



News in Brief

- Two successful workshops were held with MO's and SO's during March 2014. Feedback and follow up action are detailed in this Briefing.
- Three alleged breach cases were convened for Hearing by the Commission Members during May and June. Case findings will be published in future issues, and are also available on our website.
- Work on shaping the Guidance for the revised 'Model Code of Conduct' is now underway – it is anticipated that this will go out to consultation during August 2014, with the final version published in September 2014.
- 'Case Review Corner' will return in the next edition of 'Professional Briefing' – but all 2013/14 cases will be detailed in the Standards Commission Annual Report, available to download from the website in September. A hyperlink will be sent out to all organisations when it is published.

Monitoring Officer / Standard Officer Workshops – What happens next?

We would like to thank everyone who was able to attend the recent workshops, held in Edinburgh during March 2014. These workshops were designed to review the content of Guidance linked to the Code of Conduct for Councillors, and the newly launched revised Model Code of Conduct for Devolved Public Bodies. We also asked for feedback on what more you require from the Standards Commission in terms of support.

Both workshops were well attended, with:

- 24 Councils in attendance (36 attendees) at the Monitoring Officers event; and
- 58 organisations (70 attendees) at the Standards Officers event.

There were a variety of topics identified and discussed during the events, and the collated feedback has been sent directly to delegates.

Councillors, Board Members and Senior Officers may wish to note that the key messages distilled from both workshops were:

1. **Greater clarity required in the Guidance Notes** to accompany the Codes of Conduct.
2. Request for **more networking events** for Monitoring Officers and Standards Officers.
3. **Clarification of roles** and expectations of the Monitoring / Standards Officer role.
4. **Request for further training** for Monitoring / Standards Officers in respect of the Codes of Conduct.
5. **Clarification of the separate roles** between the Commissioner for Ethical Standards ('CES') and the Standards Commission for Scotland ('SCS').
6. Acknowledgement that there are **variations within internal governance** procedures and complaints processes across all organisations.
7. There is misinterpretation or **misunderstanding of the language used** within legislation and the Codes of Conduct.

Action Plan

Action 1:

Prepare Guidance Notes to accompany the newly launched Model Code of Conduct for Devolved Public Bodies. *(This is because there are some significant differences between the new Code and the previous version.)*

Timescale:

Anticipated that new Guidance Note will be issued for consultation during July/August 2014, with the final version published mid-September 2014.

Action 2:

Establish and maintain two separate Scotland-wide networks for all Monitoring Officers and Standards Officers. *(These will be forums to address and resolve the issues raised in workshops; they will facilitate information sharing and MO/SO training requirements on a continual basis.)*

Timescale:

First meetings to be scheduled for Autumn 2014, with remit and timetable to be agreed for each network.

Action 3:

Prepare Guidance Notes to accompany the revised Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Timescale:

Anticipated that new Guidance Note will be issued for consultation during late autumn 2014, with the final version published in January 2015.

Action 4:

Ensure sufficient range of material is available on Standards Commission website, in order to address general information needs.

Timescale:

Work in progress, but lessons from current Hearings will be published through this 'Professional Briefing' series on a quarterly basis.

For further information on what support we can offer Councillors, please either speak with your Monitoring Officer or look out for new information coming on our website.

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