



STUDY INTO THE OPERATION AND ROLE OF STANDARDS COMMITTEES WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

**Prepared for:
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Summary and conclusions

Survey of monitoring officers

Monitoring officers are generally positive with regards to varied aspects of their role within the authority, including how their working relationships are developing, the resourcing they have to undertake their duties, and the sufficiency of training. Monitoring officers do generally feel that they are supported by people within the authority at a senior level: 97% indicate that they have a good working relationship with the standards committee, 89% that the chief executive is supportive of them, 89% that the chief finance officer is supportive of them, and 88% that they are regularly asked for advice by members. However, only 57% agree that they have sufficient support staff, and indeed 26% disagree that this is the case. Therefore, whilst monitoring officers feel valued and respected by people within the authority, they do not always feel that this is reflected in the level of physical support they receive. There is also some concern regarding the issue of cost, with 18% of respondents agreeing that they experienced problems in paying for the cost of an investigation.

Furthermore, 90% of respondents feel that their workload will increase as a result of changes in regulation outlined in the White Paper *Strong and prosperous communities*. A minority of 45% agree that they feel confident that they are fully prepared for these changes. This suggests that monitoring officers will require support to adapt to these changes.

Standards committees

Almost all respondents (99%) indicate that the standards committee within their authority has met at least once since January 2005, with 35% indicating that at least seven meetings have occurred.

Almost all monitoring officers within the sample have attended at least some of the standards committee meetings within their authority (99%), with 91% attending all meetings. One-half (50%) also have separate meetings with the chair of the standards committee.

Standards committees have a broad remit and range of activities that they engage in. Within the terms of reference, the key functions include monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (98%), training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (97%), and hearings (87%).

Approximately three-quarters of authorities train/arrange training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (77%), respond to/receive feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance (74%), and/or monitor the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (73%) within the normal scope of their duties.

There is perceived to be further scope to increase the breadth of the undertaking of standards committees in the future, particularly with regards to training/arranging training and seminars

on the Code of Conduct (85%) and/or monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (81%). Indeed, such activities should be undertaken by 100% of standards committees.

Independent members of the standards committee

Independent members of standards committees tend to serve for a minimum of three years, with only 9% of monitoring officers stating that independent members are appointed for up to two years. The largest proportion highlight appointments of three or four years (62%), whilst 3% make appointments of five or more years.

Similar proportions of respondents consider the recruitment of independent standards committee members to be easy (37%) or difficult (38%), with a further 22% giving a neutral response of neither easy nor difficult. In order to recruit independent members, the largest proportion have utilised newspaper advertising (97%), although in conjunction with other methods, including website advertising (49%) or personal approaches (36%). Advertisements in the local press are generally viewed as the most effective recruitment method (61%), with personal approaches (16%) being the only other approach mentioned by substantial numbers.

Just over half of authorities (54%) provide an annual allowance for independent members, which could go some way to explaining why some authorities experience recruitment difficulties in this area. A larger proportion however (90%) provide travel and subsistence allowances, albeit that allowance entitlement does not appear to always be taken up, with 38% of respondents stating that independent members do not claim the allowances they are entitled to.

Local investigations

One-half of authorities (50%) have undertaken local investigations in the past.

Monitoring or deputy monitoring officers have been tasked with conducting the most recent investigations for the majority of authorities (52%) who have undertaken investigations, although a substantial proportion have used an external consultant (24%), or officer from another authority (15%).

Almost all respondents (93%) are aware of contingencies in place within their authority which allow for another person to undertake a local investigation should the monitoring officer be unavailable. The largest proportion (64%) have a deputy monitoring officer who would take responsibility, whilst one-half (50%) have an agreement with the monitoring officer of a neighbouring authority.

With regards to the most recent investigation, respondents are generally positive about how these were undertaken, 80% indicating that the investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard, and 65% that a hearing was carried out to an acceptable standard. By comparison, 5% disagree that the investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard (14% do not know) and 2% disagree that the hearing was carried out to an acceptable standard (31% do

not know). Almost four in five respondents (79%) disagree that they experienced problems in the investigation process, whilst 5% agree that problems had been experienced.

Almost seven in ten respondents in authorities where local investigations have taken place (69%) highlight positive impacts that have occurred as a result: raised awareness of the standards committee within the authority has been the most widely recognised benefit (57% of those where an investigation has taken place). However, other benefits have also been identified by a high proportion of these authorities, including reinforcement of the Code of Conduct (52%), raised awareness of the Code of Conduct (51%), and raised awareness of the monitoring officer (42%). Other less widely reported but still significant positive impacts include raising public awareness of the Code of Conduct (28%), and making the authority more transparent and open (12%) and 17% reported improvement in ethical behaviour.

In contrast, 36% of respondents highlight negative impacts that have resulted from local investigations, the largest proportion (18% of those where an investigation has taken place) mentioning the impact on the relationship between the monitoring officer and members, followed by impact on the public image of the authority (10%). No other negative impact was mentioned by more than 5% of respondents.

Training

Monitoring officers in 73% of authorities have received training related to how to undertake a local investigation. Reflecting the need for more training in this field, 61% of monitoring officers would like more training in undertaking local investigations.

Over nine in ten respondents (94%) state that training on ethics, and/or the Code of Conduct has been delivered within their authority since the beginning of January 2005. Within a majority of authorities, this training has been delivered to members of the standards committee (87%), and/or to elected members who are not on the standards committee (78%), and high levels of attendance are reported, with 96% of monitoring officers noting fairly/very good attendance amongst standards committee members, and 80% amongst elected members who are not on a standards committee.

Over four in five monitoring officers (85%) are aware of the ethical governance toolkit, with 27% having used some of the materials. Almost half of monitoring officers (47%) intend to use the toolkit in the future.

Members of standards committees

The majority of respondents (63%) have been serving on the standards committee for between one year and less than five years, with a further 13% serving for less than one year, and 24% for five years or more.

As a result of the publication of the White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, 75% expect their workload to increase, although 68% feel that they will be able to cope with the changes.

Operation of standards committees

Standards committee members are generally positive with regards to varied aspects of their role within the authority, including how their working relationships are developing, the resources they have to undertake their duties, and the sufficiency of training. Overall, 91% indicate that they have a good working relationship with the monitoring officer, and 89% that they receive sufficient support from the monitoring officer. Further, 89% agree that their main function is to promote ethical behaviour within the authority.

Training

Almost four in five of standards committee members indicate that they have received training on how to undertake a local hearing (79%), indicating that one in five (21%) have received no such training. A similar proportion (approximately four in five) have received training on other aspects of their role. Amongst those who have received training, the key themes included holding and chairing meetings (26%), their role within standards committees (8%), the Code of Conduct (7%), and/or role play and case studies (7%).

Training provision has been delivered through both in-house providers (51% of the most recent training received) and external providers (31%).

All respondents were asked to rate how prepared they feel in terms of being involved in a local hearing and being able to undertake other aspects of their role. Overall, 75% of respondents feel well prepared for their involvement in local hearings, whilst 86% feel well prepared to undertake other aspects of their role. This indicates that one in ten do not feel prepared for other aspect of their role and one in four members do not feel prepared for involvement in local hearings

Perceptions of the training received are positive, particularly with regards to the relevance of the training (86%), the appropriateness of the training (79%), the aims and objectives being met (79%), and the authority (79%).

Almost three in five respondents would like to receive training or additional training relevant to their role in the future (58%). Of these respondents, the key training themes include holding and chairing meetings (12%), the role of members on standards committees (12%), refresher courses on standards issues (12%), and role plays and case studies (11%).

In all, 44% of respondents are aware of the ethical governance toolkit.

Local hearings

In all, 49% of authorities have undertaken a local hearing. Of these, 89% highlight positive impacts that have occurred as a result of the hearing, including a raised awareness of the standards committee (78% of those where a hearing has taken place) or Code of Conduct (77%) within the authority, and/or reinforcement of the importance of the Code of Conduct (72%). However, only 16% commented on the fact that local hearings have had a positive impact on ethical behaviour across the authority.

Where hearings have taken place, respondents also note negative impacts, although fewer in number than positive impacts – key negative impacts include the relationship between the standards committee and members (14% of those where a hearing has taken place), and the impact on the image of the authority to the public (11%).

Comparison of monitoring officers and standards committee responses

The following table provides a brief comparison of results between monitoring officers and standards committee members where there is some degree of commonality in the question. Caution should be exercised however – overall, the monitoring officers and committee members samples do not always represent the same authorities.

From this, it is evident that members of standards committees have a less positive perception than monitoring officers about how they are perceived within their authority, and the overall levels of influence that they have. Interaction with officers, particularly in terms of the provision of ethical advice, is limited, as is the influence they have on officer behaviour. However, they also are less likely to feel valued than monitoring officers by higher echelons of the authority, particularly the chief executive.

Despite this, members of standards committees are more likely to perceive positive benefits that accrue from any hearings they have been involved in, when compared to equivalent monitoring officer perceptions of the impacts of their investigations. Notably, the role of hearings over investigations in raising awareness of standards committees and the Code of Conduct has been strongly emphasised.

Table 1: Comparisons of key findings for monitoring officers and standards committee members (all respondents)

	Monitoring officers	Members of standards committees
	%	%
Roles		
Agrees that authority values them in their role	85	79
Agrees that chief executive is supportive of them in their work	89	78
Agrees that chief finance officer is supportive of them	89	58
Agrees that authority believes their role is part of wider ethical framework	85	78
Agrees that they have appropriate influence over corporate management team	80	37
Agrees that their work has positive impact on member behaviour	81	63
Agrees that their work has positive impact on officer behaviour	71	53
Agrees that have good relationship with monitoring officer / standards committee	97	91
Agrees that officers co-operate in investigations/hearings	64	69
Agrees that officers ask for advice	75	10
Agrees that members ask for advice	89	16
Impact of investigations/hearings (where undertaken)		
Positive impacts		
Raised awareness of standards committee in the authority	57	78
Raised awareness of Code of Conduct in the authority	51	77
Reinforced importance of Code of Conduct in the authority	52	72
Improved ethical behaviour in the authority	17	32
Raised awareness of Code of Conduct amongst public	28	41
Authority more transparent/open	12	27
Negative impacts		
Relationship between monitoring officers/standards committees and members	18	14
Relationship between monitoring officers/standards committees and officers	2	6
Image of the standards committee within authority	5	8
Image of the authority to the public	10	11

Conclusions

Of possible concern is the fact that one in ten monitoring officers report to have no legal qualification.

Whilst a majority of monitoring officers feel valued and supported in their role by politicians and senior officers, they do express some concern over the level of physical support they receive. This view of the inadequacy of some areas of support is exacerbated by fears about the impact on their workload which will be brought about by the proposed changes to the role of the Standards Board, with the responsibility for filtering and dealing with less serious cases being given back to local councils. Many are unclear about exactly what the impact of these changes will be at a day-to-day level, and call for clarity on this point, particularly with regard to the implications for their workload and how this will be managed and resourced.

Another consequence of the move to more local hearings and determinations is that it will inevitably place greater emphasis on the role of independent members of standards committees. There will be a statutory requirement for committees to be chaired by an independent member and requirement that committees include independent members who reflect a balance of experience. Also, monitoring officers are somewhat divided with regard to the relative ease/difficulty of recruiting independent members, and this could be another area where more support and guidance will be needed in the future.

The issue of tackling local investigations and hearings is familiar to a notable proportion of monitoring officers, with half reporting that their authorities have done so in the past. Interestingly, monitoring officers are more likely to see positive as opposed to negative impacts arising out of local investigations, including raised awareness of the role of the standards committee and of the Code of Conduct. Fewer identified that there had been an improvement in ethical standards as a result of local hearings.

One negative output and concern that has arisen from local investigations is the impact such activities can have on the relationships between monitoring officers, standards committees and the wider elected member base. This is a key area where monitoring officers are likely to require advice and guidance from the Standards Board in the future. This suggests a future area of research, which the Standards Board could explore, the impact of local investigations on the relationships between monitoring officers and standard committees and the wider elected member base.

Many of these issues can be addressed with relevant and timely training and development for monitoring officers. Whilst a majority of monitoring officers report to have received some training in relation to performing their role and undertaking local investigations, a majority would also welcome further training and development. Those who have received training are more likely to feel confident in and prepared for their role, a message which again should be communicated widely to monitoring officers to encourage them to participate in the training opportunities presented to them.

A majority of members of standards committees also expect their workload to increase as a result of the proposed changes in how local investigations and hearings are managed. However, a similar (slightly smaller) majority believe that they are or will be able to cope with these changes. The higher level of optimism on this matter expressed by standards

committee members (compared with monitoring officers) could be a reflection of the fact that committee members can see colleagues with which to share the increased load, whereas monitoring officers could feel somewhat alone. In addition, it is worth pointing out that the Standards Board is still developing how its strategic role will work and what this will mean for monitoring officers and standard committees. It follows that standard committees members and monitoring officers at the time this research was undertaken did not have a full picture of what the changes will entail.

