

THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND
Board Meeting

Board Room
1st Floor, Cottons Centre
Cottons Lane, London SE1 2QG
8 January 2004
10.00am – 12.00pm

Meeting Minutes

Present: Sir Anthony Holland, Chair
Patricia Hughes, CBE, Deputy Chair
John Bowers QC
Cllr Celia Cameron, CBE
Cllr Peter Chalke, CBE
Margaret Pratt
Paul Sabapathy, OBE
Roger Taylor

Apologies: Professor Alan Doig

In attendance: John Edwards OBE, Interim Chief Executive
Tim Bailey, Head of Referrals (part-time)
Tim Bogan, Communications Manager
Chris Boothman, Head of Legal Services
Raewyn Curran, Policy Advisor (part-time)
Paul Hoey, Head of Policy and Guidance
Paul Kerr, Finance Manager (part-time)
Steve Kingston, Ethical Standards Officer
Anne Rehill, Senior Policy Advisor (part-time)
Bryan Wiggins, IT Manager (part-time)

Observers: Stuart Allan, Chief Investigating Officer, Stds Commission for Scotland
Fiona Mackay, Senior Officer, Standards Commission for Scotland

ACTION

- 04/01 Apologies**
Professor Alan Doig
- 04/02 Minutes of Board Meeting held on 19 November 2003 (Open Session)**
The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2003 (open session) were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 04/03 Matters Arising**
None.
- 04/04 Declaration of Board Member interests and forthcoming engagements**
Paul Sabapathy declared that he has resigned as of 31 December 2003:
- as a Director of the North Birmingham Primary Care Trust
 - as Chairman of West Midlands Industrial Development Board
 - as a Trustee of the Refugee Council
 - as a Trustee of New Walsall Art Gallery

and that he has been appointed as Chairman of East Birmingham Primary Care Trust and elected as Deputy Chairman of the Committee of University Chairmen as of 1 January 2004.

04/05 Team Briefing

The Board noted the report.

04/06 Business Planning and Management Processes

The Board agreed

- The proposed planning and performance framework;
- The role of the Board, the Chief Executive and the Management Team in managing the process; and
- The proposed roll out as set out in the action plan at Appendix 4

The Board noted that the plan is aligned with the requirements of the ODPM and that, if required, the process will be revisited following discussion with them.

04/07 Guidance on Local Investigations

The Board noted that the Regulations are still in the draft stage and that ODPM have sent further instructions to Counsel.

The Board agreed that any necessary amendments to the guidance can be agreed with appointed Board members outside the Board meeting, those members being:- John Bowers and Patricia Hughes plus Celia Cameron and Peter Chalke (if the latter two Board members are available). The Board also agreed to issue a joint consultation package with the ODPM.

HP&G

With regard to point 13 of the covering Board paper, it was agreed that Risk/Financial Considerations should also address the risk to the reputation of the Standards Board.

04/08 Proposed Structure for Corporate Services

The Board approved the structure as set out in Appendix A of the paper and noted that this is not the final structure and that it will be subject to further discussion following the arrival of the new Chief Executive.

HCS

04/09 Revised Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee

The Board approved the revised Terms of Reference as set out in Appendix A

04/10 Balancing Adverse Media Coverage

The Board agreed a change of policy enabling limited comment to be made on completed cases and the responses listed in paragraph six of this report.

With regard to point 15 of the covering Board paper, it was agreed that Risk/Financial Considerations should address the risk to the reputation of the Standards Board.

Comms.Mgr

04/11 Board and Senior Staff: Presentations

The Board agreed that Board members will be available to attend various events and that the Standards Board should:-

- write to county associations offering to attend events they are holding;
- contact regional SOLACE groups to offer to talk to them;
- contact regional LGA groups to offer to talk to them;
- agree that further proposals be worked up for identifying those intervention

- councils where more proactive work might be required; and
- agree that further proposals be drawn up for working more closely with standards committees.

HP&G

It was also noted that the LGA is setting up a task group to look at intervention authorities and Peter Chalke will enquire about the SBE becoming involved with this group.

HP&G

04/12 Managed Contact Programme

The Board agreed to adopt the programme subject to the following amendments:

- LGA - meet with Chair and Vice Chair
- Shadow SoS for Local and Devolved Government – meet more than once/year. Peter Chalke will “pave the way”.
- Minister for Local Government – Celia Cameron to accompany Chair

Comms.Mgr

04/13 Chief Executive’s Report

The Board:

- Noted the revised Corporate Plan at Appendix A;
- Agreed the approach for Business Continuity as set out in Appendix B; and
- Noted that a report on Responsibilities and Accountabilities will be submitted to the February 2004 Board Meeting

The Board also noted that ODPM have confirmed that the funding requested for the 2003/04 year will be made available and also for the office extension project.

04/14 Referrals Unit Report

The Board noted the report.

04/15 SESO Report

The Board discussed the issue of the draft report on the Islington case during which the Deputy Chair declared an interest and left the meeting. It was agreed that, in the absence of the Chair, Roger Taylor and John Bowers should be advised as a priority of the imminent issue of this report. As routine, all Board members will be advised of the issue of the report.

SESO

The Board also agreed that they wish to discuss at the 11 May Away Day one of the most serious, drawn out cases, a straightforward case and one in the middle to address the lessons to be learnt.

HP&G

04/16 Finance Report

The Board noted the report.

04/17 Human Resources Report

The Board noted the report.

04/18 IT Report

The Board noted the report.

04/19 Draft Budget 04/05

The Board noted the budget detail as well as the financial risks and consequences.

04/20 Guidance on Lobby Groups and related issues

The Board noted the progress on developing new guidance.

04/21

FAQ

The Board noted the response developed and that it will be placed on the website and in future Bulletins following the Board Meeting. The Board asked for this response to be sent to all Monitoring Officers and for a press release to be issued. The Board also said the Standards Board website should contain information about the need for Members to register membership of political associations.

**HP&G/
Comms.Mgr**

HP&G

04/22

Any Other Business

The Board noted the Court of Appeal decision on the Richardson case.

04/23 –

Closed Items

04/26

The Board then went into closed session to consider confidential matters.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 18 February at 10.00am

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Chair