



## Health and Sport Committee

### NHS Governance – Corporate Governance

#### Submission by BSI

1. BSI (the British Standards Institution) is making this submission as the National Standards Body for the United Kingdom. BSI has a public function in support of the UK economy. We bring together stakeholders (including government, industry and consumers) and facilitate the development of “what good looks like”.
2. Voluntary standards offer a flexible, adaptive and collaborative alternative to regulation by providing common languages, terminologies, guidelines and good practice developed by and for stakeholders. As the UK’s National Standards Body, BSI operates in accordance with an MOU with the UK Government. Our robust standards development process requires open and full consultation with stakeholders to build consensus based outcomes. This gives standards the legitimacy and degree of market acceptance to be used for public policy purposes.
3. BSI is actively involved in developing voluntary standards for corporate governance and quality improvement of organizations. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Scottish Parliament to consider how standards can help to deliver its policy objectives for the NHS in Scotland.
4. BSI has read with interest the committee’s questions about NHS boards. Whilst we have no specific responses to the questions raised, we would like to submit a supplementary response to the issue of creating a culture of improvement.

#### Committee questions:

**Do you have any comments on how NHS boards operate and make decisions, for example:**

- ***Do you trust NHS boards to make decisions that are in the best interests of the public?***
  - ***Are NHS board decisions open and transparent?***
  - ***How accountable do you feel NHS boards are?***
  - ***How effective are NHS boards at delivering health services and improving the health of their population?***
5. Voluntary standards play a significant role in corporate governance and organizational quality improvement. We wish to highlight the continued opportunities for Government to

use standards as a framework to deliver its policy objectives, such as *BS 13500 - Code of practice for delivering effective governance of organizations*.

6. BSI is engaged in research and standards development in the area of corporate governance, both in the UK and at an international level through ISO<sup>1</sup>. For example, under BSI's leadership, an international standards committee has recently been established to develop standards in corporate and organizational governance (ISO TC 309 - Governance of organizations<sup>2</sup>). This further demonstrates UK thinking and leadership in this area.
7. BSI is working with UK stakeholders to provide a useful and consistent framework to improve quality across a large number of organizations in many aspects of corporate governance and quality management systems. The committees in the UK which cover this work, consist of stakeholders from a variety of relevant and diverse groups from industry, government and consumer representatives, and cover topics such as governance (G/1), anti-bribery (G/3) and quality assurance and management (QS/1).
8. Standards have been developed for anti-bribery management systems, asset management, risk management, collaborative working relationships and whistleblowing arrangements. The anti-bribery management systems standard was initially a UK standard which has since entered into the International Standardization system to be published as *ISO 37001 on anti-bribery management systems*. Similarly the asset management standard and the collaborative working relationships standard were initially UK projects and have since become ISO standards. There is strong UK representation on all these ISO project committees and the UK is in the process of proposing the UK whistleblowing standard as an international project.
9. BSI also holds a leading role in the ISO committee for quality management and quality assurance<sup>3</sup>. BSI would be pleased to work with the Scottish Parliament to consider how voluntary standards can help provide a framework for quality improvement to help deliver policy objectives for NHS governance in Scotland.

## Background on BSI

BSI is the UK's National Standards Body, incorporated by Royal Charter and responsible independently for preparing British Standards and related publications and for coordinating the input of UK experts to European and international standards committees. BSI has 115 years of experience in serving the interest of a wide range of stakeholders including government, business and society.

BSI also presents the UK view on standards in Europe (via the European Standards Organizations CEN and CENELEC) and internationally (via ISO and IEC). BSI has a globally recognized reputation for independence, integrity and innovation ensuring standards are useful, relevant and authoritative.

---

<sup>1</sup> International Organization for Standardization, <http://www.iso.org/iso/home.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.iso.org/committee/6266703.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.iso.org/committee/53882.html>

BSI, as the UK's NSB, is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the national standards-making system not only for the benefit of UK industry and society but also to ensure that standards developed by UK experts meet international expectations of open consultation, stakeholder involvement and market relevance.

British Standards and UK implementations of CEN/CENELEC or ISO/IEC standards are all documents defining best practice, established by consensus. Each standard is kept current through a process of maintenance and review whereby it is updated, revised or withdrawn as necessary.

Standards are designed to set out clear and unambiguous provisions and objectives. Although standards are voluntary and separate from legal and regulatory systems, they can be used to support or complement legislation.

Standards are developed when there is a defined market need through consultation with stakeholders and a rigorous development process. National committee members represent their communities in order to develop standards and related documents. They include representatives from a range of bodies, including government, business, consumers, academic institutions, social interests, regulators and trade unions.

## **Further Information**

For further information please contact:

Steve Brunige  
Head of Government & Industry Engagement  
British Standards Institution  
Tel: 020 8996 7517