It is encouraging to see that the vast majority of standards committee members believe they have a good working relationship with their monitoring officer, and are well supported by this Officer. However, some concern must be felt over the one in ten members who do not agree with either of these statements, as this situation might only be exacerbated under the proposed new arrangements.

Most standards committee members have received some training, and this has generally been well received. However, many call for further training in key areas of their role, and this need will grow as the impact of the new arrangements is felt in local areas. The Standards Board should consider how this training need will be met, at all tiers of local government.

As with monitoring officers, standards committee members are also more likely to see positive as opposed to negative impacts having arisen out of local hearings. Interestingly, whilst the types of positive impacts identified are similar, members of standards committees are more likely to have identified each positive impact, and less likely to see a negative impact as being a deterioration in the relationship between monitoring officers and standards committee members. This is a positive message to communicate to both parties, and one which can only give monitoring officers much needed confidence in working alongside standards committee members on local investigations.

Introduction

Background

This report summarises the results of surveys undertaken by the Standards Board for England (henceforth referred to as the Standards Board) into the arrangements within local authorities of the operation and role of standards committees within authorities. This research has been undertaken against a backdrop of legislative change, with authorities becoming increasingly responsible for regulating the conduct of members within their authority, and a move towards local ownership of the ethical framework.

Two surveys were administered: one targeted at monitoring officers within local authorities, the other at members of standards committees. The focus of the research incorporates several strands, including:

- Training delivered and future training demand;
- Role of monitoring officers and members of standards committees, and how these are perceived by other people within their authorities;
- Local investigations and hearings, and the level of confidence that authorities approach these with.

For both the committee member and monitoring officer strands of the research, both local councils and other authorities (including the police, fire, parks, Broads and passenger transport authorities) were sampled.

Method

The surveys were administered through a self-completion postal questionnaire. The Standards Board provided a list of authorities within England that have monitoring officers, and the contact details for the officer in question. This contacts database includes

- All county councils¹
- All London borough councils, including the Corporation of London, and Greater London Authority
- All unitary councils
- All metropolitan district councils
- All but one of the district councils

¹ The phrase 'all councils' used in this document refers to counties, London boroughs, unitaries, metropolitan districts and districts.

- All geographic police authorities, although not the nationwide authorities (British Transport Police, Centrex and the Civil Nuclear Police Authority)
- 31 of the 47 fire and rescue authorities
- All passenger transport authorities
- eight of the nine national parks authorities

For the committee members' survey, monitoring officers were asked to distribute six self-completion questionnaires to standards committee members, including elected and independent members. These questionnaires were sent to monitoring officers in the same pack as their own questionnaire.

The number of standards committee members in each authority is an unknown, with no centrally collected data available. It was therefore agreed jointly with the Standards Board to send monitoring officers six standards committee member questionnaires, accepting the fact that some committees would have more or fewer members. Potentially therefore, not every committee member across the sample will have received a questionnaire. Whilst all authorities were sent six copies of the standards committee questionnaire, two authorities (one district, one metropolitan district) requested additional copies.

The following table summarises the response rates from both surveys. This indicates a response rate of 68% amongst monitoring officers, and 46% amongst members of standards committees. It should be noted however, that we cannot be certain how many of the 2,847 questionnaires sent to monitoring officers were actually distributed to standards committee members. Therefore, the reported response rate of 46% is unadjusted, and is likely to be an under estimate of the actual response rate.

Within the standards committee sample, 76% of authorities are represented, with one or more members having returned a questionnaire.

Table 2: Response rates by authority type (All respondents)

	Monitoring officers' survey			Standards committee members' survey				
	Number mailed	Number returned	% returned	Members			Authorities	
				Number mailed	Number returned	% returned	Number represented	% represented
Councils								
Counties	34	28	82	204	112	55	28	82
London boroughs	34	19	56	204	75	37	25	74
Unitaries	46	30	65	276	130	47	34	74
Metropolitan districts	36	25	69	217	115	53	29	81
Districts	239	164	68	1,436	691	48	183	77
Other								
Police	40	26	65	240	96	40	31	78
Fire and rescue	31	22	71	186	61	33	22	71
Passenger transport	6	4	67	36	9	25	3	50
National parks	8	5	63	48	15	31	4	50
Total	474	324	68	2,847	1,308	46	359	76

Response rates by government office region are shown in the following table. For the monitoring officers' survey, response rates are highest for authorities in the South West and West Midlands, lowest in the North West and London. With regard to the standards committee survey, 80% of all members who received a questionnaire in the East of England returned a survey, falling to only 36% of those in the North East. In all, 83% of East of England standards committees have some degree of representation within the sample, falling to 62% of standards committees within the North East.

Table 3: Response rates by authority type (All respondents)

	Monitoring officers' survey			Standards committee members' survey				
	Number mailed	Number returned	% returned	Members			Authorities	
				Number mailed	Number returned	% returned	Number represented	% represented
North East	34	22	65	204	73	36	21	62
North West	58	34	59	349	148	42	41	71
Yorks and Humber	34	25	73	204	90	44	25	74
West Midlands	48	37	77	288	139	48	38	79
East Midlands	53	32	62	318	147	46	43	81
Eastern	64	48	75	384	206	80	53	83
South East	84	55	66	504	225	45	64	76
South West	62	48	77	374	194	52	47	76
London	37	23	59	222	86	39	27	73
Total	474	324	68	2,847	1,308	46	359	76

In all, 87 authorities are unrepresented in either the monitoring officers or standards committee surveys, representing 18% of all authorities.

Weighting and tables

After responses were input, and prior to the collation of the data, responses from standards committee members were pre-weighted. This was to adjust for the differential probability in selection of members from larger standards committees. That is, where a standards committee is known to have, for example, eight members (from information provided on the monitoring officer questionnaire), but only six could have received a questionnaire (as the monitoring officer only received six questionnaires), then a pre-weight was added to adjust for this. For the small number of authorities where standards committee members returned a survey and the monitoring officer did not (and hence the size of the committee is unknown), a pre-weight was applied to reflect the average size of standards committees across the sample.

Additionally, a weight was applied to both surveys, so that both samples are representative of the breakdown of authorities provided by the Standards Board, in terms of authority type and government office region.

This report presents findings as a mixture of text, tabulated data and data in bar charts. For charts and tables, both unweighted and weighted sample bases are shown. Any percentages reported are calculated as a percentage of the weighted number of respondents. Unweighted

bases give a general indication of the level of confidence in a given result. For example, where the unweighted sample base is 200, and 50% of the sample give a certain answer, then we are 95% confident that the result would fall in the range of 50% \pm 6.9% were the entire population to be asked, that is, it would be expected that the result would fall between 43.1% and 56.9%. The range of expected answers is dependent on the percentage result and sample size:

Table 4: Confidence intervals at 95% confidence level (all respondents)

	Number of respondents						
	50	100	200	400	800	1600	3200
% result achieved							
10% or 90%	\pm 8.3	\pm 5.9	\pm 4.2	\pm 2.9	\pm 2.1	\pm 1.5	\pm 1.0
25% or 75%	\pm 12.0	\pm 8.5	\pm 6.0	\pm 4.2	\pm 3.0	\pm 2.1	\pm 1.5
50%	\pm 13.9	\pm 9.8	\pm 6.9	\pm 4.9	\pm 3.5	\pm 2.5	\pm 1.7
100% or 0%	\pm 2.8	\pm 2.0	\pm 1.4	\pm 1.0	\pm 0.7	\pm 0.5	\pm 0.3

Sample profile

The following presents a brief tabulated summary of the key characteristics of respondents from both samples. Of particular note is the demography of the standards committee member sample, in so far as it is considerably older and more likely to be male than the population as a whole. Figures from the 2007 National Census of Councillors (Employers' Organisations and IDeA) show that at the time of the census, 69% of local councillors were male, a slightly lower figure than for standard committees (75%), and the average age of councillors was 58, compared with 62 years amongst respondents to the survey. In terms of ethnicity, 96% were white, a similar figure to standard committees (95%).

Table 5: Sample profile (all respondents)

	Monitoring officers		Members of the standards committee	
	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted
	%	%	%	%
Respondent gender				
Male	61	59	75	75
Female	39	40	25	24
Not stated	<0.5	<0.5	1	1
Respondent age				
21-30	0	0	<0.5	<0.5
31-40	10	10	3	3
41-50	40	41	8	9
51-60	42	41	27	27
61-70	2	2	38	38
71-80	0	0	17	17
81+	0	0	1	1
Refused	6	7	5	5
Respondent ethnicity				
White	96	97	95	95
Asian	1	1	2	2
Black	1	<0.5	1	1
Mixed	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Other	1	<0.5	<0.5	<0.5
Refused	1	2	2	2
Unweighted and weighted bases	324	324	1,308	1,308

Additionally, 82% of monitoring officers are qualified as solicitors, 4% as legal executives, and 3% as barristers. One in ten (10%) have no professional legal qualification.

Amongst members of the standards committee, 34% are non-elected independent members, 29% elected principal authority members, and 11% parish members.

- 20% are chairs of standards committees (of whom 43% are also independent members, 6% principal authority members, and 1% parish members, with the remainder not stating other roles they may have outside of the chairmanship).
- 12% are vice-chairs of standards committees (of whom 34% are also independent members, 10% principal authority members, and 3% parish members, with the remainder not stating other roles they may have outside of the chairmanship).

Approximately one-half of elected members on standards committees state their political affiliation: 20% to the Conservatives; 14% to the Liberal Democrats; 13% to Labour; and 5% to other parties.

Monitoring officer survey findings

Respondent's role as a monitoring officer

Length of time in the role

One in twelve respondents (8%) have been in their role as a monitoring officer for less than one year, over one-third (36%) in their role for one year to less than five years, one-third (32%) in their role for five years to less than ten years, and one-quarter (24%) in their role for at least ten years. Taken as a whole, a lower proportion of monitoring officers within local councils have been in their role for ten years or more (21%) than those in the police, fire and national parks authorities (34%), although this is not the case for those in county councils, where 31% have been in their role for at least ten years.

With the exception of London boroughs, where no respondents have been in their role as a monitoring officer for less than one year, the proportion of short-term appointments is fairly consistent across different types of authority.

Table 6: Length of time that the respondent has worked as a monitoring officer (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan Councils	London boroughs	Police, fire, national parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than one year	8	8	6	9	9	0	6
One year or more but less than five years	36	36	27	36	41	42	32
Five years or more but less than eight years	22	24	27	26	13	32	13
Eight years or more but less than ten years	10	10	9	9	16	5	8
Ten years or more but less than fifteen years	14	13	14	12	12	16	18
Fifteen years or more	9	8	17	7	9	0	16
Not stated	2	1	0	1	0	5	7
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

Officer role

All respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with sixteen statements regarding their role within the authority, related to resources available to perform in their role, how they consider their role to be perceived in the authority, and the impact they have had on the authority overall. The full results are presented in Table 29 in Appendix 1.

Throughout, respondents generally perceive individual aspects of their role in a positive regard. Particularly positive are the proportions that register agreement with regard to a good working relationship with the standards committee (97%), a positive level of support from the chief executive (89%), a positive level of support from the chief finance officer (89%), and the positive aspect of their role in providing advice to members (89%).

Whilst a majority of respondents are positive about the number of support staff they have (57% agreeing that it is sufficient), there is nevertheless a notable minority who disagree that this is the case (26%). The proportion expressing disagreement rises however to 67% of those who have no support staff. Of further potential concern, is the fact that 10% of respondents disagree with the statement that they have appropriate influence over the corporate management team, and 10% with the statement that officers regularly ask them for monitoring officer advice.

With the publication of the government papers *Standards of Conduct in English Local Government* and *Strong and prosperous communities*, the role of monitoring officers may change to an extent within certain authorities. Respondents were asked to rate the impact that the content of the White Paper may have on their role.

Overall nine in ten respondents (90%) anticipate increases to workload, whilst over four in five (84%) think that the number of investigations they will have to conduct will increase. However, 52% disagree that they have sufficient support to deal with this change. Therefore, it is important to note that only a minority of respondents (45%) agree that they are confident that they will be fully prepared for the changes, and that indeed a majority do not consider this to be the case. This presents concerns over future workloads, and whether adequate resourcing will be available to monitoring officers to fulfil their remit.

Table 7: Agreement that specified changes will affect the respondent in their role as a result of the White Paper *Standards of Conduct in English Local Government* (All respondents)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
My workload will increase	%	90	5	3	3
The number of investigations I am required to undertake will increase	%	84	8	3	5
I have enough support to be able to cope with the impact of these changes	%	20	20	52	8
I am confident that I will be fully prepared for these changes	%	45	24	26	6
Bases: 324 unweighted & weighted					

Respondent confidence that they are prepared for any future changes in their role does differ between those who have received training in the past against those who have not (although whether any of this training specifically targets areas of future responsibility is unclear from the scope of the survey):

- Where respondents have received training for their role in the past, 46% feel confident about their level of preparation for the future, 23% unconfident.
- Where respondents have not received training for their role in the past, 42% feel confident about their level of preparation for the future, 37% unconfident.

