



INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

BUSINESS PLAN

2017 / 2018

Strategic Objective 1: 'GUIDANCE & SUPPORT'

To provide guidance and support to assist councillors and members of devolved public bodies to act in accordance with the Codes of Conduct.

| Actions (Taken From Strategic Plan) | Activities 2017/18 | Measurement / Target |
|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Developing, producing, issuing and promoting relevant, accessible and comprehensive guidance and educational materials for councillors and members of devolved public bodies.</p> | <p>Review and, if appropriate, update Guidance on Councillors' Code of Conduct, including the case illustrations, to ensure relevant and accurate.</p> <p>Produce and publish case examples of good practice and compliance with the Councillors' Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Produce and publish case examples of good practice and compliance with the Model Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Review and, if appropriate, update all advice notes on website to ensure relevant and accurate.</p> | <p>Undertake review in Q3 and any updates to be agreed, implemented and published Q4.</p> <p>Agree case examples and publish Q1.</p> <p>Case examples to be agreed and publish Q2.</p> <p>Undertake review Q3 and any updates to be agreed, implemented and published Q4.</p> |
| <p>2. Providing training and advice to councillors and members of devolved public bodies on the Codes of Conduct and the standards expected of them.</p> | <p>Provision of tailored training events to councillors.</p> <p>Provision of training events for members of devolved public bodies.</p> | <p>Substantive response to any request for training event to be issued within one month of receipt.</p> <p>Two regional events to be arranged by end of Q4.</p> <p>Training to be provided on request, subject to resources.</p> <p>Ongoing</p> |
| <p>3. Supporting induction and training programmes to help councils and public bodies promote awareness and understanding of the Codes of Conduct among their councillors and members.</p> | <p>Engaging with, and assisting, Councils on their planned induction and training programmes on the Councillors' Code of Conduct following the local government elections in May 2017.</p> <p>Consulting with, and assisting, any new bodies added to Schedule 3 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 on their planned induction and training programmes on the Model Code of Conduct.</p> | <p>Review information gained during consultative process in Q4 of 2016/17 to create action plan. Implement activities identified.</p> <p>Write to new Schedule 3 bodies to determine if/ what training will be provided to their members and offer assistance if appropriate within one month of them being operational.</p> |

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|--|--|--|
| <p>4. Developing guidance and training materials in light of any trends and emerging issues or developments.</p> | <p>Engaging and consulting with councils, devolved public bodies, the CESPLS and other stakeholders to identify any trends and emerging issues though:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and recording information and enquiries received by office, Members and at training events. • Reviewing intelligence gained through review of complaints and at Hearings. <p>Discussions with stakeholders including the Scottish Government, CoSLA, CESPLS, Audit Scotland, SOLAR, SOLACE and the Improvement Service.</p> <p>Holding workshops with Monitoring and Standards Officers.</p> <p>Reviewing other sources such as the media, parliamentary committee reports and Audit Scotland reports.</p> | <p>Ongoing use of information and intelligence gathered to identify any areas where guidance can be improved or where further advice or guidance required. Amendment / creation of such advice to then be issued and published on website.</p> <p>Ongoing and post Hearing analysis conducted within one month of each Hearing held.</p> <p>This to include annual meeting with SOLACE office bearers Q2, annual meeting ED and COSLA Q3, monthly meetings ED and CESPLS, annual meeting SCS and Audit Scotland Q3.</p> <p>Monitoring Officers Workshop to be held Q2. Standards Officer workshop to be held Q4.</p> <p>Ongoing.</p> |

Strategic Objective 2: 'PROMOTION'
To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and recognition and understanding of the Standards Commission's role among the public and stakeholders.

