Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting held Friday 18 December 2020

Agenda Item 2 Paper Ref 01

Paper for the Board

This paper is for Decision

Sponsor

Lord Kamlesh Patel, Chair, Social Work England

Author

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Date:

26 February 2021

Reviewed by

Lord Kamlesh Patel, Chair, Social Work England

Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting
Friday 18 December, 10.30am via videoconference

Board Members:	Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair
	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Dr Helen Phillips	Non-executive Director
	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Mark Lam	Non-executive Director
	Baroness Tyler of Enfield	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Social Work England staff in attendance (for items):	Alison Edbury	Governance Manager
	Amy Soar	Head of Policy
	Claudia Thompson	Directors' Assistant
	Greg Ross-Sampson	Assistant Director, Corporate
	Jonathan Dillon	Executive Director, Fitness to Practise
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Engagement
	Tracy Watterson	Executive Director, People and Business Support
Sponsor Team:	Michelle Mann	Department for Education (DfE)
	Tom Sutton	Department for Education (DfE)
Public Observers:	Claudia Downs	External Communications Officer (CPD), Social Work England
	Linda Ginesi	CPD Campaigns Manager, Social Work England
	Representative	Professional Standards Authority
	Representative	UWE Bristol
Minute taker:	Alison Edbury	Governance Manager
Apologies:	n/a	

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair, Lord Patel welcomed Board members, guests and observers to the meeting.

1.2 The Chair declared that he had recently been appointed as Chair to the Independent Health Providers Network. Declarations were received from Claire Tyler who became President of the Money Advice Trust Charity in November and Commissioner for the Financial Inclusion Commission. Dr Andrew McCulloch re-declared his interest as Chair of the Board of GMC Services International in relation to the ongoing contract with Social Work England and said he had not identified any conflicts of interest on the matters to be discussed at the meeting. Jonathan Gorvin declared that he had been invited to join the faculty of the Good Governance Institute.

Action: Governance Manager to update the register of interests.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting on Friday 23 October 2020 **were approved as a correct record.**

3. Matters Arising and Action Log

3.1 The Chair reviewed the action log and asked for an update on the progression plan for Fitness to Practise. The Executive Director, Fitness to Practise reported that key assumptions and targets had been set for 2021 based on a revised forecasting model. This included numbers of new incoming cases, levels of referral, the enhanced capacity in the team and the new working measures that had been put in place. Key actions for each area of the service had been prioritised to mitigate the potential resourcing risks identified in the case examiners and hearings service areas.

4. Chair’s Report - verbal

4.1 The Chair reported he had held meetings with the Chief Executive, Regional Engagement Leads and he had met with the Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Engagement and our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) partner, about our EDI strategy. Meetings had taken place with the Ofsted Chair and together with our Chief Executive, he had also met the Chair and Chief Executive of Skills for Care.

4.2 The Chair explained that now his term of office had been agreed for a further three years he and the Chief Executive planned to work on developing opportunities for social workers to gain experience in non-executive director roles, especially in relation to increasing representation by Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals. The Chair said he planned to produce written reports for future meetings.

Action: Chair to present a written report for future meetings.

5. Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair's Report

5.1 The Chair of ARAC noted two audit reports had been reviewed, IT Health Check and Online, Social Media and both provided adequate assurance to the Board.

5.2 The Chair reported her concern about the costs of the National Audit Office (NAO) external audit fee. Last year's fee of £49,000 had been expected to decrease for the 2020/21 audit, however the Committee had been informed by the NAO that the fee level would at least remain the same but could possibly increase depending on the timing of the implementation of the new financial and commercial system. The Chair said that steps had been taken to de-risk the implementation of the system and the fee should not increase but would also not decrease. The Chair confirmed that the audit fee was in line with other arm's length bodies (ALBs). **The ARAC Chair's report was noted by the Board.**

5.3 Additional meeting dates were noted:
- 1pm-3pm, 6 January 2021 – Risk Appetite workshop
- 10am-12.30pm, 22 January 2021 – Strategic Risk Register workshop.

6. Scheme of Delegation

6.1 The Chair of ARAC explained that the scheme of delegation set out what the Chief Executive had chosen to delegate within his authority as described in the Framework Document and the Delegation of Financial Authority, issued by the Department for Education (DfE). She said that the financial scheme of delegation had been reviewed by ARAC and it was recommended to the Board for approval.