Monitoring officers from authorities where they feel valued within the authority and supported by senior officers are generally more likely to feel prepared than those from authorities with weaker support levels:

- 68% of respondents who feel valued by their authority similarly agree that they feel prepared for future changes to their role. This contrasts with 28% who disagree that they feel valued.
- 65% of respondents who agree that their chief executive is supportive of them feel prepared for future changes; this contrasts with 15% who feel unsupported.
- 66% of respondents who agree that their chief financial officer is supportive of them feel prepared for future changes; this contrasts with 33% who feel unsupported.

Support networks

Monitoring officers were asked to specify the number of support staff they have available to them². Overall, 86% of authorities employ deputy monitoring officers, 77% committee clerks, 71% secretaries or PAs, 58% lawyers, and 16% other staff members. For certain roles, particularly deputy monitoring officers and secretaries, this involves a single extra employee only, whilst larger pools of lawyers and clerks are available.

² Although these staff may not necessarily be dedicated solely to roles in this area.

**Table 8: Number of staff in specified positions which support the monitoring officer
(All respondents)**

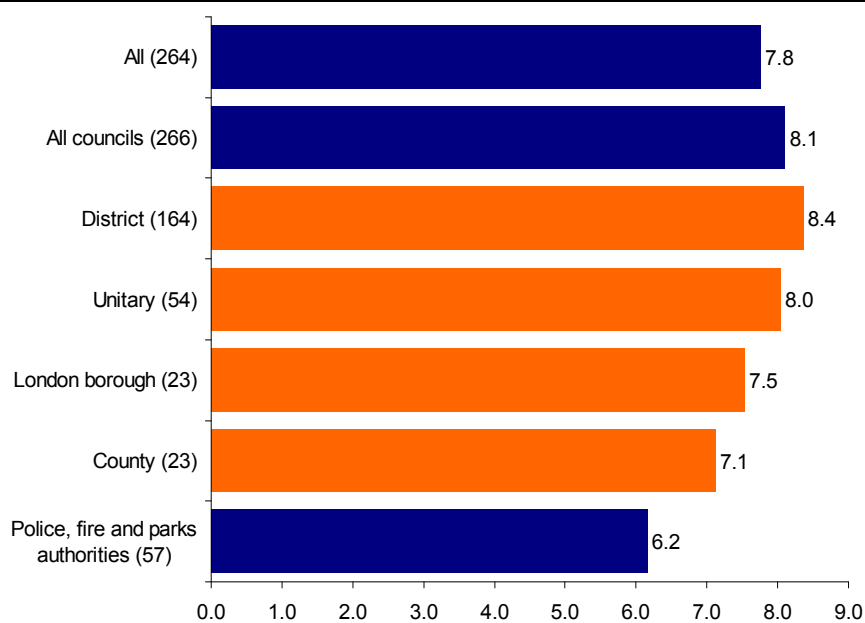
	Deputy monitoring officers	Lawyers	Committee clerks / democratic services officers	Secretaries / PAs	Other
	%	%	%	%	%
None	11	37	20	25	75
1	78	20	33	67	6
2-5	9	22	31	4	6
6-10	0	5	7	0	2
11-15	0	3	2	0	1
16-20	0	1	2	0	1
21+	0	6	2	1	<0.5
Not stated	3	5	3	4	9
Bases: 324 unweighted & weighted					

Membership and political representation of the standards committee

Membership

One in eight authorities (13%) have between one and five members on their standards committee³, over three-quarters (77%) between six and ten members, and 9% eleven members or more. The mean number of members on standards committees stands at 7.8, although this is higher amongst local councils, and particularly district councils, than amongst police, fire and national parks authorities.

Figure 1: Mean number of members on the standards committee (where provided the number of members)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

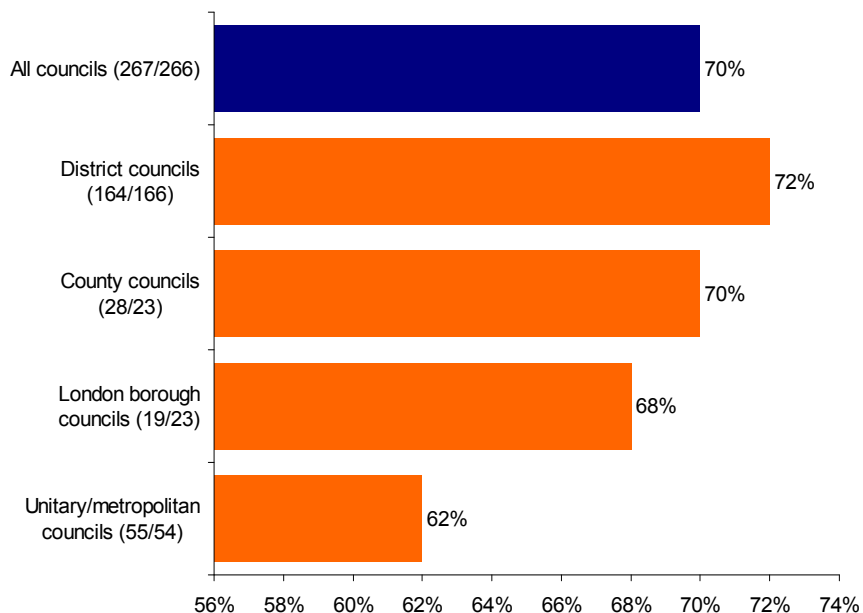
Authorities in the North tend towards a slightly higher mean number of members (8.2) than those in the Midlands (7.8) or South (7.5). Also of note is that the mean number of members increases as the frequency of standards committee meetings increases, with a mean representation of 7.0 where the committee has met on one to three occasions since January 2005, 7.6 where it has met on four to six occasions, and 8.5 where it has met on seven or more occasions.

Political representation

Seven in ten respondents (70%) indicate that the profile of elected members on the standards committee is broadly representative of the political balance of the authority, and 30% state that this is not the case. As the following figure demonstrates, this is reported by a slightly smaller proportion across unitary/metropolitan councils.

³ Including Elected and Independent members

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who indicate that the elected members on the standards committee are broadly representative of the political balance of the authority (respondents from local councils)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

The composition of standards committees in the Midlands (74%) are more likely to be representative of the political balance than those in the South (64%) and particularly the North (51%).

Where the composition of elected members on the standards committee does not reflect the overall political balance, 66% of respondents state that there is equal representation amongst all groups, 8% that there is a majority from the ruling group, and 4% that there is a majority from the opposition.

Activities of the standards committee

Formal meetings of the standards committee

Since the beginning of January 2005, and including sub-committees, almost all (99%) respondents indicate that the standards committee of their authority has met at least once, 26% meeting one to three times, 38% four to six times, and 35% seven or more times. Hence the frequency of meetings ranges from approximately once every six months to once every two months.

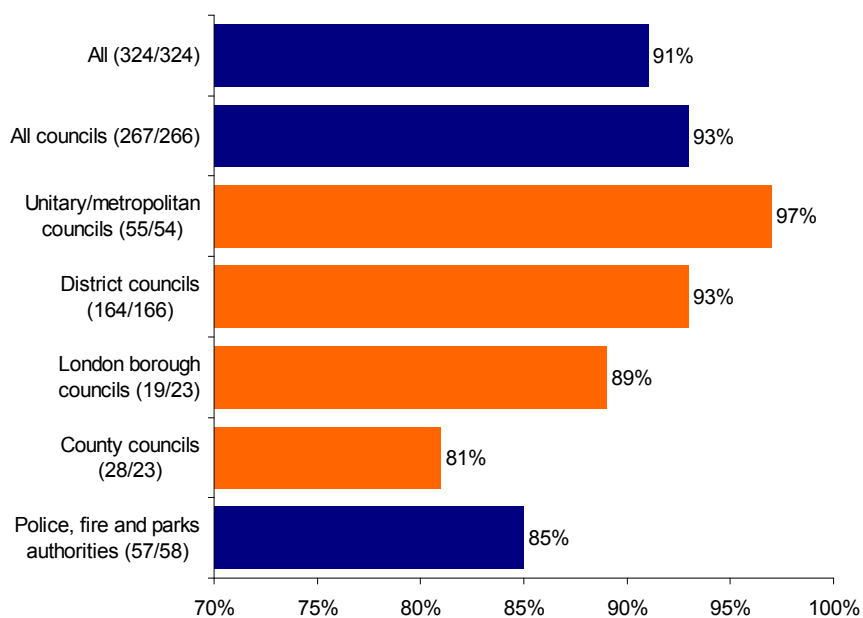
Local councils as a whole tend to have met more frequently than police, fire and national parks authorities; only 41% of the latter have met four times or more, contrasting with 80% of all local councils. Across local councils, frequent meetings of seven times or more is more typical of unitary/metropolitan authorities (51%) than it is for county councils in particular (27%).

Table 9: Number of times that the standards committee has met since January 2005 (All respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and national park authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
One to three times	26	19	27	20	16	0	59
Four to six times	38	39	43	39	28	63	33
Seven times or more	35	41	27	41	51	37	8
Don't know	<0.5	<0.5	0	0	2	0	0
Not stated	1	1	3	0	3	0	0
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

Almost all monitoring officers (99%) state that they attend at least some of the standards committee meetings, with over nine in ten (91%) attending all meetings. This proportion is not uniform across authority types, with monitoring officers in unitary/metropolitan authorities being most likely to attend all meetings, but those in county councils being less likely to do so. Given that standards committees in county councils also have a tendency to meet less often, this could lead to monitoring officers in these environments becoming somewhat isolated from the standards committee.

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who indicate they attend all standards committee meetings (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

The frequency of standards committee meetings does not appear to have an overriding effect on attendance amongst monitoring officers – where there has been one to three meetings since January 2005, 93% of respondents have attended all meetings, falling to 90% where there has been four to six meetings, and 92% where there has been seven or more meetings.

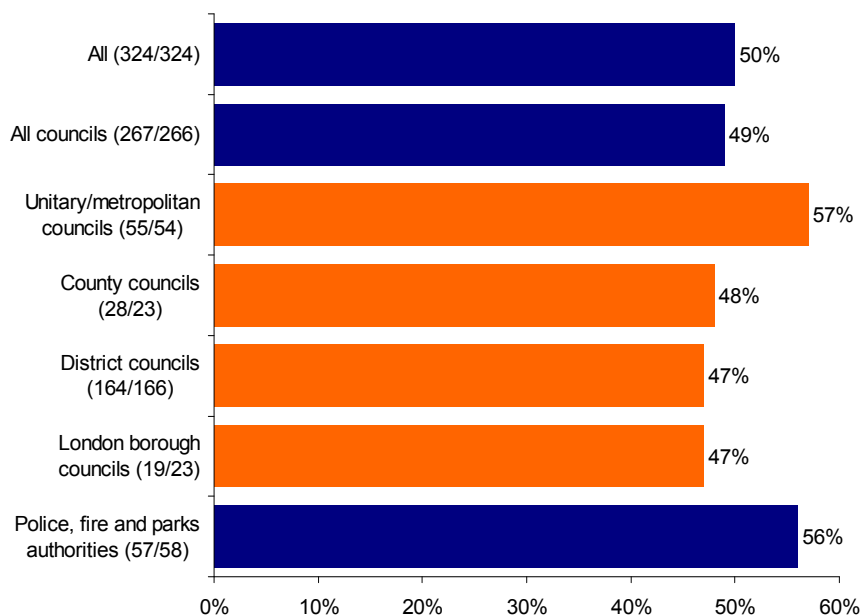
Respondents who are newer in their role as a monitoring officer are less likely to have attended all standards committee meetings (82%), as are those who have been in their role for longer periods (89% of those who have been monitoring officers for at least ten years, 95% who have been in the role for one to five years, and 92% of those in the role for five to ten years).

Other meetings with the chair of the standards committee

In their capacity as monitoring officer, 50% of respondents have regular meetings with the chair of the standards committee. Similarly, 49% of respondents indicated that they do not have such meetings with the standards committee Chair. This proportion is fairly consistent

across authority types, rising slightly amongst unitary/metropolitan councils (57%) and police, fire and parks authorities (56%).

Figure 4: Proportion of respondents who indicate they attend meetings with the chair of the standards committee (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

Respondents who are newer in their role as a monitoring officer are more likely to have attended meetings with the chair (61%), as are those who have been in their role for longer periods (59% of those who have been monitoring officers for at least ten years, falling to 44% who have been in the role for one to five years, and 49% of those in the role for five to ten years). This is the opposite pattern to that observed with regards to those attending all standards committee meetings, suggesting that isolated meetings with the chair may in some cases substitute regular attendance of monitoring officers at committee meetings.