| Actions | Activities | Measurement / Target |
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| 5. Promoting of the role of the Codes of Conduct in public life, | Ongoing proactive engagement with the media about the role of the Standards Commission. | <p>Issue press release on any major activity or changes to ethical standards framework. Ongoing</p> <p>Respond to any media enquiries within timescales outlined in the Service Charter. Ongoing.</p> <p>Review and update database of media contacts to ensure information about Hearings and Hearings press releases are issued to appropriate contacts on the conclusion of Hearings. Ongoing</p> <p>Track and record press coverage of Standards Commission activities and Hearings. Ongoing</p> |
| 6. Providing advice on the interpretation of the Codes to members of the public and stakeholders, including officers of councils and staff of devolved public bodies. | <p>Provision of advice on request.</p> <p>Respond to requests for dispensations.</p> | <p>Record enquiries and respond within timescales outlined in Service Charter. Report on performance to be included in Annual Report. Ongoing and Q2.</p> <p>Substantive response to requests for dispensations to be issued within one month of receipt. Dispensations granted to be issued and published on website within one week of being agreed. Ongoing.</p> |
| 7. Engaging with, and providing support, to the Scottish Government, Scottish Ministers and the Parliament on matters relating to the Ethical Standards Framework. | <p>Responding to any consultations which impact in the ethical standards framework and on standards in public life. Consult on response if appropriate and publish on website.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the Scottish Government on any identified potential improvements to the Codes of Conduct and governing legislation.</p> | <p>Respond substantively to any query from Scottish Government or Ministers within 5 working days and to any consultation by deadline for doing so.</p> <p>Regular contact between ED and Scottish Government.</p> <p>Invite representative(s) from Scottish Government to one SCS meeting and MO and SO Workshops.</p> |

Strategic Objective 2: 'PROMOTION'

To promote the Ethical Standards Framework and recognition and understanding of the Standards Commission's role among the public and stakeholders.

| Actions | Activities | Measurement / Target |
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| 8. Publishing information about the Standards Commission's work, including the outcomes of Hearings and learning points arising from these. | <p>Publish details of Hearings and decisions made, on the SCS website and in the Annual Report.</p> <p>Publish professional briefings on the work of the Standards Commission and the outcomes of Hearings and learning points from these.</p> | <p>Publish details about forthcoming Hearings on website within five working days of notification letters being issued.</p> <p>Review and update standard format of press releases Q1. Issue press releases within one working day of the conclusion of all Hearings.</p> <p>Publish details of Hearing outcomes on website within 5 days of the written decision being issued and also within Annual Report Q2.</p> <p>Issue quarterly professional briefings.</p> <p>Consult on format and content of professional briefings and make agreed improvements identified Q3.</p> |

Strategic Objective 3: 'ENFORCEMENT'

To enforce the Codes of Conduct in a fair, impartial and efficient manner.

| Actions | Activities | Measurement / Target |
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| 9. Undertaking the statutory adjudication role in relation to alleged breaches of the Codes of Conduct. | All actions taken in accordance with process and timescales detailed within the Hearing Rules and Process Guide. | Publish outcome of Hearing within 5 working days and full written decisions within 20 days of the conclusion of the Hearing. Report on compliance with timescales in Hearing Rules and Process Guide provided in Annual Report Q2 . |
| 10. Making consistent, fair, impartial and transparent decisions in relation to whether to hold Hearings, whether a breach of the Codes of Conduct is established and, if so, the sanction to be applied. | Ensure all decisions well-reasoned and consistent and taken in accordance with the Standards Commission's Section 16 Policy and its Hearing Rules and Section 19 Policy if applicable. Review of decisions made and sanctions imposed to check for consistency, objectivity, fairness and transparency. | Draft written decision to be circulated to Hearing Panel Members within five working days of conclusion of Hearing. Review of each Hearing undertaken as standing agenda item at the SCS meeting which follows the conclusion of each Hearing. Ongoing . Formal annual review of all decisions undertaken at SCS meeting in Q4 , including decisions taken under Section 16 and at Hearings. |
| 11. Obtaining feedback and undertaking regular reviews of the Hearings Process Guide and Rules to ensure Hearings are run efficiently and are transparent, accessible and fair. | Proactively seek and analyse feedback on the conduct and management of Hearings in order to identify any improvements. Undertake research and engage with other bodies in order to share and inform best practice. | Issue feedback survey forms at each Hearing and /or send to known participants. Identify and make any improvements to Hearing Rules and/ or standard procedures. Ongoing Comprehensive review of Hearing Rules in Q3 . Any changes to be made and updated version published within one month of being agreed. Participation in Commissioners and Ombudsman's Group, FOISA Network Group, ED annual meetings with NI Ombudsman and Standards Commissioner for Wales. Ongoing research and ad hoc contact with other bodies. |
| 12. Sharing learning, experience and knowledge gained from enforcement activities to positively influence future behaviours and conduct. | Identify and publish learning points from complaints and Hearings in professional briefings, guidance and training materials. | Regular review of website content. Quarterly professional briefings issued and published. Review information gained during consultative process in Q4 of 2016/17 to create action plan to assist induction / training for councillors' post May 2017 election. Implement activities identified. Ongoing . |

