



Standards
for England

Annual return responses 2009

This document provides an in-depth look at the responses to Standards for England's survey of standards committee activity in 2009.

Please note that:

- Where respondents were asked to answer in their own words, similar answers were put into groups, and a description of the five largest groups has been given.
- For some questions, respondents gave more than one answer to a question. The percentages quoted in the tables are percentages of all authorities that gave a response to the question. Therefore they will not add up to 100.

Section 1: Terms of Reference

Does the standards committee have Terms of Reference?

Yes: 99%

No: 1%

How is help provided to members on following the Code of Conduct? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Training	90
Advice from officers	58
Briefings	23
SfE Publications (e.g. the Bulletin, our guidance, DVDs)	16
Regular reminders to declare interests	9

Does the standards committee have a forward work plan?

Yes: 51%

No: 49%

Who outside the standards committee is involved in agreeing the forward work plan? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Monitoring officer	56
Other officer (e.g. Senior solicitor, Head of Legal, Head of Civic Services,)	34
No one	17
Chief Executive	12
Full council	10

Is the standards committee given a role in reviewing amendments to the authority's Constitution (or standing orders where appropriate)?

Yes: 50%

No: 50%

What was the Standards Committee's role in the most recent review of the constitution or standing orders? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
It reviewed some proposals (only those related to its work)	29
It made recommendations to full council about proposals	25
It reviewed items on its own composition, procedures and Terms of Reference	17
It reviewed various codes and protocols	13
It reviewed the Members' Code of Conduct	12

Section 2: The Standards Committee's Annual Report

Does the standards committee produce an annual report on its own work?

Yes: 59%

No: 41%

Is the Annual Report received by a meeting of the full authority?

Yes: 50%

No: 50%

Is the Annual Report sent to all members of the authority?

Yes: 53%

No: 47%

Is the Annual Report sent to all senior officers?

Yes: 45%

No: 55%

If an annual report is produced, how is it publicised to the general public? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Council website	79
AGM or full council agenda	32
Standards committee agenda	12
Press release / local newspaper	11
Sent to town / parish councils or through parish council clerks	9

Section 3: Promoting Standards

What else does the Standards Committee do to communicate the role of the Standards Committee internally within the authority? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Arrangement of and involvement in training / induction	33
Standards committee presence at other council meetings	29
Promotion via council website	20
Production of or contribution to newsletter / bulletin / poster	19
Circulation of minutes, meeting reports. Inclusion on agendas	15

What else has the standards committee done to promote confidence in local democracy to the wider public? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Promotion via council website	40
Inclusion in council publications	21
Attending external meetings / opening meetings out to public	15
Promotion via the local press / media	10
Circulation of minutes, meeting reports, inclusion on agendas	8

Has the authority, or the standards committee in particular, considered how it will monitor and ensure high standards of behaviour when the authority is working in partnership with other organisations?

Yes: 48%

No: 52%

If yes, please provide examples (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Protocol for joint working, partnership framework, memorandum of understanding or similar document	32
Involved in reviews, audits or risk assessments	17
Issued guidance and advice	13
Discussed at standards committee meetings or other council meetings	12
Developed, delivered or attended training	10

Section 4: Training

Between 01/04/2008 and 31/03/2009, has the authority assessed the training and development needs of members in relation to their responsibilities on standards of conduct?

Yes: 75%

No: 25%

If yes, what training needs were identified? (Top five responses)

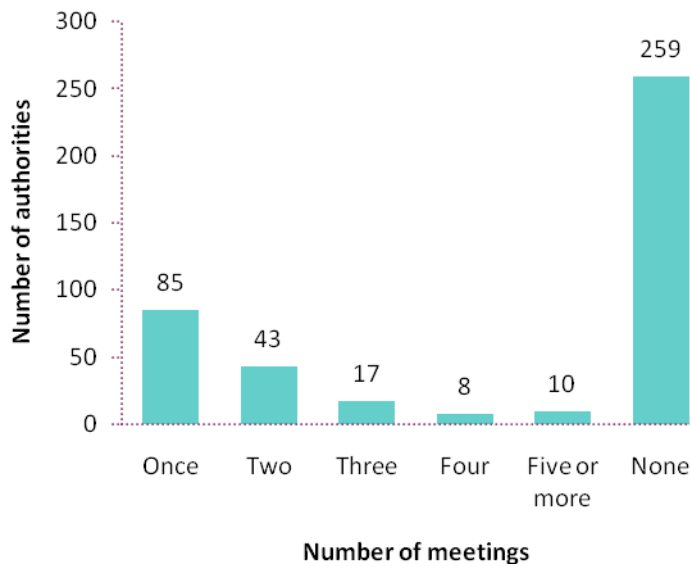
	% of responses
Local framework	41
Code of Conduct	37
Inductions for new members	9
Ethical governance/behaviour	8
Chairmanship skills	3