Activities of the standards committee

Respondents were asked to indicate what they consider is included within the terms of reference for standards committees (the full results are presented in Table 30 in appendix 1). The largest proportion of respondents highlight the following: monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (98%), training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (97%), hearings (87%), and/or providing advice/assistance to Members/Officers on the Code /ethics (81%). Given that these four functions are statutory requirements, it is of concern that all respondents did not highlight these functions – this may well indicate uncertainty and a lack of understanding on the part of monitoring officers over their exact role and how their responsibilities have been described to them by the Standards Board. Smaller proportions mention responding to/receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance (71%), and inclusion of Code/ethics issues in the induction of new members (62%).

These terms of reference also represent those activities that local councils are most likely to engage in: training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (77%), responding to/receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance (74%), monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (73%), inclusion of Code/ethics issues in the induction of new members (57%), providing advice/assistance to members/officers on the Code/ethics (56%). Monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (42%), responding to/receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance (38%), and training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (35%) represent the three activities that have taken up most of the standards committee's time. Activities that are planned for the standards committees over the next twelve months also generally replicate those that have taken priority in the past, although slightly larger proportions will plan activity around the monitoring of the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct, or on hearings: training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct (85%); monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct (81%); responding to/receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance (66%); inclusion of Code/ethics issues in the induction of new members (64%); providing advice/assistance to members/officers on the Code/ethics (61%); and/or hearings (54%). The full results are presented in Table 30 in Appendix 1.

Independent standards committee members

Length of appointments

Over three in five respondents (62%) state that independent members to their standards committee are appointed for a period of three to four years, with this approach being consistent between local councils and police, fire and parks authorities (61% and 62% respectively). A further 22% of authorities appoint independent members for two or three years (22% of local councils, 31% of police, fire and parks authorities), whilst 4% of authorities make short-term appointments of one year (4% of local councils, 5% of police, fire and parks authorities).

Over one in five respondents (21%) indicate that the appointment of independent members is of no fixed term, although this represents a slightly larger proportion of local councils (22%) than police, fire and parks authorities (17%).

Within all local council types, appointments of three to four years are the most likely to be cited, including 70% of respondents from county councils, 69% of London boroughs, 62% of district councils, 50% of unitary and metropolitan councils, and 38% of police, fire and parks authorities.

Table 10: Length of time that independent members are appointed to the standards committee (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
One year	4	4	0	3	8	11	5
Two years	5	5	4	6	7	0	7
Three years	17	15	12	16	16	11	24
Four years	45	46	66	46	34	58	38
Five years or more	3	3	4	3	7	0	4
Varies/no fixed term	21	22	11	25	24	16	17
Unsure	2	2	4	1	2	0	3
Not stated	2	2	0	1	2	5	4
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

Recruitment of independent standards committee members

Similar proportions of authorities have found the recruitment of independent members to the standards committee to be easy (37%) or difficult (38%), with a further quarter of respondents stating that the process has been neither easy nor difficult (23%). Local councils overall are more likely to have experienced recruitment difficulty than police, fire and parks authorities, 33% highlighting an easy process, 42% a difficult one (compared to 56% and 21% respectively amongst police, fire and parks authorities).

However, recruitment difficulties have not been experienced to the same degree by all types of local council – notably London boroughs have more likely found the process easy (63%) rather than difficult (21%).

Table 11: Ease of recruiting independent standards committee members (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	4	3	0	2	3	11	9
Fairly easy	33	30	32	31	13	53	47
Neither	23	23	25	21	36	11	22
Fairly difficult	26	29	37	31	28	16	14
Very difficult	12	13	6	13	18	5	7
Easy	37	33	32	34	17	63	56
Difficult	38	42	43	44	46	21	21
Unsure/not stated	3	2	0	2	2	5	2
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

At a regional level, the recruitment experience varies significantly. Authorities in the North are most likely to have experienced recruitment difficulties, and those in the South least likely to have done so:

- 27% of Northern authorities have found it easy to recruit, 43% difficult;
- 40% of Midlands authorities have found it easy to recruit, 41% difficult;
- 41% of Southern authorities have found it easy to recruit, 33% difficult.

Recruitment difficulty has been at the most extreme where a standards committee meets most frequently. This potentially stems from the greater degree of commitment required on the part of independent members.

- 34% of authorities where the standards committee has met at least seven times found it easy to recruit, 45% difficult.

In order to recruit independent members to the standards committee, almost all authorities within the sample have used local newspaper advertisements (97%), although in conjunction with other recruitment methods, including websites (49%), personal approaches (36%), and working through other local authorities (20%). Generally, local councils and police, fire and parks authorities have tended to adopt similar approaches to recruitment, the only key difference noted being in the proportions making personal approaches, lower amongst police, fire and parks authorities (19%) than amongst local councils (39%).

London boroughs tend to have undertaken more exhaustive measures in order to recruit independent members than is seen across other authority types, with all taking out press advertisements (100%), a majority using a website (58%), and over one-third working with local partners and the voluntary or community sectors (37%). Also of note is that county and unitary/metropolitan authorities are more likely to have made personal approaches to prospective independent members than is observed in the overall sample (67% and 53% respectively).

Table 12: Measures adopted to recruit independent members to the standards committee – prompted, multiple response (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advertisements in local press	97	97	97	97	96	100	96
Website	49	49	51	48	46	58	51
Personal approach	36	39	53	30	67	32	19
Working through other local authorities e.g. chamber of commerce	20	20	22	15	27	37	23
Working through local voluntary and community sector	19	21	17	18	24	37	12
Local radio	6	6	15	5	7	5	4
Other	7	7	3	9	3	5	8
None of these	1	1	0	1	0	5	1
Unsure/not stated	2	2	0	2	2	0	2
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

In terms of the most effective measure utilised to recruit independent members, over three in five respondents (61%) highlight newspaper advertising, with personal approaches (16%) being the only other approach mentioned by substantial numbers. Police, fire and parks authorities are far more reliant than local councils on the former approach.

As noted above, the approach to recruitment amongst London boroughs differs slightly, as greater emphasis is placed upon partnership working, in this case with recruitment through the voluntary and community sectors, than is placed upon personal approaches.

Table 13: Most effective method adopted to recruit independent members to the standards committee – prompted, multiple response (where the authority has undertaken measures to recruit independent members to the standards committee)

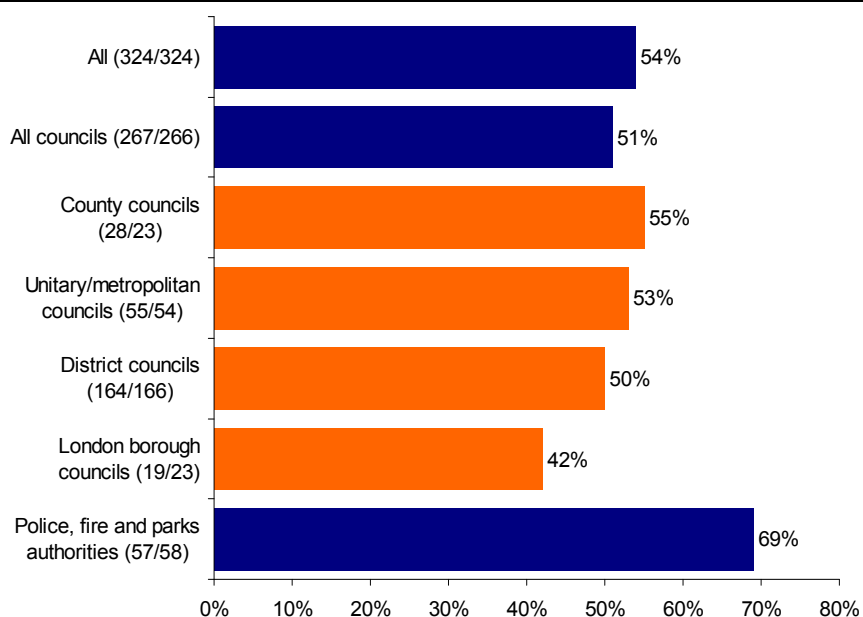
	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan Councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Advertisements in local press	61	59	37	66	49	53	70
Personal approach	16	17	35	9	40	11	9
Working through local voluntary and community Sector	3	3	4	1	3	16	0
Working through other local authorities e.g. chamber of commerce	2	2	0	2	4	0	3
Local radio	<0.5	<0.5	0	1	0	0	0
Website	<0.5	<0.5	0	1	0	0	0
Other	3	3	0	4	0	5	4
None of these	1	1	0	1	0	5	0
Not stated	14	14	24	17	4	11	15
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

Allowances for independent members

Annual allowances

Overall, 54% of respondents indicate that their authority entitles independent members on the standards committee to an annual allowance (54%), although this proportion is far higher within police, fire and parks authorities (69%) than amongst local councils (51%). By contrast, 42% of authorities indicated that independent members are entitled to no such allowance.

Figure 5: Proportion of respondents who indicate that independent members of the standards committee are entitled to an annual allowance (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

The provision of annual allowances to independent members of the standards committee varies to a degree by region, with those in the Midlands being most likely to be in receipt (59%, compared to 51% of both Northern and Southern authorities).

No clear pattern emerges however, with regard to member allowances for standards committees that meet more frequently: 57% of those where the committee has met at least seven times since January 2005 provide annual allowances, compared to 56% of those that have met one to three times, and 50% of those that have met four to six times.

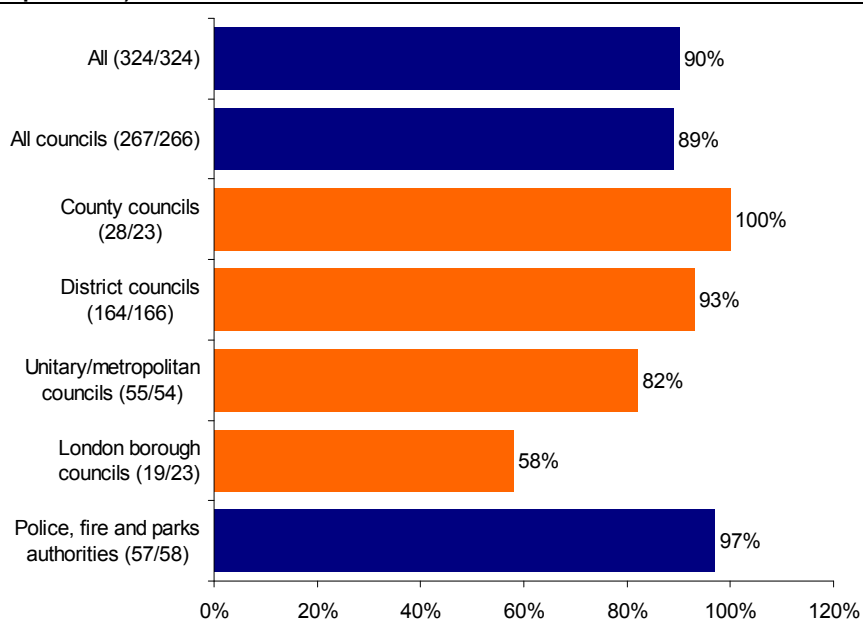
Results suggest the potential for a link between the provision of annual allowances and recruitment difficulty. Overall, where authorities have experienced difficulty in recruiting independent members, only one-half (50%) offer an annual allowance. In contrast, 62% of those that have found it easy to recruit independent members offer an annual allowance.

Travel and subsistence allowances

Nine in ten respondents (90%) indicate that their authority entitles independent members to the standards committee to a travel or subsistence allowance, although, as with annual

allowances, provision is more likely to be offered by police, fire and parks authorities (97%) than by local councils (89%). Provision also varies at a local council level: all county councils offer travel and subsistence allowances, unsurprising given the lengthier journey times involved for members, whilst provision is far lower within London boroughs (58%).

Figure 6: Proportion of respondents who indicate that independent members of the standards committee are entitled to a travel or subsistence allowance (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

At a regional level, the proportion of respondents who indicate that their authority provides travel or subsistence allowances shows little variation – 93% of Midlands, falling to 90% of Northern and 88% of Southern authorities.

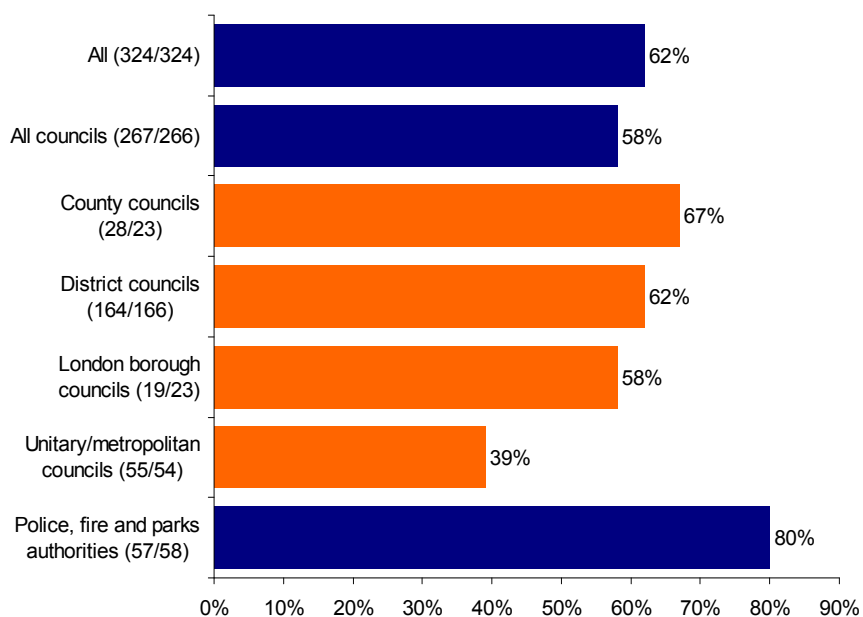
Furthermore, travel and subsistence allowance provision does not vary significantly according to the number of times the standards committee has met – where the standards committee has met one to three times since January 2005, 94% of authorities provide allowances, 90% where the standards committee has met four to six times, and 88% where the committee has met on seven or more occasions.

