%
Referred to MO for investigation:	39%
Referred to MO for alternative measures:	18%
Referred to the Standards Board:	2%

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

Timeliness of decisions

The guidance indicates that it should take, on average, 20 working days from receipt of a complaint to a referral decision being made.

- During the quarter, the average length of time a case took from date of receipt to referral decision was **14 days**.
- 24 cases took longer than 20 days for a referral decision to be made (7%)

Next Quarter report

The second quarter runs from 1 July 2008 to 30 September 2008. A further update on the next quarter's statistics will be brought to the Committee at its first meeting following the Board's publication of the national picture.

Report Author

Kate Owen
Members Support Officer

(39) 8822