

**Social Work England
Annual Report and Accounts
2020 to 2021**

**2020
2021**

**Social
Work
England**

Social Work England
Annual Report and Accounts
For the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

A Non-Departmental Public Body

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to paragraph 19, schedule 3 of
the Children and Social Work Act 2017**

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Overview from the chair and chief executive

Welcome to our annual report and accounts for the period of 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. Having become the new specialist regulator for social workers in England in December 2019, this report sets out the successes and challenges of our first full year of operation. We have been focused on delivering the first year of our 3-year corporate strategy, while laying the foundations for delivering radically different regulation for social work.

Looking back on the last year, it is difficult to think of anything other than the impact of COVID-19 on all our lives. It has been an especially challenging year for everyone in social work, impacting the work we do and the way we do it. Despite this, there has been progress and success, and the past 12 months showcased the great resilience of all who work in health and social care. We are proud of everyone that has quickly adapted and continued to provide support to people when they need it the most.

As a new regulator, we have been focusing on further establishing ourselves and embedding our processes. We have built an experienced and talented workforce, put in place robust IT, governance, and management systems, and embedded our regulatory approach.

Engagement and co-production remain at the heart of everything we do. We have continued our extensive dialogue and collaboration with the sector. We have initiated conversations with social workers and people with lived experience to listen to their views on our work to raise standards, enable change, and promote confidence in the sector. As part of this engagement, we held the first Social Work Week in March 2021. The week was our biggest conversation with the sector to date, marking a significant moment, both for Social Work England and for the sector.

The fundamental purpose of everything we do is public protection. Despite the pressures faced by the sector, we were heartened by the way social workers engaged with our first renewal and continuing professional development (CPD) cycle. The insight we have gathered over the past year will allow us to continue improving these annual processes, ensuring they remain both robust and effective for maintaining public safety.

We have supported education and training providers, and their students, as they navigated significant disruption due to the

pandemic. Courses moved online or were delayed, and students faced uncertainty around placements. We partnered with employers and leaders to provide new guidance, remaining flexible and responsive as the sector adapted to these challenges. Our priority, as ever, is ensuring that all social workers have received quality education and trained in environments that meet our standards.

This was the first full year of implementing our fitness to practise process. We faced significant challenges, with our teams working from home, a complex transition caseload, and new referrals coming to us at a rate of 35% higher than forecast. We have worked to overcome this and in doing so have restructured our teams and processes. We continue to learn and work in collaboration with key stakeholders in this area.

Throughout all this work, we recognise the importance of gathering data. We are in a unique position to capture information about the profession. Over the last year, we have engaged and carried out research and we are starting to build a rich picture of social work in England. We will ensure we share this learning, both with the sector and with all those who have an interest in social work, to reflect the identity of this complex, sometimes misunderstood, multifaceted profession.

As we look back on the last year, it is important to celebrate our achievements, as well as to look forward and think about our longer-term vision. We urge social workers to do the same, to feel proud of the essential role they have played in the pandemic response, and consider, with optimism and ambition, what the impact of effective social work looks like for the millions of people who need their support.

As set out in our business plan for 2021 to 2022, we will continue to work hard for public protection and for social workers against the backdrop of a complex and changing landscape.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'The Lord Patel'.

Professor The Lord Patel of
Bradford OBE
Chair of the Board,
Social Work England

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Colum Conway'.

Colum Conway
Chief Executive, Registrar
and Accounting Officer,
Social Work England

Performance report



Performance overview

The performance overview explains who we are, our purpose, how we are organised and our performance against our objectives. Over the last 12 months, our focus has been on building the skills, capability, and capacity of our people, and putting in place systems and processes, while also delivering our first business plan as the regulator.

Our purpose

Social Work England is a non-departmental public body, established by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Social Workers Regulations 2018, sponsored by the Department for Education in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care.

The Department for Education has responsibility for child and family social workers, and the Department of Health and Social Care for adult social workers. Our office is based in Sheffield, alongside our hearing suites.

Our purpose is to regulate social workers in England so that people receive the best possible support whenever they might need it in life.

Our overarching objective is to protect the public (section 37(1)). The Children and Social Work Act 2017 also describes how we will pursue this through the following objectives:

- To protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public
- To promote and maintain public confidence in social workers in England
- To promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England (section 37(2))

Our values

Our values shape and steer our interactions with each other and with everyone that we come into contact with. We're proud of our values and what they mean to us:

Fearless

We'll be fearless in our determination to deliver radically different regulation. In doing so, we'll improve the value placed on social work as a profession and the positive impact social work has on people's lives. Through our leadership, we'll influence and drive change wherever needed and use our intelligence and engagement to shine a light on current social work practice.