Where authorities have experienced difficulty in recruiting independent members, this does not appear to be linked to the provision of travel or subsistence allowances. In all, 91% of those who have found it easy and 91% of those who have found it difficult to recruit independent members in the past provide such allowances.

Allowance claims

Despite authorities offering allowances to independent members of their standards committee, it is clear that this provision is not always taken up – 62% of respondents indicate that independent members take their entitlement, although the proportion is far higher amongst police, fire and parks authorities (80%) than it is amongst local councils (58%), and particularly unitary and metropolitan authorities (39%).

Figure 7: Proportion of respondents who indicate that independent members claim the allowances that they are entitled to (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

At a regional level, the proportion of respondents who indicate that independent members take up their allowance entitlement varies significantly – 71% of Midlands, falling to 62% of Southern and 49% of Northern authorities. Interestingly, it is Northern authorities who are most likely to report encountering difficulties in recruiting independent members.

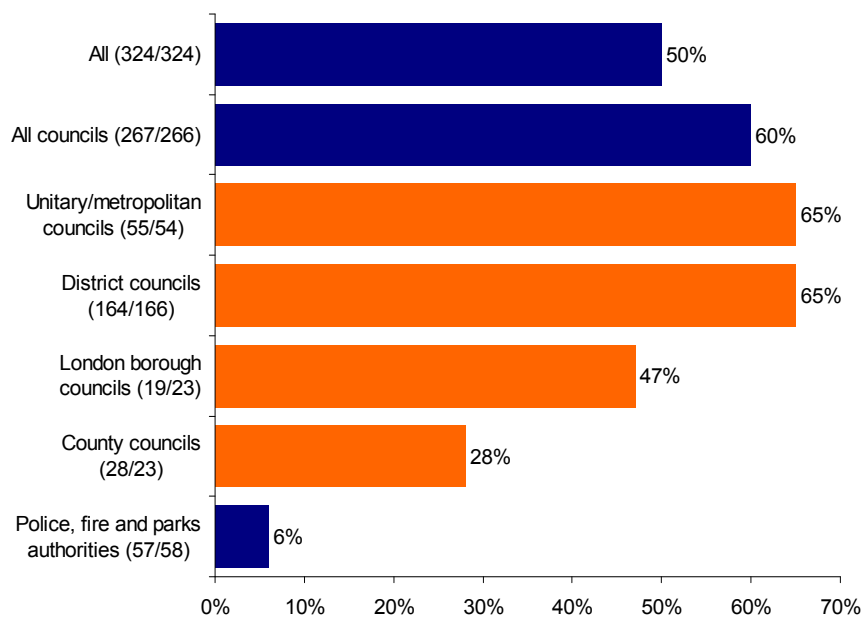
Local investigations

Previous local investigations

Undertaking local investigations

One half of authorities in the sample have undertaken local investigations in the past (50%), although significant variation is observed between local councils (60%) and police, fire and parks authorities (6%). This may to some extent reflect the fact that unitary, metropolitan and district councils also have arrangements in place for undertaking investigations on behalf of parish councils, rather than solely their own authority. The following figure highlights the wide differential between local council types in the proportion that have undertaken local investigations, district and unitary authorities having been most likely to have done so, county councils least likely to have.

Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who indicate that a local investigation has been undertaken within their authority (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

No significant regional variation is noted in the proportion of authorities where a local investigation has taken place – 54% of Southern, falling to 51% of Midlands and 47% of Northern authorities.

With regards to the most recent investigation undertaken, for over half of authorities where an investigation has taken place, this was carried out by either the monitoring (21%) or deputy monitoring officer (31%), whilst one-quarter (24%) have utilised an external consultant.

For all types of local council, deputy monitoring officers were most likely to have carried out the most recent investigation, including within 83% of county councils, 45% of London

boroughs, 25% of district councils and 40% of unitary/metropolitan councils. As the following table demonstrates, both unitary/metropolitan and district councils have a greater reliance on the use of external consultants and/or other officers within their own authority in the administration of local investigations.

Table 14: Who carried out the most recent local investigation (where a local investigation has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Monitoring officer	21	20	0	24	9	36	67
Deputy monitoring officer	31	32	83	25	40	45	0
External consultant	24	25	17	27	26	9	0
Another officer of the authority	15	15	0	15	23	0	33
Officer from a neighbouring authority	4	4	0	5	3	0	33
Other	5	5	17	5	3	9	0
Unweighted bases	166	162	9	106	37	9	4
Weighted bases	164	161	6	108	35	11	4

Monitoring officers who have been appointed more recently are more likely to have carried out a local investigation themselves: 28% of those who have been in their role for less than one year having done so, falling to 12% who have been in their role for one to five years, 9% who have been in their role for five to ten years, and 5% who have been in their role for ten years or more.

Operation of local investigations

Respondents from those authorities where a local investigation has taken place since January 2005 were asked to rate their level of agreement with six statements regarding the operation of the most recent investigation, and whether any problems were associated with it.

Perceptions of the investigation process are positive overall, with a majority of respondents registering agreement that the investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard (80%), or that the hearing was carried out similarly (65%). A majority of respondents disagree that specified difficulties or problems occurred during the investigation process, notably problems in understanding the investigation process (79% disagree), problems in finding someone to undertake the investigation (70% disagree), or problems in getting sufficient independent members for a Hearing (65% disagree). However, 18% of respondents agreed that they experienced problems in paying for the cost of the investigation, 9% that they experienced difficulties in deciding breach, and 8% that they experienced problems in finding someone to undertake the investigation. The issue of cost and finding someone to undertake the investigation could become more problematic as a greater number of cases will be decided at a local level.

Table 15: Agreement that specified statements apply to the conduct of the local investigations (where a local investigation has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
The investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard	%	80	2	5	14
The hearing was carried out to an acceptable standard	%	65	2	2	31
We experienced problems in paying for the cost of this investigation	%	18	14	50	18
There were difficulties in deciding breach	%	9	5	57	28
We experienced problems in finding someone to undertake the investigation	%	8	9	70	13
We experienced problems in understanding the investigations process	%	5	6	79	11
We experienced problems in getting sufficient independent members for a hearing	%	4	3	65	28
Bases: 166 unweighted, 164 weighted					

The following figures are based on those authorities that have undertaken a local investigation since January 2005:

- Authorities in the Midlands (13%) and district councils (11%) are most likely to have experienced problems in finding someone to undertake the investigation. However, no London boroughs or police, fire and parks authorities experienced similar problems.
- London boroughs (22%) and authorities where the standards committee has met at least seven times since January 2005 (21%) are most likely to have experienced problems in paying for the cost of the investigation. County councils (10%) and police, fire and parks authorities (0%) are least likely to have experienced this difficulty.
- Police, fire and parks authorities are most likely to have experienced problems in understanding the investigations process (24%). In contrast, no county or London boroughs have done so.
- London boroughs are most likely to disagree that the investigation was carried out to an acceptable standard (11%), although no unitary/metropolitan and county councils, or police, fire and parks authorities experienced similar issues.
- Most likely to have experienced difficulty in recruiting independent members include county councils (10%), and those where standards committee meetings have been less frequent (11%).

- There is wide variation across authority types in terms of the proportions that have experienced difficulty in deciding breach, ranging from 24% of police, fire and park authorities, to 13% of county and unitary/metropolitan councils, 11% of London boroughs, and only 7% of district councils.

Impact of local investigations

Amongst those authorities where a local investigation has taken place since January 2005, 69% of respondents highlight a positive impact that has occurred, and 13% could highlight no positive impacts. Notably, at least one-half highlight three positive outcomes, that awareness on the standards committee has been raised within the authority (57%), that the importance of the Code of Conduct has been reinforced within the authority (52%), and/or that awareness of the Code of Conduct has been raised within the authority (51%). There has also been a raised awareness of monitoring officers and their role within the authority (42%). Of monitoring officers questioned 17% commented that local investigations had improved ethical conduct within the authority.

Amongst different types of local councils, respondents from London boroughs are most likely to report positive outcomes resulting from local investigations (78%), followed by unitary and metropolitan (71%), district (68%), and county (62%) councils. Unlike other authority types, respondents from London boroughs are more likely to have noted an increased awareness of the Code of Conduct and/or of the monitoring officer within the authority than they are to highlight raised awareness of the standards committee.

Table 16: Positive impacts of local investigations – prompted, multiple response (where a local investigation has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Raised awareness of the standards committee in the authority	57	57	62	54	66	67	52
Reinforced the importance of the Code of Conduct in the authority	52	52	62	47	64	67	28
Raised awareness of the Code of Conduct in the authority	51	51	49	51	47	78	52
Raised awareness of the monitoring officer in the authority	42	42	49	43	29	78	24
Raised public awareness of the Code of Conduct	28	28	0	31	30	11	28
Improved ethical behaviour in the authority	17	18	23	18	15	22	0
Authority now more transparent / open	12	13	0	12	19	11	0
Other	6	6	0	8	3	0	0
No positive impacts	13	13	13	14	12	11	0
Unsure	7	7	15	7	7	0	0
Not stated	11	11	10	11	10	11	20
Unweighted bases	166	162	9	106	37	9	4
Weighted bases	164	161	6	108	35	11	4

Amongst those authorities where a local investigation has taken place since January 2005, more than one-third of respondents (36%) note any negative impacts that have occurred, the proportion ranging from 45% of London boroughs, to 38% of district, 36% of unitary/metropolitan, and 13% of county councils. Overall, the impact of the relationship between the monitoring officer and members has been highlighted by the largest proportion of respondents as being a negative impact (18%), followed by the image of the authority in the minds of the public (10%).

Table 17: Negative impacts of local investigations – prompted, multiple response (where a local investigation has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Impact on relationship between monitoring officer and members	18	18	0	18	18	33	24
Impact on the image of the authority to the public	10	10	0	5	22	33	0
Impact on relationship between monitoring officer and officers	2	2	0	3	0	0	0
Impact on image of the standards committee in the authority	5	5	13	6	0	0	0
Other	12	12	0	15	9	0	0
No negative impacts	36	37	62	34	41	44	0
Unsure	10	9	15	8	11	0	56
Not stated	18	18	10	20	12	11	20
Unweighted bases	166	162	9	106	37	9	4
Weighted bases	164	161	6	108	35	11	4

In the table above, 12% of respondents give ‘other reasons’ on a spontaneous rather than prompted basis. The key issues highlighted include an increase in political partisanship⁴ (3%), a decline in the relationship with parish councils (2%), and an increase of what are seen as trivial complaints. The volume of trivial complaints is perceived to lead to a subsequent lack of staff resource (2%), and financial problems with authorities (2%).

The perception that local investigations have had a negative effect in terms of the impact on the image of the authority with the public does not differ significantly at a regional level – 11% of respondents in Northern and Midlands, and 9% in Southern authorities consider this to have been the case.

Contingency planning

Almost all respondents (93%) are aware of contingencies in place within their authority which provide another person who is able to undertake a local investigation should the monitoring officer be unable to proceed. From the following table, it can be seen that a large number of authorities have multiple contingencies in place to deal with the unavailability of their monitoring officer. Options include a deputy monitoring officer (64%) a monitoring officer from

⁴ Including the misuse of the procedure by making what are considered trivial complaints to meet political ends.

a neighbouring authority (50%), an external consultant (37%), and/or another officer within the authority (37%).

As the following table demonstrates, police, fire and parks authorities are less likely to have any procedures in place to deal with the absence of their monitoring officer (86% having a contingency plan, compared to 95% of local councils), and are the only type of authority that favour the use of monitoring officers from neighbouring authorities (57%) over an internal solution, particularly through the use of deputy monitoring officers (50%).

For all local council types, the largest proportion have deputy monitoring officers available to deal with the contingency, and this proportion is particularly high amongst county councils (86%). Overall however, unitary and metropolitan councils seem most likely to have adopted a multi-strand policy and have particularly strong internal resourcing, with a majority using deputy monitoring officers, other officers within their authority and/or external consultants.