6.2 The Board discussed the levels of delegation. The Head of Finance and Commercial informed the Board that the scheme of delegation had been drafted following a comparison with other arms-length Bodies. **The financial scheme of delegation was approved by the Board.**

7. Chief Executive's Report

7.1 The Chief Executive introduced the report and welcomed feedback on the format. He highlighted:

- The successful completion of our first renewal process with just under 94,000 social workers having renewed and submitted their continuing professional development (CPD) by the deadline 30 November. Those who have not completed the renewal process, for whatever reason, now meet the criteria for the temporary register established in March 2019 under legislation introduced as part of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. As such these registrants would now be placed on the temporary register with the requirement to use the restoration process to restore to the full register should they wish to do so. This would also apply to those who fail to complete the requirement to upload evidence of CPD by 21 December 2020.
- There has been full compliance on the completion of our first annual monitoring of Education and Training providers of all social work programmes.

- Following on from a detailed inspection process, approval for one programme provider has been withdrawn.
- Work in relation to the EU exit and the consultation on amendments to registration and fees rules, was due to close on 22 December.
- The imminent launch of the Children's Social Care Review and the Mental Health Act reforms would be a priority for our policy work, alongside the development of professional learning outcomes in education and training for social work students and trainees.

Action: Baroness Tyler to discuss issues concerning the Children's Social Care Review and the Mental Health Act reforms with Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement.

7.2 The Board discussed the annual monitoring of Education Quality Assurance and the process for approval of courses for people who are or who wish to become social workers in England. It was agreed that the Board would review the annual monitoring report when it is completed. **The Chief Executive report was noted by the Board.**

Action: Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal to present the annual monitoring report when it is completed.

7.4 The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his report and passed on his thanks to the team for their achievement regarding renewals and CPD.

7.5 The Chair invited feedback on the format. The Board welcomed the dashboard and asked for the charts for Fitness to Practise and Registration to include a dotted line for the average rate and the indicated forecast.

Action: Chief Executive to incorporate changes into future dashboards.

8. Registration Renewals

8.1 The Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal reported that the number who had failed to renew had been within our expected range of removals. The Board asked whether the resources allocated had been sufficient to support the renewal cycle. He said there had been extra work in this first renewal to support social workers with their account set up and uploading their continuous professional development (CPD) for the first time and less pressure was anticipated next year. **The report was noted by the Board.**

9. Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

9.1 The Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement reported that the communication and engagement approach had been successful, with only a small cohort of social workers not submitting their CPD. Registrants who have been selected for CPD validation would be notified on 22 December with validation starting in January 2021.

9.2 The Board discussed how the CPD would be assessed with a view to understanding how the assessment outcomes would inform our future policy regarding standards. The Executive

Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement said that research commissioned by YouGov would be used to inform a lessons learned reflection.

9.4 The Chair thanked the team for the achievements. **The report was noted by the Board.**

10. Student Registration

10.1 The Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement introduced the paper and asked the Board to agree in principle to further explore the implications of registration of social work students.

10.2 The Chair noted the ambition of our three-year corporate strategy for radically different regulation and that student registration was an important piece of the education and training pipeline for social work.

10.3 The Board discussed the viability and timing of registering students and concluded that although there was broad agreement in principle significant issues remained to be explored most notably timing and capacity. The Executive Director Strategy Policy and Engagement was asked to develop further thinking on public protection implications, aligning student registration as part of our education and training strategy, the cost and sustainability of a student register.

Action: Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement to develop a further paper for the Board.

11. Social work in England report

11.1 The Head of Policy outlined the approach to developing the report, our first step towards our commitment to publish a 'state of the nation' style report within our first three years as regulator. It would offer reflections to the profession and the public in our first year of regulation. Its publication was planned for the week of 18 January 2021.

11.3 Board members offered their support with the launch of the publication and suggested an alternative heading for one of the chapters. It was agreed that the board would sign off the report prior to publication. The report would be circulated via email to the board the second week of January for Board feedback and the Chair and the Chief Executive would then sign off the report for publication.

Action: The Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement to circulate the report to the Board for feedback to enable the Board's support with the launch and for the Chair and the Chief Executive to sign off the report.

12. Any other business

12.1 The Chair thanked everyone for working through the pandemic and asked the Chief Executive to pass on the thanks to all staff from the Board.

12.2 The Chief Executive thanked the Chair for his contributions and congratulated him on his appointment for another three-years as Chair of the Board.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

10.30am, Friday 26 February 2021

Meeting concluded at 12.35pm

To Note: Summary of Actions

1. The Governance Manager to update the register of interests.

2. The Chair to present a written report for future meetings.

3. Baroness Tyler to discuss issues concerning the Children's Social Care Review and Mental Health Act reforms with Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement.

4. Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal to present the annual monitoring report to the Board when it is completed.

5. Chief Executive to incorporate changes into future dashboards.

6. Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement to develop a further paper on student registration for the Board.

7. The Executive Director, Strategy Policy and Engagement to circulate the report to the board for feedback to enable the Board's support with the launch and for the Chair and the Chief Executive sign off the report.