Independent

A regulator must always be independent and carry out its work without undue influence from anyone. As the new specialist social work regulator, we hold true to this value and will demonstrate this through all aspects of our work.



Transparent

Throughout our work, we'll be open and honest about what we're doing and how we're doing it. We'll seek feedback and continue to talk to and collaborate with everyone who has an interest in social work. We know as we develop we may make mistakes, but we'll be honest about these and learn from them.



Ambitious

We have high aspirations for the social work profession, for regulation, and for ourselves. Through our engagement, collaboration and our planning, we'll deliver on our ambition.



Collaborative

Since the beginning of our journey, we've spoken to those with an interest in social work about who we are, what we plan to do and how we plan to do it. Wherever possible, we've done this together with our experts in the social work profession, social work education and training providers, other regulators and with a range of other partners. We'll continue to work in this way.



Integrity

We will hold true to our values and our overarching objectives, and work with integrity in every aspect of our business.



Our leadership

Chief Executive



Colum Conway

Strategy, Policy and
Engagement



Sarah Blackmore
Executive Director

Fitness to Practise



Jonathan Dillon
Executive Director

Corporate Services



Greg Ross-Sampson
Assistant Director

Registration, Quality
Assurance and Legal



Philip Hallam
Executive Director

People and Business
Support



Tracy Watterson
Executive Director

Measuring and reporting our progress

We measure progress against our objectives in several ways.

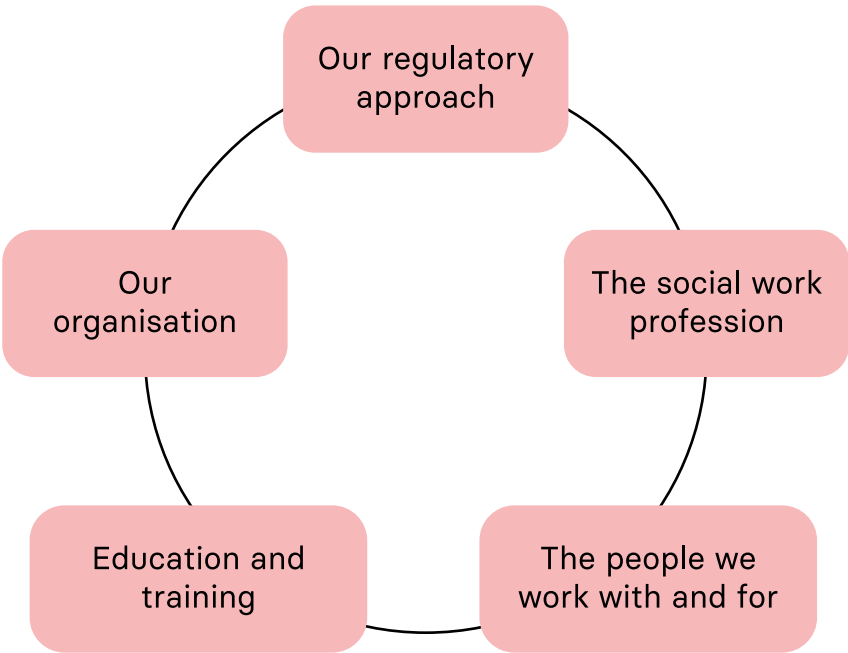
- The executive leadership team track performance and milestones on a monthly and quarterly basis, including against key indicators.
- Our board and the audit, risk and assurance committee review performance regularly.
- We regularly report to both the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, and our accounts are consolidated within the Department for Education’s annual report and accounts.

Professional Standards Authority

We are overseen by the Professional Standards Authority. The Professional Standards Authority oversees our work and the work of 9 other statutory bodies that regulate health and care professionals in the UK. They review and scrutinise our performance against their standards of good regulation on an annual basis. They also review the decisions made by our independent adjudicators who consider fitness to practise concerns.

Our corporate strategy

We published our corporate strategy on 5 May 2020. Our strategy was developed to reflect our values and our regulatory approach. In developing the strategy, we reviewed our legislative and policy context and talked to people who have an interest in social work regulation. From this work, we developed our 5 strategic pillars.