Table 18: Who would carry out a local investigation in the event of the monitoring officer being unable to do so – prompted, multiple response (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Deputy monitoring officer(s)	64	67	86	62	72	74	50
A monitoring officer from a neighbouring authority	50	49	53	50	47	42	57
External consultant	37	39	33	38	51	21	27
Another officer within the authority	37	40	40	35	54	47	25
Other	4	5	6	6	1	5	3
Nothing in place	5	4	4	4	4	5	11
Unsure	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

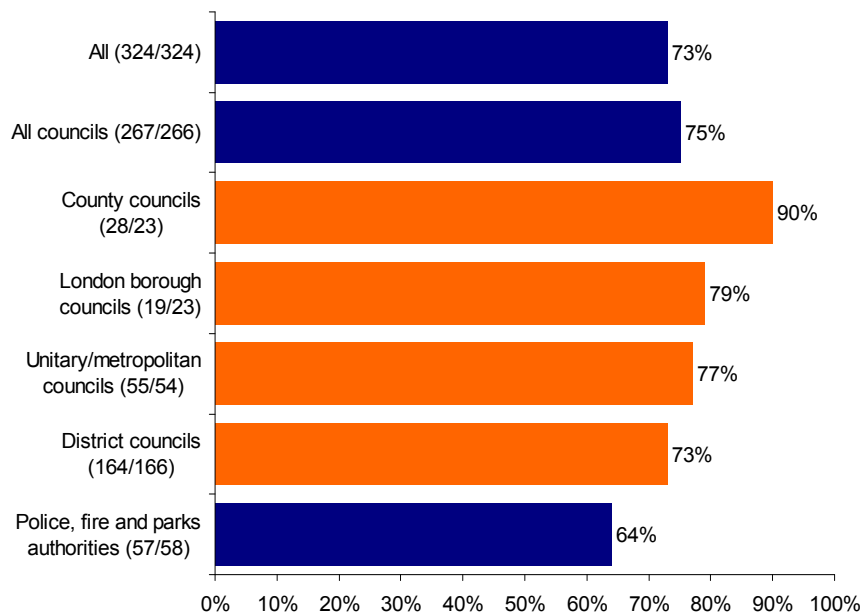
Training

Training on investigations

The majority of respondents indicate that they or other members of their standards committee have received training on how to undertake a local investigation (73%). By contrast, 26% have not received any such training.

As the following figure indicates, receipt of investigations training is more typical within local councils (75% receiving training, rising to 90% in county councils) than police, fire and parks authorities (64%). Over a quarter of district council respondents have not received any training on how to undertake a local investigation, whilst just over 20% of unitary/metropolitan councils and London boroughs, also have not received any training in this area. These results highlight the need for training provision, particularly amongst police, fire and parks authorities as well as district councils who, in terms of overseeing standards of conduct, incorporate parish/town councils.

Figure 9: Proportion of respondents who indicate that training on undertaking investigations is delivered within their authority (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

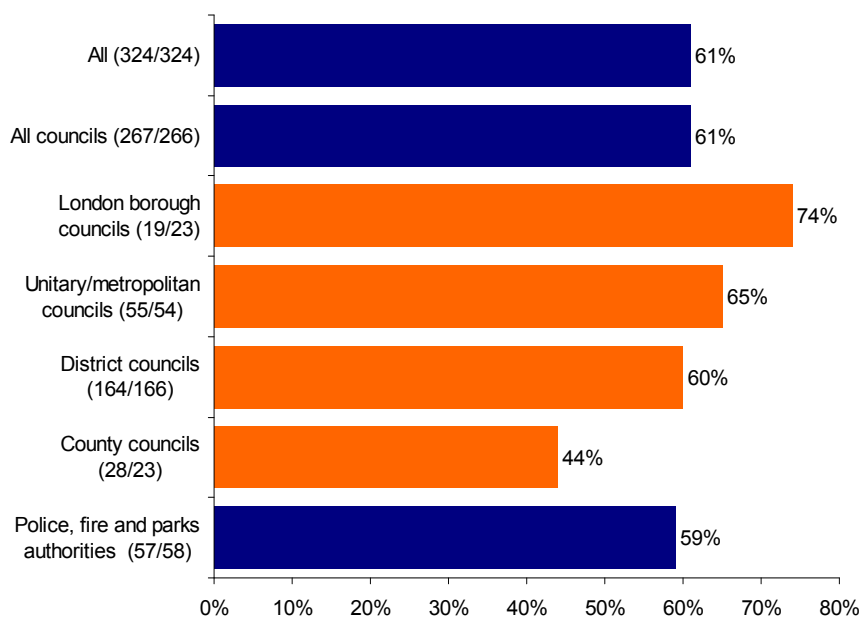
The receipt of training also varies to an extent at a regional level, with respondents or standards committee members who represent authorities in the Midlands being most likely to have received investigations training (79%, falling to 72% of Northern and 69% of Southern authorities).

Just over three in five respondents would like to receive training or additional training on how to conduct local investigations in the future (61%). Unsurprisingly, those yet to receive any

investigations training are more likely to express a demand for future training (73%, compared to 57% of those who have already received investigations training).

Whilst a consistent level of training demand is observed between local councils (61%) and police, fire and parks authorities (59%), between differing types of local councils, the proportion that would like (further) training varies notably, high demand being observed in London boroughs, and lower demand in county councils.

Figure 10: Proportion of respondents who would like (more) investigations training in the future (All respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

Training demand is slightly higher within authorities in the North (67%) over the South (59%) and Midlands (57%).

Furthermore, training demand is unsurprisingly higher amongst those monitoring officers who have been in their role for shorter periods of time, with 77% of those working as a monitoring officer for up to a year highlighting a training demand, falling to 63% of those who have been in their role for one to five years, 55% of those in their role for five to ten years, and 58% of those in their role for ten or more years.

Training on ethics and the Code of Conduct

Training delivery and attendance

Over nine in ten respondents (94%) state that training on ethics, and/or the Code of Conduct has been delivered within their authority since the beginning of January 2005, although this proportion is higher within local councils (96%) than within police, fire and parks authorities (85%).

This training is most likely to have been delivered to standards committee members (87% of respondent authorities) and/or elected members who are not on a standards committee (78%), although notable minorities also highlight training being given to officers (37%) and/or parish and town councillors (36%). There is wide variation between local councils and police, fire and parks authorities, or even between differing types of local councils in terms of the proportion of authorities that deliver ethics/Code of Conduct training. The key points to note, highlighted in the following table include:

- A greater commitment of London boroughs in delivering training to officers.
- A greater involvement of district councils in delivering training to parish or town councillors.
- Fewer opportunities for standards committee members to benefit from training amongst police, fire and park authorities.

Table 19: Groups to which training on ethics and/or the Code of Conduct is delivered (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
standards committee members	87	89	93	88	94	79	77
Elected members who are not on a standards committee in your authority	78	82	93	79	86	89	59
Officers	37	37	45	31	40	68	34
Parish and town councillors (not on the standards committee)	36	44	5	57	40	0	0
None of the above	6	4	4	4	2	5	15
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	57
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	58

At a regional level, the key differences from the headline sample are observed in the delivery of training to officers in the South (44% of respondent authorities), and to parish and town councillors in the Midlands (43%).

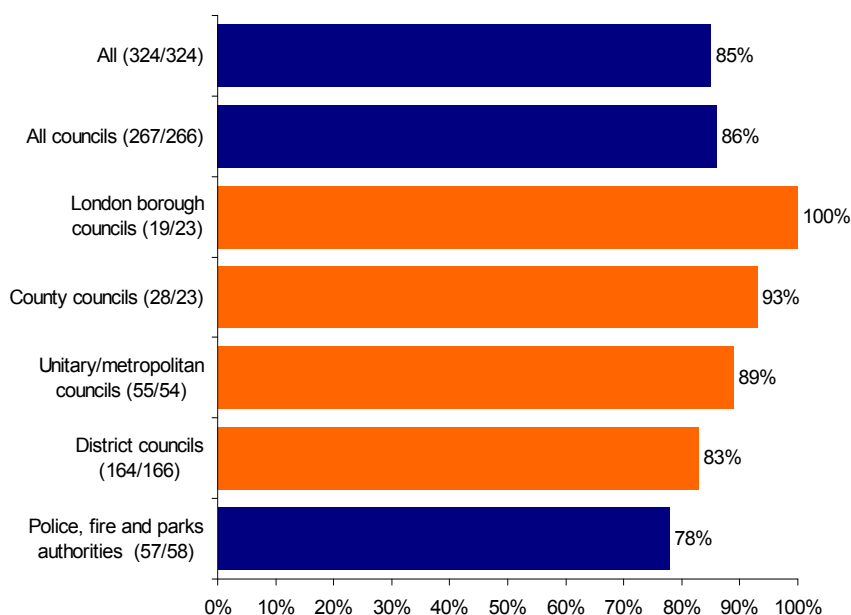
Attendance at training on ethics or the Code of Conduct varies significantly across the groups to which the training has been delivered. Where respondents indicate that training has been delivered to standards committee members, 96% state that the training has been fairly or very well attended by these members; in contrast 87% of officer training (which is compulsory), 80% of other elected member training, and 64% of parish and town councillor training has been similarly attended.

Table 20: Attendance levels at training on ethics or the Code of Conduct amongst specified groups (where training has been delivered to the specified groups)

	Standards committee members	Elected members who are not on a standards committee in your authority	Officers	Parish and town councillors
	%	%	%	%
Very well attended	65	22	38	15
Fairly well attended	31	58	49	49
Not well attended at all	2	17	7	32
Unsure / not stated	2	3	5	5
Unweighted bases	281	254	118	116
Weighted bases	281	254	119	117

Ethical governance toolkit

Over four in five respondents (85%) are aware of the ethical governance toolkit, developed by the Standards Board, Audit Commission and IDeA. Awareness is slightly higher amongst local councils (86%) than amongst police, fire and parks authorities (78%), although as the following figure demonstrates, awareness amongst local council respondents achieves even higher levels amongst London borough and county councils.

Figure 11: Proportion of respondents who are aware of the ethical governance toolkit (All respondents)

Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

Regional variance in terms of awareness of the ethical governance toolkit is also observed, with respondents in Midlands authorities (78% aware) less likely to be aware than those in the North or South (both 88%).

Over one-quarter of respondents (27%) have used some of the materials in the toolkit, although as the following table demonstrates, respondents from London borough and county authorities are far more likely to have done so (58% and 53% respectively).

Approaching a further half of respondents (47%) intend to use the toolkit in the future, rising to 57% of respondents from unitary authorities, whilst one in eight (13%) would like further information. This latter group includes 30% of those who have been in their position of monitoring officer for less than one year. Finally, 12% of respondents have no intention of using the toolkit, peaking at 15% of respondents from district authorities.

Table 21: Usage of the ethical governance toolkit (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Used the toolkit	27	28	53	22	22	58	25
Intend to use the toolkit	47	47	33	47	57	42	45
Would like further information on the toolkit	13	12	4	15	11	0	15
Does not intend to use the toolkit	12	12	7	15	9	0	12
Not stated	2	1	3	1	0	0	8
Unweighted bases	324	267	28	164	55	19	324
Weighted bases	324	266	23	166	54	23	324

Members of standards committees survey findings

Respondent's role within the standards committee

Length of membership

The majority of respondents (63%) have been serving on the standards committee for between one year and less than five years. This contrasts with 13% who have been serving for less than one year, and 24% who have been serving for five years or more.

Local councils on the whole differ from police, fire and parks authorities in terms of long-term standards committee members⁵, who represent 25% of the former group, but only 17% of the latter. Across local authorities, the time served on standards committees is fairly consistent with the exception of London boroughs, where a large proportion has served for less than one year (35%).

Table 22: Length of time that the respondent has worked as a standards committee member (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than one year	13	13	13	10	11	35	12
One year or more but less than five years	63	62	64	64	59	48	71
Five years or more	24	25	22	25	29	17	17
Not stated	1	1	1	1	1	0	<0.5
Unweighted bases	1,308	1,127	112	691	245	75	181
Weighted bases	1,742	1,477	114	939	302	117	265

⁵ That is, those who have been members of standards committees for at least five years.

With the publication of the White Paper *Strong and prosperous communities*, the workload of committee members may change to an extent within certain authorities. Respondents were asked to rate the impact that the content of the White Paper may have on their role.

Whilst committee members recognise that there will be negative impacts on committee members regarding workload (75% agree that this will increase), and the number of hearings that members will have to attend (66% agree), there is nevertheless a high degree of positivity that members will be able to meet these challenges, 68% agreeing that they are confident that they will be fully prepared, and 60% that the committee has sufficient support. By contrast, 14% disagree with the statement that the standards committee has sufficient support to manage the proposed changes.

Table 23: Agreement that specified changes will affect the respondent in their role as a result of the White Paper *Standards of Conduct in English Local Government* (all respondents)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
My workload will increase	%	75	17	2	6
I am confident that I will be fully prepared for these changes	%	68	18	8	6
The number of hearings I am required to attend will increase	%	66	21	2	11
The standards committee has enough support in order to manage these changes	%	60	17	14	9
Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted					

Operation of the standards committee

All respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with twenty statements regarding perceptions within their authority with regards to the standards committee, the impact that the committee has had within their authority, and how effective working relationships and lines of communication are. The full results are presented in Table 31 and Table 32 in Appendix 1.

