



## Standards Committee

25 March 2009

### Report from the Borough Solicitor

Wards Affected:  
NONE

## Standards Board for England Statistics

### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights some of the latest statistics provided by the Standards Board for England about the number of complaints received by the standards committees of local authorities, the number of matters investigated and the decisions that were made.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note this report.

### 3. DETAIL

- 3.1 This is first comprehensive set of statistics published by the Standards Board since the new standards framework commenced ten months ago. The Standards Board receives information, on a quarterly basis, from the monitoring officers of local authorities. The statistics published by the Standards Board on their website in February 2009 cover the period 8 May 2008 to 31 December 2008 (the first three quarters).
- 3.2 During the first three quarters there were no complaints made about Brent councillors. However, three complaints were made at the start of the fourth quarter (1 January 2009 – 31 March 2009). Two of these have been referred to the monitoring officer for investigation, while in relation to the third it was decided to take no further action.

- 3.3 Some of the statistics that may be of interest to members are set out in **Appendix 1**.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. The quarterly return from the monitoring officer on which these statistics are based is completed online and takes 5-10 minutes each quarter.

#### **6. DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Officers believe that there are no specific diversity implications in this report.

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, as previously advised, the Monitoring Officer is required to supply the Standards Board with quarterly returns on the complaints that the Standards Committee receive and the progress of them.

#### ***Background Information***

*Bulletin 42 (which contains a brief discussion about the latest statistics) is available through the Standards Board for England website*

Should any person require any further information about the issues addressed in this report, please contact Shasha Ingbritsen on 0208 937 1656.

**Terry Osborne**  
**Borough Solicitor**

## APPENDIX 1

- Sixty nine percent (69%) of authorities have dealt with at least one complaint during the first three quarters.
- There have been fewer complaints recorded under the new arrangements, however, the first quarter was shorter due the legislation not commencing until 8 May 2008.
- Of the total number of complaints recorded in the first three quarters (2,030), fifty-six percent (56%) were from members of the public; thirty four percent (34%) were from council members; and the final ten percent (10%) were from officers, monitoring officers, MP's and various 'others' (see **Figure 1**)