The context in which we operate

2020 was always going to be an important year for us. We became the new specialist regulator on 2 December 2019, so this was a year of many firsts. We pursued our primary aim of public protection. We worked to maintain our commitments, ambitions, and values. But we also, like all organisations, had to respond to the challenges and pressures of a global pandemic, and the UK's exit from the European Union. COVID-19 and other significant events during the past 12 months magnified inequalities in society, with greater awareness and engagement on equality, diversity and inclusion both within the profession and the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic

The outbreak of COVID-19 affected services across the social work sector. Both the virus and its associated social restrictions brought unprecedented challenges to social workers supporting some of our most vulnerable people in society. We also had to adapt our work to the environment that the pandemic created. At the beginning of the business year, after regulating for only 4 months, we put in place continuity plans to:

- establish home working and ongoing support for our people, including health and wellbeing resources and a people assistance programme;
- keep our registration and advice telephone lines open with reduced hours;
- move face-to-face functions online, including hearings, approvals and course monitoring;
- work with government departments, stakeholders and employers to provide guidance and leadership to the sector;
- work with the higher education sector to produce guidance on practice placements;
- use emergency powers to establish a temporary registration process to bolster local workforce capacity;
- move recruitment and inductions online;
- drive employee engagement through our internal communications; and
- reimagine our communication and engagement strategies.

Everyone has been affected by the pandemic and everyone has their own story. Social work is a profession dedicated to people and relationships. Due to COVID-19, professionals have considered entirely new ways of working, and sought to balance the importance of limiting the spread of the virus with that of supporting at-risk children, adults and families.

In March 2020, the Coronavirus Act gave us emergency powers to respond to the pandemic. We introduced temporary registration and with others launched the Social Work Together campaign. This allowed previously registered social workers to return to practise, pre-empting a potential need for extra social work capacity across England. There were 13,922 social workers with temporary registration as of 31 March 2021. Temporary registration will remain in place until the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care announces that the emergency response has ended.

The pandemic caused delays to our hearings and fitness to practise activity. We had a significant number of cases at the outset and a high rate of new ones. We then consulted on how to conclude complex investigations through hearings under lockdown. After implementing a remote process, we accelerated hearings activity in the second half of the year. We found it difficult at times to get information to progress investigations, due to pressures on key services. And without physical hearings, we've been unable to resolve some of the oldest investigations we inherited.

Education and training providers also experienced significant disruption during 2020. The early part of the year was particularly challenging as they moved to new ways of delivering learning, online and remotely. We worked with them as they adapted to the new environment. We provided students, employers and other stakeholders with guidance. We informed them of our continuing role in assuring the quality of education, but we remained flexible and responsive so that they understood how to continue to meet our standards.

Students were particularly concerned about practice placements this year. They wanted to know how placements would be safe and in line with COVID-19 health guidance. In response, we worked with stakeholders to develop statements on the safe operation of placements.

Some providers delayed the introduction of new courses due to COVID-19. As a result, we received a lower number of course approval requests. We decided to postpone the implementation of the education and training standards from 2020 to September 2021. The postponement gives courses an extra year to prepare for the new standards. Meanwhile, we have continued to discuss the challenges and partnered with employers and leaders, including the principal social workers networks, to give advice to social workers practising in new and untested conditions.

The impact of the pandemic has also affected how applicants for registration and registered social workers engage with us. Restrictions in several countries hampered international applications. This made it more difficult for course providers to share information with us about graduating students.

Our regional engagement team experienced generally positive outcomes from adapting to engaging online during lockdown. We hosted more national events and reached more people online than we could ever have done in person. Over the course of the year the team engaged with more than 35,000 people on a national and regional level. They also took part in more than 1,100 external meetings. Recurring topics over the year included the impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of social workers and their ability to practise. Conversations on the topic covered remote working, an increase in referrals and staffing reductions. They also touched on mental health and the impact of when colleagues have lost their lives or been ill.

In navigating our first full year as a regulator, we have shown ourselves to be an innovative and flexible organisation. The wellbeing and safety of our people and those who deliver our services was paramount throughout the year. We have addressed business need, management, and delivery. We've shared what we have learnt during the pandemic alongside other regulators as part of the Professional Standards Authority's Learning from COVID-19 study¹. We have taken time to consider what we have learned and how we apply this learning as we move forward.