From the table, it can be seen that the standards committee is perceived in the most positive terms with regards to having a good relationship with the monitoring officer (91% agree that this is the case), that the committee receives sufficient support from the monitoring officer (89%), and that the main function of the committee is to promote ethical behaviour within the authority (89%).

There is a variation in the extent to which standard committees provide an advisory role to members and officers. With 50% expressing disagreement that officers and 45% that elected members who are not on a standards committee regularly ask for ethical advice.

Training

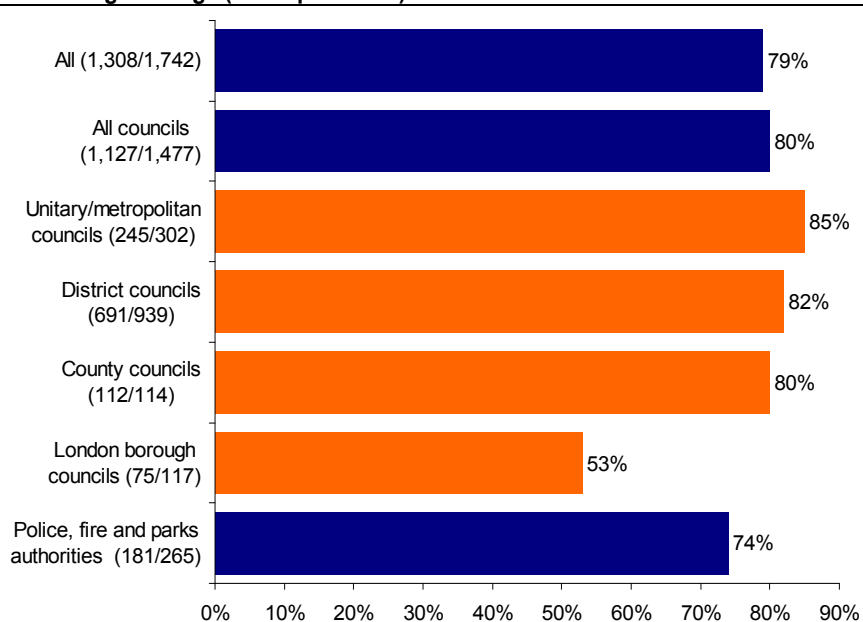
Training on hearings

Training received

Almost four in five of respondents indicate that they have received training on how to undertake a local hearing (79%). In contrast, 19% of respondents reported that they have received no such training.

As the following figure indicates, receipt of such training is more typical of local councils (80% receiving training) than police, fire and parks authorities (74%), although within local councils, a far smaller proportion of respondents in London boroughs received training (53%).

Figure 12: Proportion of respondents who indicate that they have received training on undertaking hearings (all respondents)



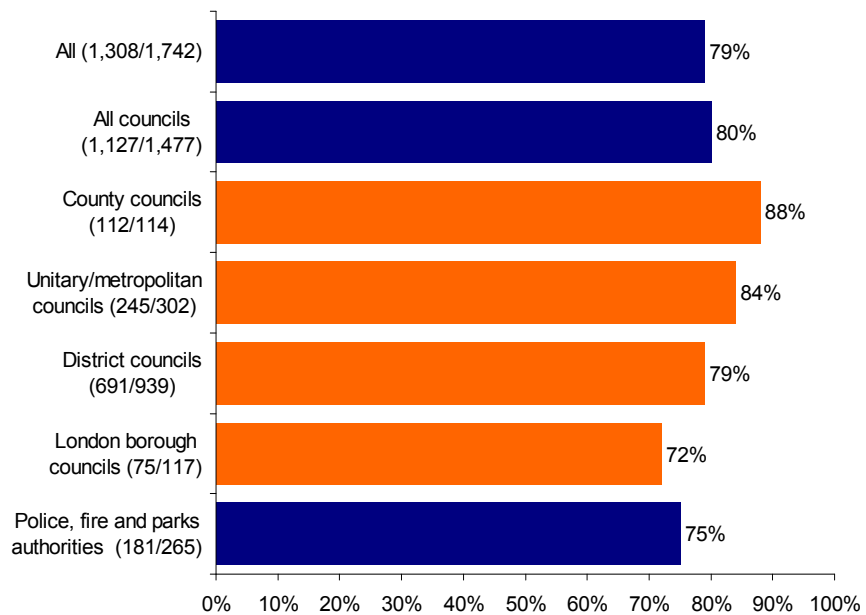
Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

The receipt of training also varies to an extent at a regional level, with respondents in the Midlands being most likely to have received hearings training (84%, falling to 83% in the North and 73% in the South).

As with training on local hearings, 79% of respondents have undertaken training related to other aspects of their role, and 18% report this not to be the case.

As the following figure indicates, receipt of training related to other aspects of the role is more typical of local councils (80% receiving training) than police, fire and parks authorities (75%). However, across local councils, whilst there is a divergence in the proportions receiving other training between 88% for county councils, falling to 71% for London boroughs, this differential is far smaller than that observed previously with regards to the receipt of training on hearings.

Figure 13: Proportion of respondents who indicate that they have received training related to other aspects of their role (All respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

The receipt of training also varies to an extent at a regional level, with respondents in the North being most likely to have received other relevant training (83%, falling to 78% in the Midlands and 77% in the South).

The following table summarises the number of training days received on how to undertake hearings and other aspects of the respondent's role. The number of days delivered on either type of training is similar; for the majority of respondents training on either or both of hearings and other aspects of the role has been limited to one to three days (66% hearings; 61% other aspects of the role), although a notable proportion has received in excess of three days training (15% on hearings training, 21% on other aspects).

Table 24: Number of days training received (all respondents)

	Training on how to undertake hearings	Training on other aspects of their role
	%	%
None	19	18
Less than one day	22	21
1-3 days	44	40
4-6 days	10	11
7-9 days	1	3
10 days or more	2	3
Don't know	1	1
Not stated	1	2

Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted

Where respondents have received training in relation to their role as a standards committee member, 51% indicate that the most recent training was delivered in-house, and 39% by an external provider. Local councils, in comparison to police, fire and parks authorities have a greater reliance on in-house provision (52%), particularly amongst London boroughs (64%). For police, fire and parks authorities, and also unitary/metropolitan authorities, there are approximately equal proportions of respondents who received the most recent training through in-house or external provision.

Table 25: Provider of the most recent training (all respondents)

	All	All councils	County councils	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
In house	51	52	54	52	48	64	46
An external provider	39	38	34	40	41	22	40
Don't know	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Not provided	9	8	11	7	9	13	12
Unweighted bases	1133	986	103	607	219	55	147
Weighted bases	1513	1291	105	822	274	87	222

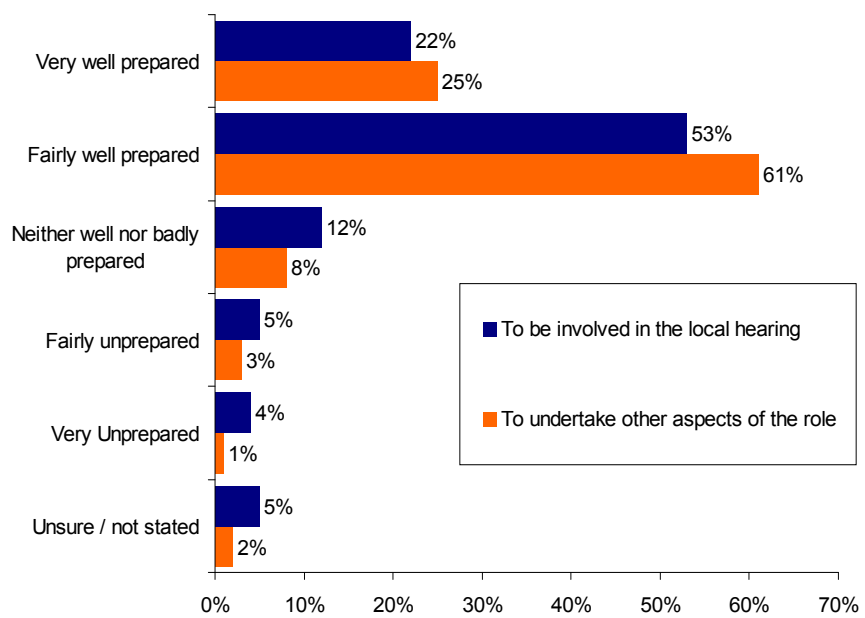
In terms of the themes covered in recent training, the key theme was holding/chairing meetings – in all, 26% of those who have received training were trained in this area. Other areas of training include their role (8%), role play and case study (7%) and the Code of Conduct (7%). The full list of training received is summarised below:

- 26% - holding/chairing meetings
- 8% - role of standards committee members
- 7% - Code of Conduct; role play
- 4% - complaints procedures
- 3% - ethical standards; declaration of interest; 'more of the same'; basic training; hearing procedures
- 2% - future changes; local determination; planning issues
- 1% - training session for parish councils; mediation; monitoring officer issues; adjudication issues

Preparedness for the role as a standards committee member

All respondents were asked to rate how prepared they feel in terms of being involved in a local hearing and in being able to undertake other aspects of their role. Overall, 75% of respondents feel well prepared for their involvement in local hearings (of which 22% were very well prepared), whilst 12% feel neither well nor badly prepared, and 9% badly prepared. In contrast, 86% feel well prepared to undertake other aspects of their role (of which 25% very well prepared), 8% neither well nor badly prepared, and 4% unprepared.

Figure 14: How prepared the respondent feels with regards to specified aspects of their role (All respondents)



Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted

Perceptions of the training

Respondents who have received training related to their role within the standards committee were asked to rate their level of agreement with six statements relating to the training they received. The results in the table below do not highlight any particular deficiencies with the training provided, respondents being highly likely to agree that the training was relevant (86%), was of an appropriate standard (79%), fully met aims and objectives (79%), and was well organised (79%). The only aspect which raises a level of concern relates to the content of the training, for which a lower proportion of respondents (55%) express agreement that everything they needed to know was covered.

Table 26: Agreement with specified statements regarding the training received (all respondents)

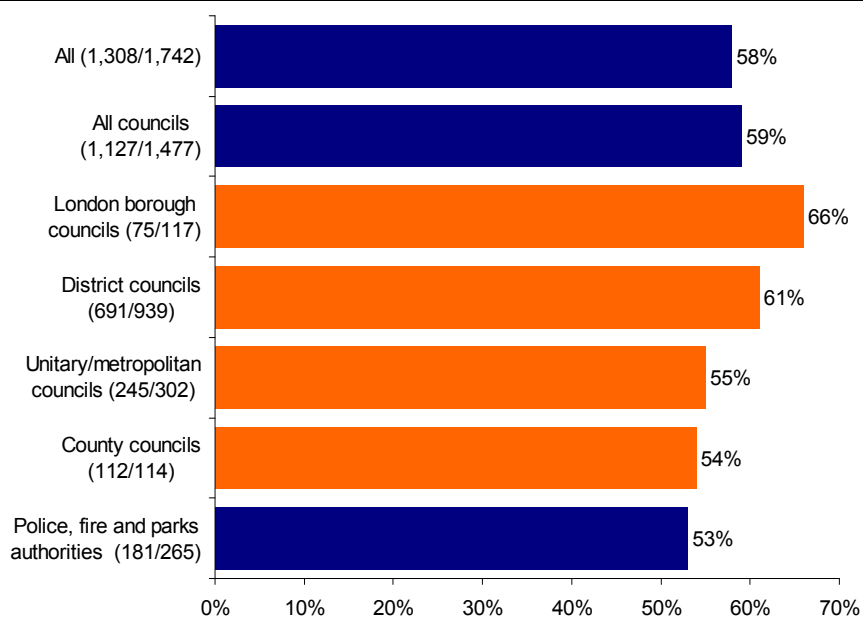
		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
Was relevant	%	86	4	1	9
Overall was of an appropriate standard	%	79	9	2	10
Fully met the aims and objectives	%	79	9	2	11
Was well organised	%	79	8	3	9
Was well structured	%	77	10	3	11
Covered everything I needed to know	%	55	24	9	12
Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted					

Future training need

Approaching three in five respondents would like to receive training or additional training relevant to their role in the future (58%). Unsurprisingly, those who feel unprepared for their role are more likely to express a demand for future training (87%, compared to 56% of those who feel prepared for their role).

The proportion that would like to receive more training in the future is slightly higher within London boroughs (66%), unsurprising given the comparatively low proportion that have received training in the past.

Figure 15: Proportion of respondents who would like (more) training relevant to their role in the future (all respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

Training demand is slightly lower within authorities in the North (85%) in comparison to the South (93%) and Midlands (92%).