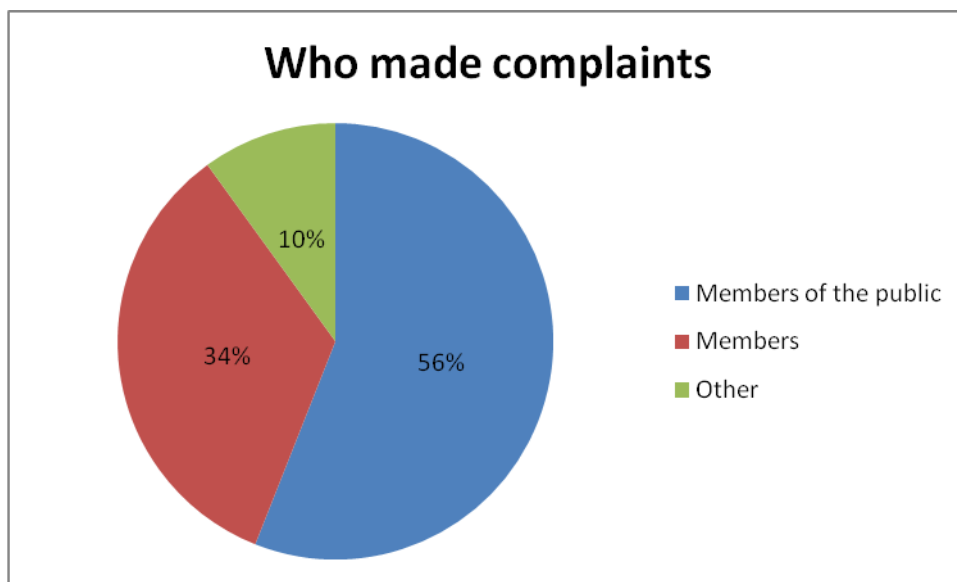
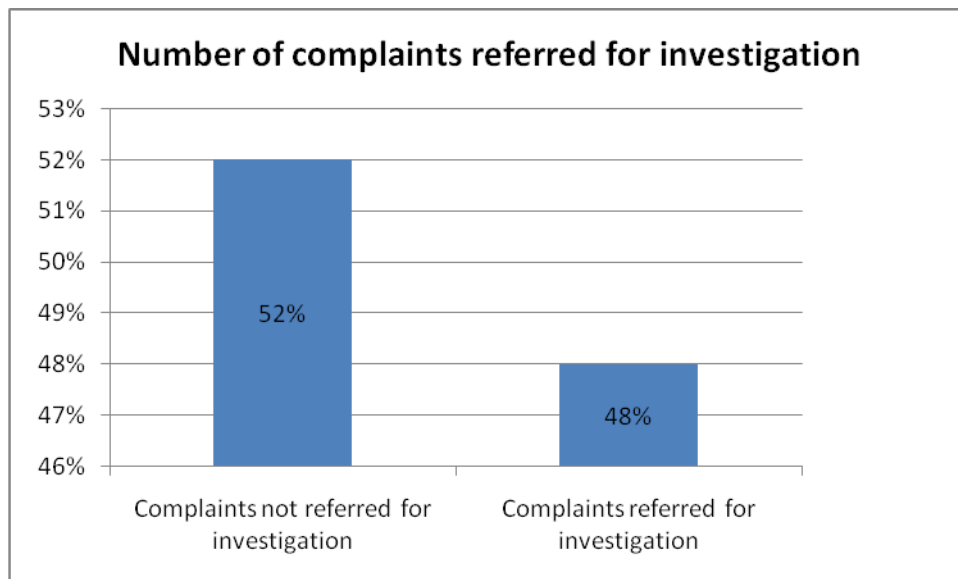
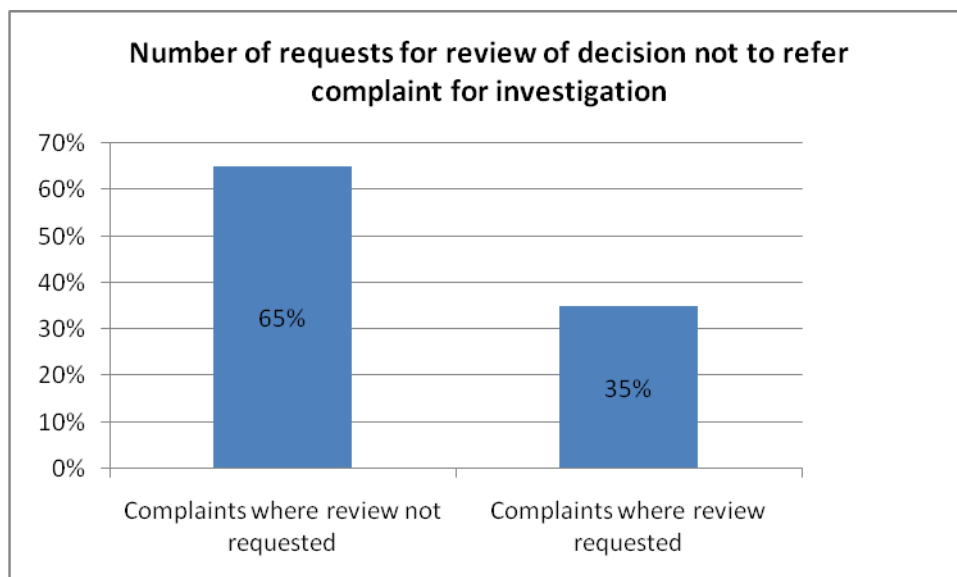