COVID-19 continues to impact on our operations and services, as well as having an impact on the social work sector and course providers. We do not expect face to face hearings to resume until at least September 2021. Our blended approach to work is developing alongside technological developments to make maximum use of our office space.

Exit from the European Union

Our launch as a public body in December 2019 was shortly before the UK's departure from the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020. During negotiations we worked with the government and our fellow social work regulators across the UK. We advised on areas of the agreement on the future relationship with the EU that would support our ongoing regulation.

¹ [learning-from-covid-19-a-case-study-review-of-the-initial-crisis-response-of-professional-regulators.pdf](#) (professionalstandards.org.uk)

The final EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement did not include rights for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. We then had to shape new arrangements for EU social workers seeking to practise in England. We removed the existing recognition route for EU social workers from our legislation. We changed our registration rules. We sought comment and consulted with the public on these changes in November and December 2020.

Since the end of the transition period on 1 January 2021, we assess all applicants from outside the UK in the same way. We continue to advise government on important matters to do with our cooperation with international bodies. We also give guidance to prospective applicants to our register from around the world.

Increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion

The events of this last year shone a direct spotlight on social inequality and injustice. The murder of George Floyd was a catalyst for long overdue public and professional discussions on race. Anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice were topics that recurred in our engagement work as the profession and our organisation reflected on how to support and be a better ally to people who experience stigma based on their background, identity, or ability.

In fulfilling our obligation to protect the public, we acknowledge that equality, diversity and inclusion goes beyond race to encompass the other 8 protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation) and the intersectionality between them.

Over the year we have established a steering group and published our 3-year statement of intent on equality, diversity, and inclusion. We established a National Advisory Forum and created a new role for a head of equality, diversity and inclusion. We shared learning resources internally and brought in courses for new employee inductions on subjects including unconscious bias. We began to facilitate anti-racism work with the principal social worker networks. We have also joined external programmes and networks dedicated to making improvements in these areas. Most importantly, we are committed to continued learning. The voices of those with lived and learned experience are essential for identifying the changes needed across our sector. As an organisation in its infancy, their input will ensure we embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do.

Performance analysis

This section of the report provides an analysis of our performance, working to our strategic ambitions set out against each of our 5 strategic pillars.

1. Our regulatory approach

Strategic ambition:

A new regulatory approach – we will learn, reflect and test boundaries

Collaborate and engage, developing understanding and leadership in regulation

Advice and enquiries service

Our advice and enquiries service is our first point of contact for the public and professionals. From the outset we took a digital first approach to its design, encouraging people to access advice, guidance and information from our website as a first step in their enquiry whenever possible. However, we acknowledge that for some, digital access can be a barrier. Despite the challenges of our people working remotely, we balanced our online self-service model by keeping our phone lines open for personal, one-to-one response throughout the year.

We received 49,390 telephone calls and 18,920 emails over the year. Enquiries related to all aspects of our work, including registration and renewal requirements, CPD requirements, and concerns being raised about a social worker. During the year, it took us a median of 9 minutes to answer phone calls. We know that at peak times, especially during the renewal period, people had to wait longer on the phone than we would have wanted them to. When people contacted us by email, it took us a median of 5 working days to respond.

Learning from this year, we are using the analysis of the calls and contacts we have received to review our responsiveness. We will consider what more we can achieve relating to timeliness and relating to the experiences of those contacting us, and how we ensure that contacts are appropriately resolved. This work will take place alongside planned changes and enhancements to our website and online systems.

Our social work register

One of our core statutory responsibilities is to maintain an accurate register of social workers in England. 7,187 individuals applied to join the register this year. We created an efficient process for social workers to join and maintain their registration with us and made our application for restoration of registration process available online.

We took a median of 8 working days to approve registration applications requiring no investigation from UK graduates, improving to 1 working day by the last 3 months of the year. Registration applications from graduates outside of the UK took a median of 48 working days, improving to 19 working days in the last quarter of the year.

Our registration requirements mean that we need evidence of English language competence for anyone joining the register. We have continued to take a robust and proportionate approach to this requirement. We have also continued to build close relationships with education providers, which assisted the efficient registration of graduates throughout the year.

We annotated entries on the register to show if a social worker can practise as an approved mental health professional or best interests assessor. The public can then clearly see who holds this important specialism.

Alongside our fitness to practise team, we have investigated 105 misuse of title cases. We have reminded individuals of the importance of maintaining their registration if they wish to use the protected title of social worker in England.