Please provide a list of training and development opportunities that have been provided to members and officers in the period from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009, that are relevant to ensuring high standards. Your list should include any training that relates to the operation of the local standards framework, e.g. local assessment and hearings. (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Local framework/assessment	66
Code of Conduct	58
Determinations (hearings)	17
Ethical standards generally	17
Chairing skills	6

Section 5: Leadership

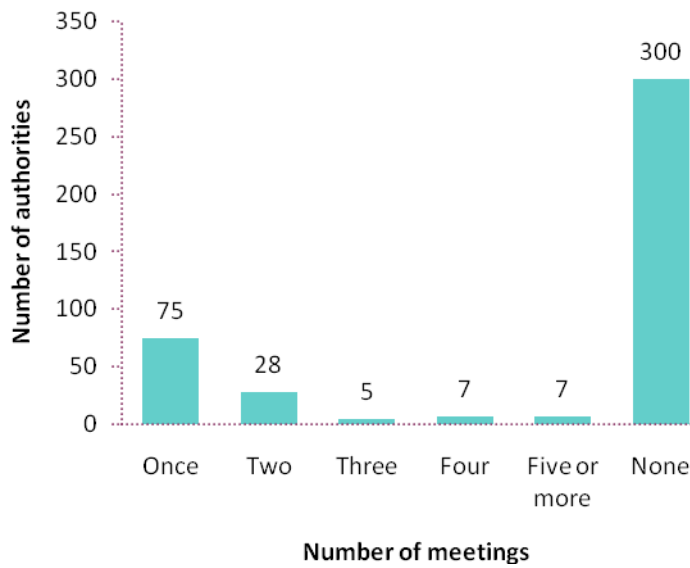
How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the chief executive to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?



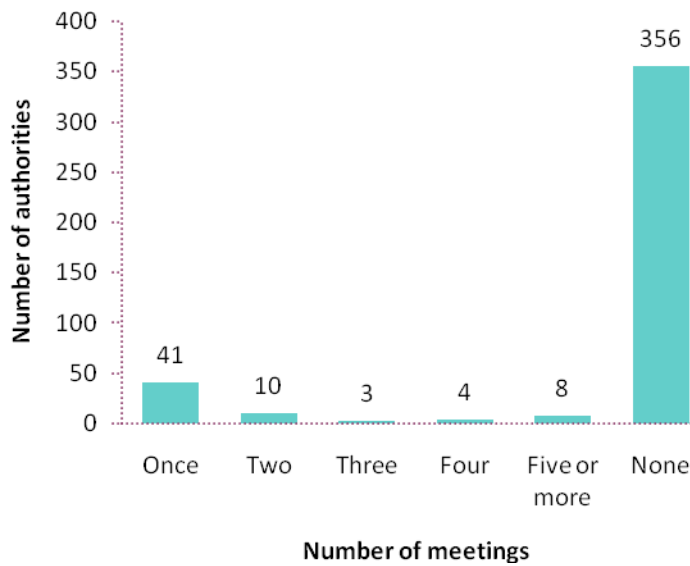
Please also provide an overview of what these meetings were about (Top five responses)

	% of responses
General ethical issues and assessment of standards in authority	18
Role and responsibilities of the standards committee	15
Local framework and assessment of complaints	11
Discussion or review of documents or reports e.g. Terms of Reference or Annual Report	9
Lessons learnt, action planning, future work or meeting agendas	9

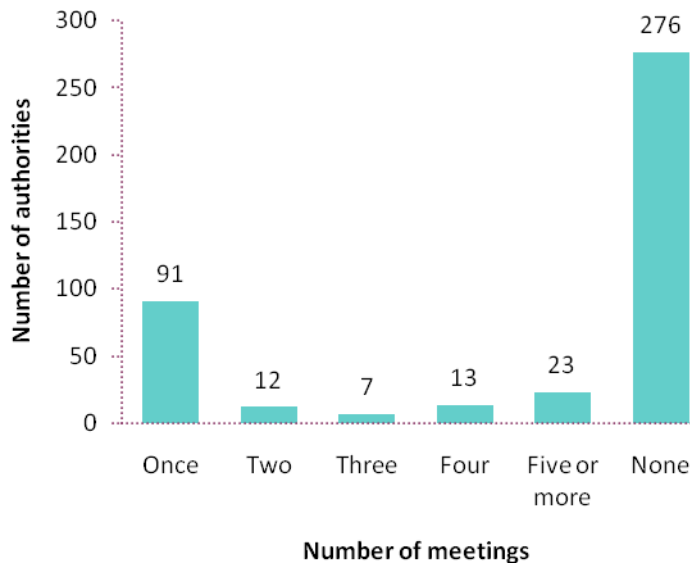
How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the leader of the council to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?



How often has the standards committee, or its chair, met the other party group leaders to discuss ethical issues in the last 12 months (from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009)?



How many times from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009 has the standards committee chair been invited to address a full authority meeting?



Does the monitoring officer sit on the corporate management team?