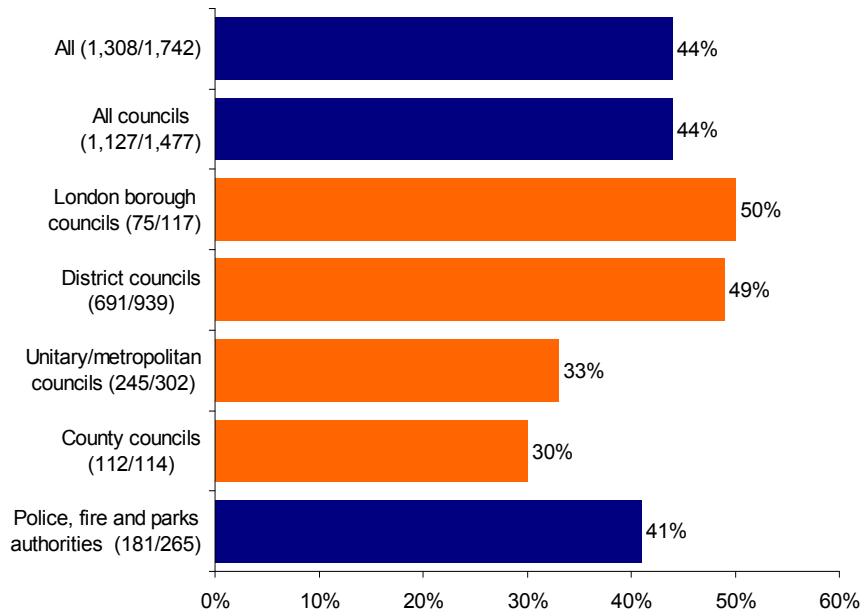
Those respondents who would like to receive future training were further asked to highlight topic areas of the training they would like. The key areas include holding and chairing meetings (12%), the role of members on standards committees (12%), refresher courses of standards issues (12%), and role plays and case studies (11%). The full list of responses is as follows:

- 12% - holding and chairing meetings; role of members of standards committees; refresher courses on standards issues
- 11% - role plays and case studies
- 10% - hearings procedures
- 9% - 'more of the same'
- 5% - rules / Code of Conduct, ethical behaviour
- 4% - basic training
- 3% - investigations procedures; future changes to role; general legal issues
- 2% - communication
- 1% - mediation; local determination; auditing; monitoring officer roles; adjudication issues; decision-making

Ethical governance toolkit

Approaching one-half of respondents (44%) are aware of the ethical governance Toolkit, with no significant difference reported between local councils and police, fire and parks authorities. Across different types of local council, awareness levels do vary to a significant degree, those representing London boroughs being most likely to be aware of the toolkit (50%), those in county councils least likely to be aware (30%).

Interestingly, awareness of the ethical governance toolkit is far lower amongst standards committee members across all authority types than is the case amongst monitoring officers.

Figure 16: Proportion of respondents who are aware of the ethical governance toolkit (all respondents)

Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

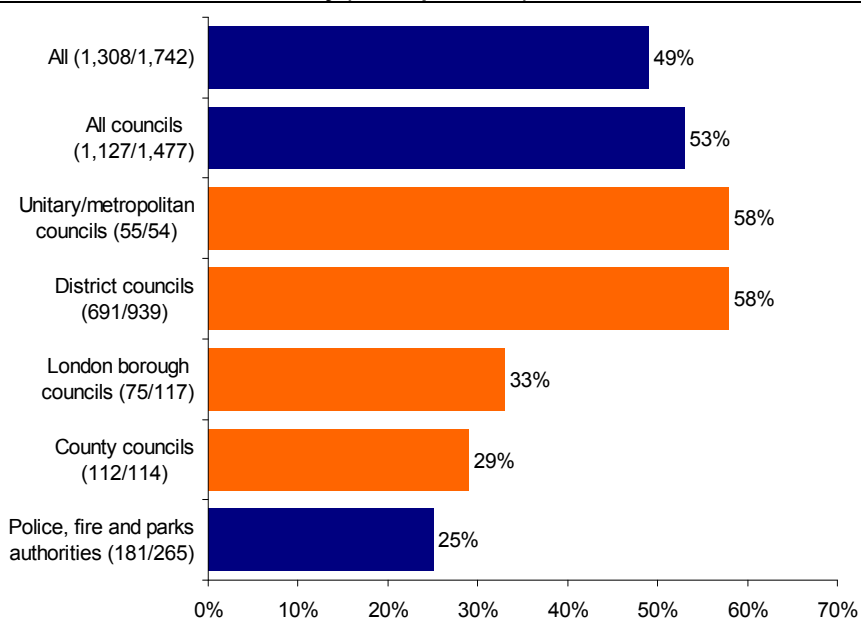
Impact of local hearings

Previous local hearings

Undertaking local hearings

Almost one half of authorities in the sample have undertaken local hearings in the past (49%), although significant variation is observed between local councils (53%) and police, fire and parks authorities (25%). The following figure also highlights a wide differential between local council types in the proportion that have undertaken local hearings, unitary and district authorities having been most likely to have done so, county councils least likely to have.

Figure 17: Proportion of respondents who indicate that a local hearing has been undertaken within their authority (All respondents)



Figures in parentheses denote unweighted/weighted bases

No significant regional variation is noted in the proportion of authorities where a local hearing has taken place – 50% of southern and northern authorities, falling to 47% of Midlands authorities.

Impact of local hearings

Amongst those authorities where a local hearing has taken place, 89% of respondents highlight a positive impact that has occurred. Three key positive impacts emerge – that the hearing has raised awareness of the standards committee within the authority (78%), raised awareness of the Code of Conduct within the authority (77%), and/or reinforced the importance of the Code of Conduct within the authority (72%). One-third (32%) of respondents consider that local hearings have improved ethical behaviour in the Authority.

Table 27: Positive impacts of local hearings – prompted, multiple response (where a local hearing has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

	All	All councils	County council	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Raised awareness of the standards committee in the authority	78	79	79	80	78	68	71
Raised awareness of the Code of Conduct in the authority	77	78	74	79	78	71	66
Reinforced the importance of the Code of Conduct in the authority	72	72	76	72	73	66	68
Raised public awareness of the Code of Conduct	41	43	38	45	43	21	18
Improved ethical behaviour in the authority	32	33	41	30	43	32	17
Authority now more transparent / open	27	26	26	26	26	24	38
Other	10	11	12	12	6	8	6
No positive impacts	3	3	0	2	2	8	8
Unsure	5	4	6	3	6	8	9
Not stated	3	4	12	4	3	0	0
Unweighted bases							
Weighted bases	854	789	34	542	176	38	65

Amongst those authorities where a local hearing has taken place, a third of respondents (31%) note negative impacts that have occurred, the proportion ranging from 33% of district, and 32% of unitary/metropolitan authorities, to 26% of county, 24% of London boroughs, and 23% of police, fire and parks authorities.

Overall, the impact of the relationship between the standards committee and members has been highlighted by the largest proportion of respondents as having a negative impact (14%), followed by the image of the authority in the minds of the public (11%).

Across authority types, members of standards committees within unitary authorities are most likely to have noted positive impacts of local hearings (83%, compared to 79% amongst district, 76% amongst London borough, 75% amongst police, fire and parks, and 70% amongst county authorities). There is some difference across authority types in terms of the proportions noting individual positive impacts, although the raising of awareness of both the standards committee and Code of Conduct and reinforcement of the Code of Conduct are frequently recognised as the key benefits across all authority types. Key differences to note are:

- Respondents from county councils are more likely to have noted improved ethical behaviour within their authority.
- Respondents from London boroughs are generally less likely to have noted individual positive impacts, but particularly raising awareness within the authority of standards committees, and raising public awareness of the Code of Conduct.
- Respondents from police, fire and parks authorities are less likely to have noted a raising in awareness of the standards committee within their authority, raised public awareness of the Code of Conduct, and improved ethical behaviour within their authority. They are more likely to feel that their authority has become more transparent or open however.

Table 28: Negative impacts of local hearings – prompted, multiple response (where a local hearing has been undertaken in the authority since January 2005)

	All	All councils	County council	District councils	Unitary / metropolitan councils	London boroughs	Police, fire and parks authorities
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Impact on relationship between standards committee and members	14	8	3	14	17	5	14
Impact on the image of the authority to the public	11	11	12	11	11	5	11
Impact on the image of the standards committee in the authority	8	2	6	9	8	0	8
Impact on relationship between standards committee and officers	6	9	6	6	7	0	6
Other	11	8	12	12	9	21	12
No negative impacts	48	54	50	47	47	47	47
Unsure	15	15	9	14	14	29	15
Not stated	6	8	15	6	7	0	6
Unweighted bases							
Weighted bases	854	789	34	542	176	38	65

Appendix 1: Tables of results

Table 29: How the respondent perceives aspects of their role within the authority (all respondents)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
As monitoring officer I have a good working relationship with the standards committee	%	97	2	0	2
The chief executive (or similar) is supportive of my work as monitoring officer	%	89	6	2	2
The chief finance officer is supportive of my work as monitoring officer	%	89	7	2	2
Members regularly ask me for monitoring officer advice	%	89	6	3	2
I am consulted on the legal implications of decisions made by the authority	%	88	6	3	2
My authority values what I do as a monitoring officer	%	87	7	5	2
My authority believes that my role as monitoring officer is part of its wider ethical framework	%	85	10	2	2
My work as a monitoring officer has a positive impact on the behaviour of members	%	81	16	2	2
I have had adequate training to undertake my current role of monitoring officer	%	80	12	7	1
As monitoring officer I have an appropriate influence over our corporate management team	%	80	8	10	2
Officers regularly ask me for monitoring officer advice	%	75	13	10	2
My work as a monitoring officer has a positive impact on the behaviour of officers	%	71	23	4	2
Officers are co-operative with my investigations	%	64	11	0	26
Members are co-operative with my investigations	%	59	12	2	27
I have a sufficient number of support staff	%	57	16	26	2
My role as monitoring officer is isolated within the authority	%	14	10	74	3
Bases: 324 unweighted & weighted					

Table 30: Activities of the standards committee (all respondents)

	Activities included in the standards committee's terms of reference	Activities that the standards committee has been involved in	Activities that have taken up most of the standards committee's time	Activities planned by the standards committee over the next twelve months
	%	%	%	%
Monitoring the effectiveness of the Code of Conduct	98	73	42	81
Training/arranging training/seminars on the Code of Conduct	97	77	35	85
Inclusion of code/ethics issues in the induction of new members	62	57	1	64
Providing advice/assistance to members/officers on the code /ethics	81	56	16	61
Overview of internal and/or external audit	13	11	4	9
Overview of whistle-blowing Code	46	29	1	33
Overview of constitution or relevant extracts	39	35	11	37
Responding to ombudsmen investigations	22	11	1	13
Hearings	87	36	18	54
Functions relating to authority's complaints procedure	29	23	3	21
Representing the council to other authorities with respect to standards issues	23	26	1	17
A role in employees' conduct (e.g. in appeals against disciplinary action)	6	5	1	7
Approving and reviewing of anti-fraud procedures	18	17	1	15
Determining disputes over special payments to members (e.g. dependents' allowance)	5	1	<0.5	2
Responding to / receiving feedback on national or governmental developments regarding ethical governance	71	74	38	66
Other	17	11	5	16
None/not stated	<0.5	<0.5	7	4
Bases: 324 unweighted & weighted				

Table 31: How the respondent perceives aspects of their role within the authority (all respondents)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
The standards committee has a good working relationship with the monitoring officer	%	91	3	1	5
The standards committee gets enough support from the monitoring officer	%	89	4	2	5
The main function of the standards committee is to promote ethical behaviour within the authority	%	89	5	3	3
My authority values what the standards committee does	%	79	12	3	5
My authority believes that the role of the standards committee is part of its wider ethical framework	%	78	11	3	8
The chief executive (or similar) is supportive of the work of the standards committee	%	78	11	2	9
Officers are co-operative with hearings of the standards committee	%	69	11	1	19
The work of the standards committee has a positive impact on the behaviour of members	%	63	23	5	8
The standards committee has a good working relationship with the deputy monitoring officer	%	61	13	1	25
The chief finance officer is supportive of the work of the standards committee	%	58	18	2	22
The standards committee receives an adequate level of financial support	%	56	19	9	15
The work of the standards committee has a positive impact on the behaviour of officers	%	53	28	5	15
I personally receive an adequate level of financial support for my work on the standards committee	%	45	24	19	12
The standards committee has an appropriate influence over our corporate management team	%	37	28	9	27

Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted

Table 32: How the respondent perceives aspects of their role within the authority (All respondents)

		Agree	Neither	Disagree	Unsure / not stated
The relationship of the standards committee with parish or town councils has improved since I have been on the standards committee	%	33	29	6	33
We have had difficulty in recruiting unelected independent members	%	21	16	44	19
The standards committee is isolated within the authority	%	19	18	55	8
Members regularly ask me and/or other members of the standards committee for ethical advice	%	16	23	45	15
The main function of the standards committee is to hold hearings	%	15	16	63	6
Officers regularly ask me and/or other members of the standards committee for ethical advice	%	10	25	50	16
Bases: 1,308 unweighted, 1,742 weighted					