Social workers by age

21 to 24

2,149 (2.2%)

25 to 34

19,356 (20.1%)

35 to 44

25,060 (26.0%)

45 to 54

25,455 (26.4%)

55 to 59

12,724 (13.2%)

60 and above

11,571 (12.0%)

Registration renewal

Social workers must renew their registration with us each year. We opened our first renewal period on 1 September 2020 and by the end of the renewal period on 30 November 2020, 94,416 social workers had renewed their registration and were able to continue to practise. This equates to 95% of registrants who were eligible to renew at the start of the renewal period.

It also enabled us to demonstrate to the public that social workers continue to maintain their skills through our CPD requirements. This achievement was significant. It was our first renewal period, and we had asked social workers to do something very different to what they had done before in uploading evidence of their CPD using their Social Work England online account.

We asked for feedback from everyone who applied to renew through an online survey. We also facilitated 2 workshops with a small group of social workers. From the survey sample of over 800 respondents:

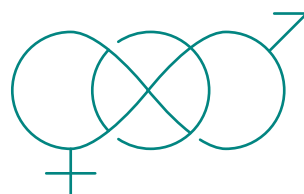
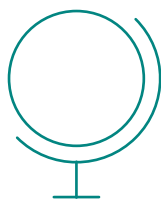
- 65% of respondents were satisfied with the renewal process.
- more than half of respondents said it took them 30 minutes or less to complete the renewal process, while less than a third took more than an hour.
- 71% of respondents accessed our guidance during the renewal process and almost three-quarters of those who did had their query or issue resolved as a result.
- 81% of respondents renewed following direct contact from Social Work England.

96,315

Social workers (excluding temporary registration)

Applications to join the register

7,187 total applications
90.4% UK applicants
1.7% EU/EEA applicants
7.8% non-EU/EEA applicants



Social workers by gender identity

82.5% female
17.5% male
0.03% prefer not to say
0.01% other

Case study: delivering digital products and services to put the user first

We want people to respect and value us for how we do things as well as what we do. From the outset, to drive efficiencies, we knew that we needed a purpose-built digital platform to meet a range of requirements across regulation, case management, professional standards, registration, education and training, CPD and fitness to practise. Not opting for an off the shelf product was an ambitious ask, but we knew a bespoke digital solution would be scalable, easily accessible and provide us with one source of rich information and data to inform our decision making.

Approach

An example of our agile approach to developing digital solutions was our first ever renewals cycle.

Listening was vital. We listened to external testing. We listened to internal observations. And most importantly, we listened to feedback from everyone with an interest in social work, including those with lived and learned experience.

Nearly 100,000 social workers needed to renew their registration in the space of 3 months from 1 September 2020. We began work to deliver the processes and technology to support this new service in May 2019. At the same time, we piloted a new approach to delivery. We combined our commitment to collaboration with 14 standards set by the Government Digital Service. These standards put social workers at the forefront when it came to designing the online renewals process.

We ran a series of workshops with our users, to learn about their expectations and needs. The sessions allowed us to not only deliver the best online process possible, but to also reconsider how we developed our other services. Our collaborative, user-centric approach to service design proved beneficial. It shaped the guidance we provide as well as the online renewals form and the processes that support it. The result was a well-designed and helpful product to support social workers to renew.

Results

The pilot project was a success, with over 94,416 social workers renewing their registration. It also demonstrated to us the value of listening to our users. The insight we gathered through workshops and feedback will now help us to further develop our online services and renewals process for 2021.

Our approach to fitness to practise

We began the year with 477 new cases and 1,487 live cases from the previous regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The transfer of an active caseload of this size was a challenge. Our immediate priority was to review and risk assess the entire caseload, which we achieved by 31 March 2019. Shortly afterwards, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we were forced to transfer to remote-working and the sector came under significant strain. As a result, concessions were made for both social workers and employers where information was sought in cases that were not categorised as high risk. All of these factors meant that it was difficult to progress cases between April and July 2020.

The pandemic also prevented physical hearings from being held safely. Our adjudications teams and legal providers designed a new platform for holding hearings online which allowed us to progress interim order applications and statutory reviews of existing orders. After a period of further consultation with the Professional Standards Authority, fellow regulators and our fitness to practise steering group, a process was designed for hearing more complex substantive hearings remotely.

We have taken time in our first year to analyse and understand an unanticipated increase in concerns raised to us by members of the public, many of which are not appropriate for regulatory investigation. We will continue to monitor, track and research this increase in our second year.