Yes: 60%

No: 40%

If no, describe in what ways, if any, the monitoring officer has access to the corporate management team (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Monitoring officer has access to individual members of corporate management team	37
Monitoring officer is able to attend corporate management team meetings	35
Monitoring officer receives agendas, papers or minutes	31
Monitoring officer has access to chief executive or chair	27
Monitoring officer has access through other management teams or team members	16

Has an executive member (or senior member where appropriate) been given portfolio responsibility for standards?

Yes: 31%

No: 69%

Section 6: Complaints

Can the public access information, from the authority website, about how to make a complaint against a member?

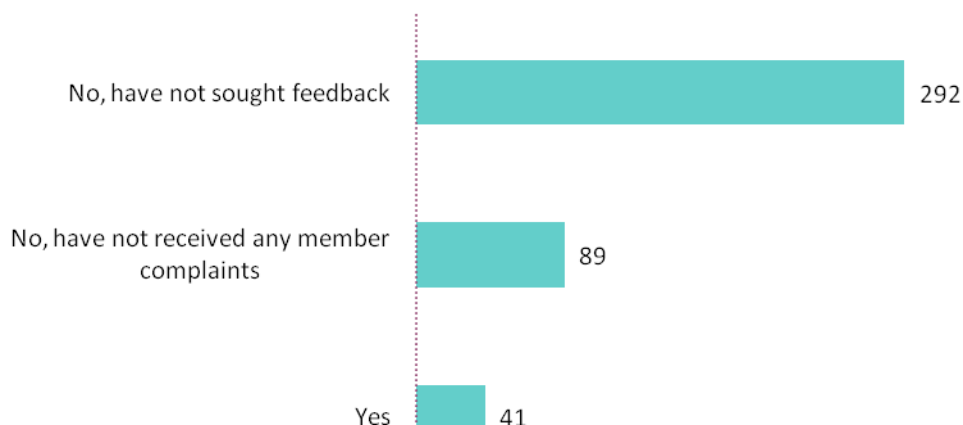
Yes: 94%

No: 6%

What else has the authority done to advertise the complaint process on member conduct to the general public? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Information in local press	43
Information in council publications (e.g. news letter to all households)	34
Information displayed in public buildings/reception areas	24
Complaints leaflet	17
Advertising through parish councils	10

Has the authority sought feedback from any of those people involved in an allegation of member misconduct about their satisfaction with the member conduct complaint process? For example has the authority sought feedback from the complainant, witnesses or person against whom the allegation was made?



Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member misconduct to members? (Top five responses)

Which members are informed?

	% of responses
Standards committee	20
Full council	15
All Members	4
Members who attend public meetings	3
Parish councillors (through their clerks)	3

How is the information given?

	% of responses
Report to standards committee	20
Standards committee agendas and/or minutes available to members	18
Regular report to full council by standards committee chair or monitoring officer	15
Letter and/or copy of report	12
Council web site	12

Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member misconduct to officers? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Report, minutes or other Standards committee materials, e.g. agendas	18
Website	9
Management team are informed	8
Related/relevant officers are informed	8
Written (email/letter)	6

Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of investigations into member misconduct to the general public? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Minutes	20
In accordance with Regulations ¹	13
Annual/periodic report	8
Decision notice	5
Statutory notice	3

Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of allegations that have not resulted in an investigation to members? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Communicated to the standards committee	24
Communicated to complainant and subject member	22
In writing	15
Included in minutes or agendas	14
Regular reports (e.g. annual, quarterly)	13

Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of allegations that have not resulted in an investigation to officers? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Through minutes of meetings	55
Not communicated to officers at all	51
Communicated to senior officers	47
Only communicated if the officer was the person making the complaint	35
Through authority website	35

¹ Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008

Where they have been undertaken, how does the authority communicate the outcome of allegations that have not resulted in an investigation to the general public? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Meeting documents (agendas, minutes or reports)	20
Not communicated to the public	16
Through authority website	16
Only communicated if the member of the public was the person making the complaint	12
In accordance with Regulations ²	10

² Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008

Section 7: Member-officer relations

Does the authority have a protocol for relations between members and officers?

Yes: 93%

No: 7%

If yes, how is the protocol communicated to officers and members? (Top five responses)

	% of responses
Constitution	64
Intranet	43
Induction / training	42
Handbook	8
Reported to full council	7

Does the authority include training on the importance of high standards of behaviour in the inductions of new members and officers?

Yes: 96%

No: 4%

Does the authority have informal mechanisms for dealing with member/officer and member/member disputes?

Yes: 84%

No: 16%

Section 8: Registering members' interests

Is the member register of interests accessible to the public on the authority website?

Yes: 34%

No: 66%

Is the register of gifts and hospitality accessible to the public on the authority website?

Yes: 21%

No: 79%

Section 9: Officer Conduct

Does the authority have a code of conduct for senior officers?

Yes: 77%

No: 23%

Does the authority compile a register of senior officers' interests?

Yes: 67%

No: 33%

If yes, is the register of senior officers' interests available to the public on the authority website?

Yes: 3%

No: 97%