Figure 1

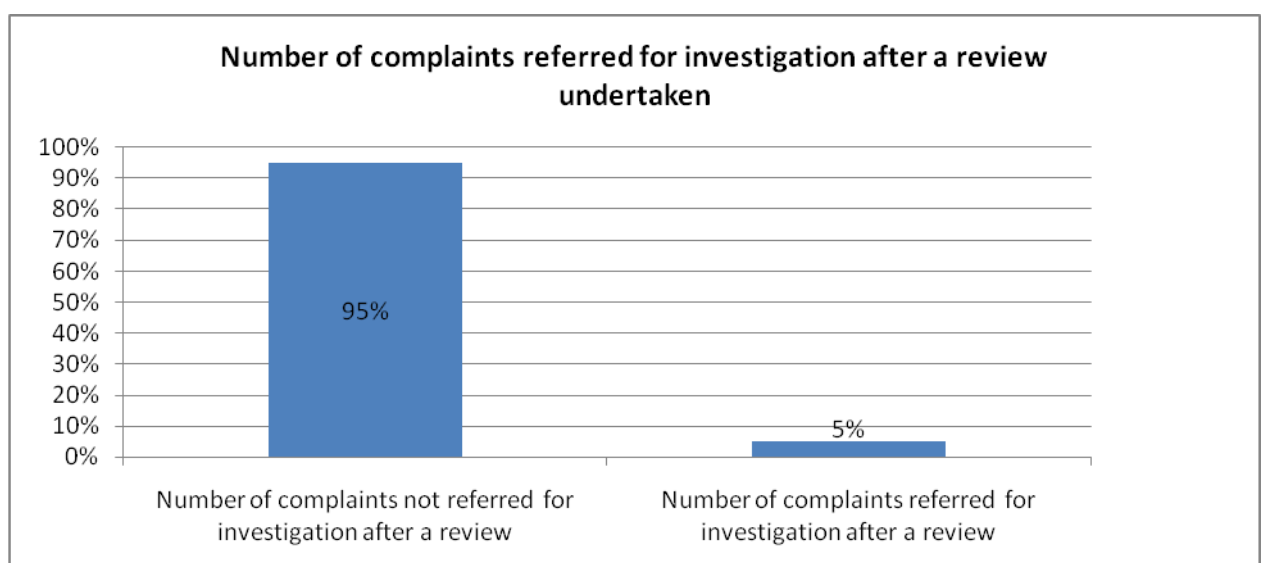
- Of the 2,030 complaints received, only 80 (or 0.1%) were in relation to members of London boroughs.
- Fifty two percent (52%) of all allegations were not referred for investigation (see **Figure 2**). However, in thirty five percent (35%) of those cases a review of that decision was requested (see **Figure 3**). Only five percent (5%) of those considered on review were referred for investigation (see **Figure 4**).



**Figure 2**

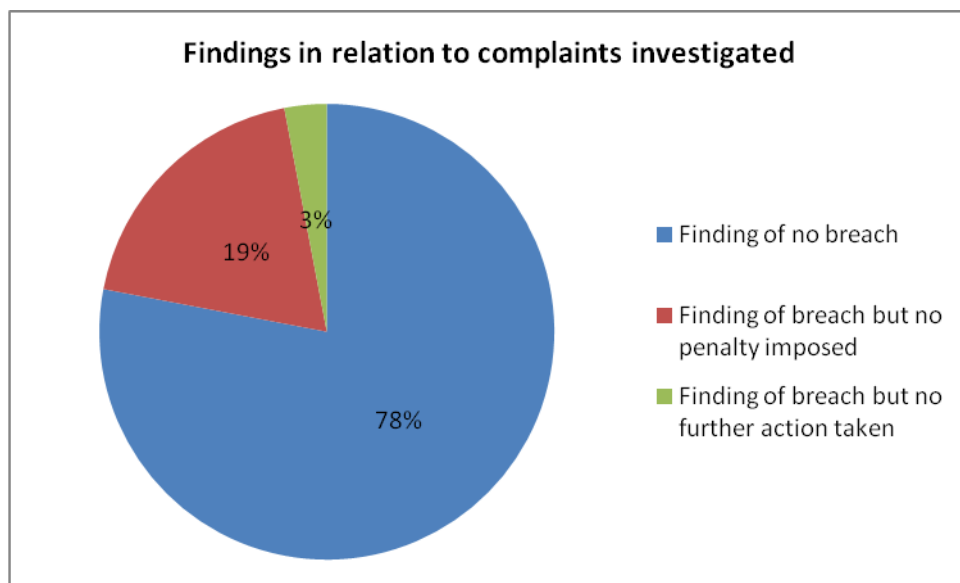


**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

- Twenty eight percent (28%) of all allegations were referred to the monitoring officer investigation.
- Ninety four (94) cases that were referred for investigation have been determined during the first three quarters. In seventy eight percent (78%) of these cases there was a finding of no breach; in nineteen percent (19%) of cases there was a breach found but no penalty imposed; and in three percent (3%) of cases a breach was found but no further action was taken (see **Figure 5**).



**Figure 5**

- The most common breach was failure to disclose a personal interest.