

Day 1 Monday 15 October 2007

08.30 – 10.15

Registration



Light breakfast available

9.15 – 10.00



Getting up to speed

David Prince, Chief Executive, the Standards Board for England

An introduction to the Code of Conduct and the Standards Board, for those delegates new to the Code or the conference. Attendance optional.

Opening plenary

Hall 1

10.15 – 10.25

Welcome

Sir Anthony Holland, Chair, the Standards Board for England

10.25 – 10.40

Defining the detail

Phil Woolas MP, Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion

The Minister highlights how meeting the dual challenge of the local filter and the revised Code of Conduct depends on getting the details right – and sets out the government's focus for the future.

10.40 – 10.55

Evolving standards

David Prince, Chief Executive, the Standards Board for England

Drawing on local authorities' experience of putting the revised Code into practice, we provide a timely update on how implementation is progressing. The session also brings delegates up-to-date on the development of the Standards Board and our future support for authorities.

10.55 – 11.15

Local filter: Countdown to 2008

Patricia Hughes, Deputy Chair, the Standards Board for England

What key challenges, changes and implications will the local filter bring? We look at how the new legislation will impact on authorities and shape their future responsibilities, as well as setting out the timetable for implementation of the local filter.

11.15 – 11.30

Question time

An opportunity to pose questions to the morning's speakers.

11.30 – 12.00

Refreshments

Tea and coffee available



12.00 – 13.15

The Local filter: In detail

Various halls



A step-by-step guide to the local filter, essential for anyone working with the Code of Conduct. Using a case example, this session takes delegates through every stage of the local filter process, from handling the initial complaint to evaluating the outcome.

Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss solutions and draw on expert advice at every stage of the session.

Up to eight workshops, each with a maximum of 100 delegates.

Delegates will choose between:

- A monitoring officer focused session
- A standards committee focused session
- A mixed attendance session

13.15 – 14.30

Lunch



Hall 3

14.30 – 15.45

Breakout sessions

Breakout sessions on day one of the conference aim to prepare delegates for the changes expected in April 2008. They look in depth at the process and practice of managing the local filter and focus on helping delegates to develop the skills and knowledge they need to deliver a high standard of effective local governance.

Please note that these sessions run again at 16.15, with the exception of *Investigations: The essentials* and *Investigations: Tackling complex cases*.

Delegates can choose to attend one of the following session options.



Safeguarding local standards

An informative session mapping out the monitoring and auditing role of the Standards Board and how it fits in with other regulatory bodies such as the Audit Commission. Delegates learn what local filter data they will have to supply from 2008 and how we intend to collect it. The session also explores ways in which the Standards Board can support delegates in ensuring local arrangements are working effectively – and when we will intervene to support authorities who face difficulties.

Useful for all delegates.



Referrals: Lessons learnt

Drawing on over five years' experience, the Standards Board referrals team use practical case examples to explain the essential technical components and key skills involved in effectively managing referrals. **Useful for all delegates.**



Investigations: The essentials

Delegates work through a range of practical scenarios, based on the requirements of the new local filter system, to build the key technical skills required at each stage of the investigations process. This is an opportunity to share experiences and discuss best practice. **Particularly useful for monitoring officers new to the investigations process or those wanting a refresher.**



Investigations: Tackling complex cases

Not every case is straightforward. In this practical workshop delegates work in groups to review a case complicated by a number of issues. This session helps delegates to anticipate and respond effectively to potentially serious impacts on the decision-making process. **Particularly useful for experienced monitoring officers who want to develop their skills in this area.**



Managing the filter: Resources, challenges and solutions

The local filter brings benefits, not least increased local ownership of the ethical agenda. But it also brings challenges. This session shares the results of the Standards Board pilot looking at joint arrangements for standards committees, and explores ways of dealing with some of the pressures on local resources. Delegates discuss solutions and share best practice on this important issue.

Useful for all delegates.



Cracking the revised Code

An overview of the revised Code of Conduct, using practical case examples to bring delegates up-to-date with all the major changes and how they work in practice.

Useful for all delegates.



Talking it over: Why mediation works

Speakers explain how they have used mediation to successfully resolve a range of cases, demonstrating the key benefits of this valuable alternative to investigation and helping delegates to identify opportunities to apply this approach in their own work.



Standards committee member open house Q&A

An open house for standards committee members to ask questions on any topic to representatives from the Standards Board for England. **Useful for standards committee members.**

15.45 – 16.15

Refreshments

Tea and coffee available



16.15 – 17.30

Breakout sessions

Please note that in this part of the conference the sessions *Investigations: The essentials* and *Investigations: Tackling complex cases* have been replaced by two new sessions, *Hearings: The essentials* and *Spotlight on sanctions*.

Delegates can choose to attend one of the following session options.



Safeguarding local standards

An informative session mapping out the monitoring and auditing role of the Standards Board and how it fits in with other regulatory bodies such as the Audit Commission. Delegates learn what local filter data they will have to supply from 2008 and how we intend to collect it. The session also explores ways in which the Standards Board can support delegates in ensuring local arrangements are working effectively – and when we will intervene to support authorities who face difficulties.