New fitness to practise referrals

When new concerns about social workers are received, the triage team must decide if there are reasonable grounds for investigating whether the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired. During the year we opened 2,159 new fitness to practise cases. Referral rates were 35% higher in our first year than we had forecast, based on figures from the previous regulator.

The structure of the team meant that we didn't have the capacity to manage incoming caseloads at this level. The original target was to conclude the triage process within 4 weeks of receipt of the concern. Due to the increase in new referrals, it was not possible to meet this target with existing resources.

We have recorded and examined the content of fitness to practise referrals throughout the year. We have not identified any emerging themes in these referrals that explain the increasing numbers we have received. Whilst it is encouraging that those wishing to raise concerns have a clear route to do so, we will continue to apply our case management powers effectively to ensure that referrals are managed efficiently and proportionately.

Service restructure

As we looked to address the increase in new referrals, we conducted a review of capacity and in August 2020 a new team structure and progression strategy was introduced. This enabled us to:

- robustly risk assess new concerns at the volume we are now experiencing;
- quickly identify which cases would benefit from further enquiries before making a triage decision;
- apply an appropriate decision making process in accordance with the risk and complexity profile of the case; and
- target professional or legal advice, only where expert opinion is necessary.

We also recruited additional officers to support case progression.

These changes resulted in an approximate 30% increased capacity by the end of the last quarter of 2020. The increase in progression rates resulted in the overall caseload being reduced by 111 cases to the lowest level since November 2020.

Investigations

Cases that pass the triage test are referred into the investigations team. The process undertaken at this stage is a more robust and intensive form of enquiry, with a targeted completion time of 6 months. The team gathers all available documentary evidence and is responsible for preparing cases for referral to the case examiners. During this investigation process we remain in contact with social workers and will share the evidence we have gathered as soon as we are able to do so. This helps social workers to understand the purpose of the investigation and to fully engage in the process.

Case progression was impacted by the pandemic because it became more difficult to get information quickly from employers. Our investigators, who were all still relatively new to their roles, also had to adapt to remote working. This impacted on our ability to progress cases within targeted timescales during the year, but we succeeded in keeping the overall caseload in the service stable.

Strengthening capacity and performance

We implemented several measures to increase overall capacity across investigations.

- We recruited additional investigators and lead investigators.
- We created a bespoke investigations team that focus exclusively on progressing lower risk transfer cases and instructing our external legal provider to progress 100 cases.
- We recruited a fitness to practise expert to support the training and development of new and existing staff.
- We introduced more effective performance management tools for team managers, including targeted reports and objectives.
- We launched a new communications functionality in our case management system to reduce the amount of time it takes to send standard correspondence.

Following the successful implementation of these measures, the team have set a target to reduce the caseload to 1,230 open investigations by the end of March 2022.

The nature, volume and sensitivity of the work investigators undertake can be challenging and it is crucial that appropriate tools for support and communication are in place. A range of supportive measures are now available for team members who have been homeworking during the last year.

Case examiners

Case examiners consider cases based on documentary evidence alone at the conclusion of an investigation. The case examiners may close a case at this stage without any further action, or they may refer a case for consideration at a public hearing. A case will be referred to a public hearing when the case examiner feels that there are reasonable grounds that the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired, and that a hearing is in the public interest.

In cases where a real prospect of impairment is found, but the case examiners do not consider a full hearing to be in the public interest, the case examiners will look to make use of 'accepted disposal' powers. These new legal powers allow the case examiners to propose a sanction up to and including a suspension, with the consent of the social worker concerned. This allows us to achieve an appropriate outcome in a more proportionate, responsive and efficient manner.

Case examiners considered 297 cases (excluding adjournments).

- 110 (37%) were closed with no further action
- 87 (29%) were closed with either a warning or a sanction
- 100 (34%) were referred for a fitness to practise hearing.

The case examiners achieved a sustained increase in productivity, more than doubling the rate of decision making across the period. From quarter 1 to quarter 4, we increased the total number of decisions made by 121%, resulting in a reduction in the time taken for decisions to be made.

The hearings service

Cases referred to a hearing are progressed fairly and efficiently by a combination of pre-hearing case management with everyone involved, and support during hearing events. Decisions at hearings are made by independent experts, which include lay panel chairs, lay adjudicators and social worker adjudicators. At the hearing, a panel of adjudicators is supported by a legal advisor who provides independent legal support to panels and other participants during the event.

