



Learning from 2020/21 Renewals Period

Agenda Item 10 Paper Ref 08

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

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Reviewed by

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO1: We will continue to develop and refine our registration systems and processes.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Regulatory functions - Cautious

1. Summary

This paper briefly describes the process of learning and reflection undertaken following the end of the 2020 renewal process, and indicates broad areas of development of systems, processes, and approach using that learning to prepare for the 2021 renewal process which begins on 1 September 2021.

2. Action required

The Board are invited to note the content of this paper.

3. Commentary

The 2020 renewal process for all social workers registered in England concluded on 1 December 2020, and the Board were provided with a paper setting out the outcome of the renewal process at its meeting of 18 December 2020¹.

That paper also indicated that a review of our first renewal period, to determine learning across all areas, would be undertaken. This review was conducted during January and February 2021, and learning and feedback was sought from the following groups:

- Seven registered social workers, who provided user feedback on the renewal process as part of a wider session looking at all aspects of Social Work England digital engagement.
- The Social Work England Registration and Advice team
- The Social Work England Communications team
- The Social Work England team responsible for the development and testing of the online renewal system functionality
- The Regional Engagement Leads

Additionally, 855 quantitative and qualitative responses provided by registered social workers during the renewal process (using the online survey tool available to all registrants during the renewal period) were analysed.

A report setting out the findings from this review, which included possible areas for development of systems, processes, and approach, was produced and shared internally in March 2021.

Broad areas for development in advance of the start of the 2021 renewal period are as follows:

Online renewal system

- A number of technical issues relating to the Forge system were identified during the review, and resolution of these issues will be prioritised.

¹ <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/3648/20201218-social-work-england-board-meeting-item-7-registration-renewals-201920.pdf>

- We will consider what improvements can be made to the online account and application process within the time and resources available. This will include improving the visibility of the completion status bar so that registrants are more easily able to understand what aspects of their application they still need to complete, as well as considering what further functionality can be provided into the online account so that registrants can determine the status of their renewal application.
- We will consider further user research with registered social workers in advance of the start of the 2021 renewal process.

Guidance for registrants

- We will consider what further improvements can be made to the guidance for applicants and registrants relating to safe and effective practice declarations, to ensure that registrants are able to properly inform us of matters relating to their fitness to practise at the appropriate time (rather than at renewal), and that they only declare matters that may raise issues relating to their continued registration.
- We will ensure that the 'how to' video for the renewal process is made as prominent as possible throughout the renewal process, to ensure that all registrants clearly understand the steps involved in the completion of the renewal application, and how they can check that the application has been submitted.
- We will review and update the renewal application guidance, to ensure that it remains as clear as possible for all registrants and employers how the application process works, the sequence of steps to be undertaken, and when an application is deemed to be complete.

Communications and engagement

- We will consider how best to engage with a broad range of employers in advance of, and during, the 2021 renewal period so that there is a clearer understanding of the relationship between the individual responsibility of the registrant to complete the process of renewal, the ability of the employer to understand the timeline for the renewal of registration for all registrants, and how we as the regulator communicate the outcome of the renewal process.
- We will ensure that direct communications with individual registrants about the status of the renewal application are tailored so that registrants recognise what action they are required to take from each communication.
- We will review and plan carefully the volume and frequency of our communications with all registrants before and during the renewal period, to ensure an appropriate balance in our messages so that they ensure that all registrants renew if they wish to.
- As part of the review of volume and frequency of our communications, we will ensure that messages relating to renewal and continuing professional development

requirements are aligned, to prevent duplication of messages or confusion for registrants.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

Work will now continue to prepare for the 2021 renewal period, taking into account the areas for development indicated above.