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Referrals: Lessons learnt

Drawing on over five years' experience, the Standards Board referrals team use practical case examples to explain the essential technical components and key skills involved in effectively managing referrals. **Useful for all delegates.**



Hearings: The essentials

Delegates work through a range of practical scenarios, based on the requirements of the new local filter system, to build the key technical skills required at each stage of the hearings process. Delegates have the opportunity to share experiences and discuss best practice. **Particularly useful for standards committee members new to the investigations process or those wanting a refresher.**



Spotlight on sanctions

A practical workshop focusing on assessing the findings of a problematic case and agreeing a proportionate sanction. Delegates take an in depth look at the alternative sanction options and their implications and how they have been applied in recent cases. **Particularly useful for experienced standards committee members who want to develop their skills in this area.**



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Talking it over: Why mediation works

Speakers explain how they have used mediation to successfully resolve a range of cases, demonstrating the key benefits of this valuable alternative to investigation and helping delegates to identify opportunities to apply this approach in their own work.



Monitoring officers open house Q&A

An open house for monitoring officers to ask questions on any topic to representatives from the Standards Board for England. **Useful for monitoring officers.**

17.30

Close of day one

17.45 – 18.45

Fringe events

Various optional fringe events including:



Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitors (ACSeS)



The Association of Independent Members of Standards Committees in England (AIMSce)



Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)



Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)



Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE)

19.30 – 20.00

Drinks reception



20.00 – late

Conference dinner

Dress code is smart or smart-casual.

Cash bar available.

Live music.



Day 2 Tuesday 16 October 2007

08.00 – 09.00

Refreshments

Tea and coffee available. Delegates attending for today only should register at the Enquiries desk.



09.00 – 10.15

Breakout sessions

Breakout sessions on day two of the conference address vital issues linked to managing the wider impact of the local filter and the revised Code. Training and hands-on workshops help delegates to focus on raising their authorities' standards to an even higher level, improving communications with their stakeholders and confidently delivering effective local regulation.

Please note that these sessions run again at 13.15, with the exception of *Anything to declare? Understanding interests*.

Delegates can choose to attend one of the following session options.



Key case review

A detailed review of key cases which have had a significant impact on procedure and application of the Code. Delegates gain an insight into how the lessons learned from the cases can be applied to their work. **Useful for all delegates.**



State of independence

This session helps independent chairs and members build the key skills they need to respond effectively to the challenges of the local filter, including chairing successful meetings, dealing with complaints, problem solving and effective communication skills. **Particularly useful for independent members of standards committees.**



Positive about towns and parishes

Delegates hear a series of short presentations identifying positive ways to improve engagement with town and parish councils. The session focuses on key issues including how to maximize the role of town and parish representatives, the most effective techniques for training and building a useful and productive dialogue with town and parish councils and the benefits of working with County Associations.

Particularly useful for officers and members working closely with town and parish councils.



Engaging leaders

The local filter system positions local authorities as the foundation of the ethical framework, making an engaged leadership more vital than ever. Speakers share their experiences, suggesting practical measures to help delegates ensure that their own council leader and chief executive are fully prepared to take the lead and meet the challenges of greater local ownership. **Useful for all delegates.**



Anything to declare? Understanding interests

A practical session giving delegates the opportunity to build a sound knowledge of the detailed changes to the Code relating to interests. Delegates are presented with a series of short scenarios and are asked to debate the likely conclusion.

Useful for all delegates.



Message received? Managing communications

As the local filter comes into play, local authorities will be the first point of call for local media enquiries on complaints, investigations and case outcomes. This session uses practical examples to reveal the detail of how and why we deal with press interest in cases, before giving delegates the opportunity to discuss the implications of possible differing approaches. **Useful for all delegates.**



Practical mediation skills

A useful companion session to 'Talking it over'. Mediation can be a valuable tool in resolving disputes and reducing the potential of a complaint leading to a full investigation. This practical training session focuses on key mediation skills, equipping delegates with the competencies to mediate in disputes between individuals. **Useful for all delegates.**



Standards committee member open house Q&A

An open house for standards committee members to ask questions on any topic to representatives from the Standards Board for England. **Useful for standards committee members.**

10.15 – 10.45

Refreshments

Tea and coffee available



10.45 – 12.00



What's the score?

Hall 1



What is the current state of the regulatory framework? Is it fit for purpose and robust enough to deal with greater local ownership? Key opinion formers discuss and draw conclusions from the results of recent studies including Audit Commission research into ethics and standards committees. **All delegates attend this session.**

12.00 – 13.15

Lunch



Hall 3

13.15 – 14.30

Breakout sessions

Please note that in this part of the conference the session *Anything to declare? Understanding interests* has been replaced by a new session, *Striking a balance: Disclosure and public interest*.

Delegates can choose to attend one of the following session options.



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Striking a balance: Disclosure and public interest

A practical session giving delegates the opportunity to build a sound knowledge of the key changes to the Code relating to public disclosure. Delegates hear a series of short scenarios and debate whether they constitute disclosure in good faith, or are examples of disclosure in the interests of political gain. **Useful for all delegates.**



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Monitoring officer open house Q&A

An open house for monitoring officers to ask questions on any topic to representatives from the Standards Board for England. **Useful for monitoring officers.**

14.30 – 14.45
Comfort break

Closing plenary

Hall 1

14.45 – 15.00

All clear

Sir Anthony Holland, Chair, the Standards Board for England

A review of the conference.

15.00 – 15.30

The next step

David Prince, Chief Executive, the Standards Board for England

The conference has provided delegates with a wealth of knowledge and the confidence to make local regulation work. What happens next?

15.30

Networking

Refreshments available



16.00

Close of conference