COVID-19 prevented final hearings from being held during the first half of the year, but we were able to progress once a process for conducting hearings online was established. We were subsequently able to resolve 61 cases at a final hearing between October 2020 and 31 March 2021. We will continue to operate an accelerated schedule of hearings next year to further reduce caseloads.

In addition, the adjudicators conducted 423 reviews of active interim and substantive orders imposed at earlier hearings. Most of this activity took place online.

The case review service

The case review team manages all cases where conditions or suspensions are in place. The team works with social workers subject to interim orders, case examiner conditions or suspensions via accepted disposal and adjudicator conditions or suspensions.

To support all social workers who are going through the process, the team builds supportive relationships to encourage ownership of their registration status. They also assist social workers to properly engage in the remediation process with the aim of supporting a return to unrestricted practice in a safe and structured way.

Overall performance by the end of the financial year

By 31 March 2021, we concluded:

- 261 cases in pre-triage
- 589 in triage
- 273 via just disposal²
- 197 via case examiners
- 66 following fitness to practise hearings.

Within the investigations service, productivity increased across the last quarter to almost double the average monthly output for the year in March, with a corresponding sustained reduction in caseloads.

The role of our decision review group

Our decision review group provides scrutiny of a targeted sample of administrative and statutory decisions across different stages of the fitness to practise process.

This forum gives us an enhanced oversight of high-risk decisions. It helps to look at trends in the service and develop an insight into the challenges faced by professionals. It also helps to improve performance. Intelligence gathered during these meetings guides further collaboration with the sector through our strategy, policy and engagement directorate.

Case examiners considered

297

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110 (37%)

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² <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/concerns/just-disposal-of-transfer-cases-policy/>

2. Education and training

Strategic ambition:

Improve quality and consistency in education and training

Through collaboration and intelligence gathering build an evidence based on models of provision

Education and training was another area that was significantly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included facilitating student placements and achieving certain learning outcomes. As a regulator we responded to this with flexibility, removing barriers and encouraging adjustments to courses where necessary. Education providers could then manage their own response to COVID-19 based on their local arrangements and what was in the best interest of each student on each course. Providers worked hard to find new and creative ways to facilitate the completion of placement days, to identify and implement new learning opportunities and to deliver teaching and learning so that, wherever possible, students could graduate on time or progress within their course.

Quality assurance

We have a statutory responsibility to approve, reapprove and monitor courses. Our work with education and training providers is fundamental to our strategy to be an effective specialist regulator for social workers. Our quality assurance shows the public that those who train as social workers do so in environments that meet our standards. In addition, we carry out course inspections against our education and training standards.

This year, in addition to supporting education providers with the pandemic response, we delivered our approval activity. This has helped us begin to gain a detailed understanding of how social work education is delivered in England. We carried out 7 inspections, resulting in:

- 2 courses approved;
- 3 courses approved with conditions;
- 1 course not approved; and
- 1 course provider withdrawing from the process.

Our annual monitoring exercise with all courses launched in November 2020. The process was our first opportunity to seek confirmation that all approved courses continued to meet our standards. All courses provided this declaration. We also gathered contextual and qualitative information about approved courses. This data will help us to prepare for our first cycle of course reapproval beginning in autumn 2021.

Education and training advisory forum

Our education and training advisory forum held regular meetings throughout the year to offer advice, and to input into our work with education providers. The forum includes academics, students and practitioners. We also recruited 2 professional associates as subject matter experts to work with a subgroup of the forum. They are helping us to consider how professional learning outcomes for social work courses might complement and enhance our education and training standards.

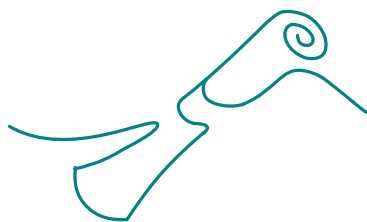
We also started work to explore options for the future registration of students. We have investigated the approach taken by other regulators, the views of social work education and training providers and students themselves and will report our findings and recommendations in due course.

Post-qualification training: approved mental health professionals and best interests assessors

This year, we annotated 1,007 approved mental health professionals and best interests assessors on the register. Our first annual monitoring exercise also covered courses leading to such qualifications.

Over the course of the year, we have followed the government's work in relation to the Mental Health Act 1983. We have also monitored the development of the approved mental capacity professional role. This work will have an impact on the post-qualifying courses we approve. It will also affect how we annotate registration entries for those qualified as approved mental health professionals and best interests assessors.