Strategic Objective 4: 'GOVERNANCE'

To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance and best value.

| Actions | Activities | Measurement / Target |
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| <p>13. Developing the skills and competencies of Members and staff of the Standards Commission through a programme of continuous professional development, knowledge management and shared learning.</p> | <p>Continued training of new Member commencing in post in Q4 of 2016/17.</p> <p>Induction and training of new Member commencing in post in Q1 of 2017/18.</p> <p>Individual training for Members to be identified and actioned.</p> <p>Create and implement personal development plans for all staff.</p> | <p>Induction of both members to be completed by end of Q1. Training ongoing.</p> <p>Feedback on training and induction to be sought from both new members and induction pack and plan amended as appropriate in Q2.</p> <p>Convener to discuss individual training / skills development requirements with each member in Q2. All activities identified to be undertaken by end of Q4.</p> <p>Personal development plans developed as part of performance review in Q1. All activities identified to be undertaken by end of Q4.</p> |
| <p>14. Adopting good practice and governance in the oversight of the Standards Commission's finances and other resources.</p> | <p>Implement recommendations and action points arising from external and internal audits.</p> <p>Review membership and terms of reference of Audit & Risk Committee.</p> | <p>Programme of audits and associated improvement actions to be completed Q4.</p> <p>Review undertaken and changes implemented Q1.</p> |
| <p>15. Identifying and taking forward opportunities to work jointly or in partnership with other public bodies in order to ensure the efficient delivery of the Standards Commission's role, to eliminate duplication and to obtain best value in terms of shared services.</p> | <p>Continue to develop shared service agreements with SPCB.</p> <p>Continue to develop training material and briefings in conjunction with the Improvement Service, the College Development Network and Audit Scotland.</p> | <p>Discuss opportunity for access to the Scottish Parliamentary staff training portal Q1</p> <p>Review service level agreement with BIT Q2.</p> <p>Regular meetings / contact between ED and Officeholders Services / SPCB (On going) and annual formal meeting SPCB and Convener Q4.</p> <p>ED to hold meetings with each body Q3.</p> |

Strategic Objective 4: 'GOVERNANCE'

To operate in accordance with the principles of good governance and best value.

| Actions | Activities | Measurement / Target |
|--|---|---|
| 16. Making good use of resources and striving for operational efficiency and continuous improvement. | <p>Review of Policies Control Sheet by Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>Attend meetings of the Commissioners and Ombudsman's Business Managers Group and FOISA Network Group 7 to share information and ensure best practice is being applied uniformly.</p> <p>Review Records Management Plan and Document Retention Policy.</p> | <p>Review undertaken and changes implemented Q4.</p> <p>Attend meetings /contact between BM and other members of the group – share best practice and support role. On going</p> <p>Review undertaken and changes implemented Q2. Publish revised documents on SCS website.</p> |