

REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 26 September 2008)

1. STANDARDS COMMITTEES AND LOCAL ASSESSMENT OF COMPLAINTS – STANDARDS BOARD GUIDANCE (REPORT B) (MINUTE 23)

The Committee has considered various issues affecting its operation, flowing from the introduction, in May 2008, of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations.

Since the regulations came into force, the Standards Board has issued further guidance on a number of subjects, as a result of which the Committee has agreed some additions and amendments to its processes. These include:-

- The renaming of the Hearing Sub-Committee as “The Consideration and Hearing Sub-Committee” to undertake the initial (pre-hearing) consideration of investigator’s reports.
- Additions to the assessment criteria for dealing with complaints, criteria for circumstances where the complainant could remain anonymous, and criteria for deciding whether requests by complainants to withdraw their complaint should be agreed.

The Committee has also adopted the Council’s policy on persistent complainants for use in appropriate cases in relation to complaints against a member.

Consideration was given to separating the audit functions from the Committee’s Terms of Reference, but the Committee sees no benefit in recommending a change at this time.

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 imposes new duties on Standards Committees in relation to politically restricted posts. As a result the Standards Board guidance has stated that the function “to grant exemptions for politically restricted posts” should be formally added to the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Committee’s terms of reference be amended by adding:

“12. To grant exemptions for politically restricted posts”

**Cllr J A G Hutchins
VICE – CHAIRMAN**