We will collaborate and consult with fellow regulators on new education and training standards for existing and incoming professional courses for social workers. We will develop common specialist standards across the regulators for these professionals.



296
approved courses

83
course providers

Case study: register, record and renew

During our first year, all social workers needed to activate their online account, upload CPD and renew their registration. This was a significant change to how social workers interact with their regulator. A low-cost but impactful communications campaign was needed to shift behaviour and encourage action.

Approach

The overarching objectives of the campaign were to inform all social workers of the new requirements, maximise engagement, and spur them into the required key actions. These actions all had to be completed before 30 November 2020.

As well as directly communicating with social workers, we targeted networks, communities and employers who could influence social worker engagement through their connections, relationships, and credibility.

The campaign was planned and delivered in two key phases.

- Phase 1 (May to June) – short-term focus on simple, direct communications and virtual events to raise awareness of our requirements and encourage use of a new online account.
- Phase 2 (July to November) – medium-term, sustained multichannel communication campaign, to support social workers to complete the required actions.

It was critical that our messaging, using the 'easy, attractive, social and timely' (EAST) principles, was clear about the significance of recording CPD as a legal requirement for safe and effective practice. We needed to start a conversation with professionals on why CPD matters, and its value as a reflective tool for social work practice that benefits those they support.

Our multichannel, flexible plan included a range of direct and mass communication activities, such as email, SMS, web content, 'how to' videos, online engagement events, social media and trade press activity.

Continual monitoring of campaign performance enabled the activities to be optimised and refined based on audience insight. Crucial to refining our CPD approach is ongoing engagement, research, and data analysis. We commissioned YouGov to speak with social workers specifically about their behaviours and attitudes towards their ongoing learning. From surveys, focus groups and interviews, we gained valuable insight.

Outcome

By 30 November 2020, 222,144 CPD records were uploaded, an average of 2.2 items per social worker. On 1 December 2020, 92.5% (92,189) had recorded CPD and renewed their registration.

3. The social work profession

Strategic ambition:

Create a different approach to standards and professional development

Provide a picture of social work in England

Continuing professional development (CPD)

A huge amount of activity has taken place across the organisation this year in relation to the development of CPD. This has been significant for social workers, who were not previously required to record their CPD online. The focus has been on shifting behaviour and perceptions - explaining our approach, why we require evidence of CPD, and how it should be an essential, reflective tool throughout the year that benefits professional practice and those who rely on social work support.

As highlighted in our register, record and renew case study, there was a deliberate process of engagement with professionals, employers and stakeholders across the year on CPD. Careful thought has gone into our engagement work at a regional level and a communication campaign developed to bring people on the journey with us. The approach was awarded campaign of the month in January 2021 by the Government Communications Service for its readily identifiable objectives and clear strategy. The campaign incorporated a multitude of tactics that included 30 national online events, 'how to' guidance videos, Twitter question and answer sessions, CPD surgeries and joint initiatives with stakeholders including the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Research in Practice.

As a result of our communication and engagement activity, we saw a number of anticipated spikes in CPD recording which was particularly evident in the week immediately preceding the deadline. This included on one day almost 4,500 social workers uploading CPD. At the end of the process, only 256 social workers had not recorded the required CPD, demonstrating significant compliance with our approach.

For our first annual validation assessment, we randomly selected 2.5% (2,205) of eligible social workers³. The validation assessment was carried out between January and March 2021, by a team of 10

³Sampling for our validation assessment excluded those who at the time were subject to a fitness to practise investigation, had a live sanction of suspension or condition of practice applied to their registration, or who had not been registered continuously since the start of the registration year.

independent assessors. Overall, 96% (2,116) of social workers selected for validation received an accepted outcome — the remaining 4% (89) were given advice on how to improve their CPD in future.

Our first full year of regulation provided the opportunity to learn more about social workers and their CPD. Alongside this insight, we reviewed our requirements to see how we could raise the standards of CPD. Following this we will launch a consultation in year 2 on proposed changes to our CPD requirements. Our approach here will also come together with our work on the future of the professional landscape for social workers — both pre-qualifying and post-qualifying.

Policy

Our policy team have continued to lead on social work and regulatory policy for the organisation, commissioning research and developing our publications. They have worked closely with other stakeholders and regulators to ensure our policy places us at the cutting edge of specialist regulation. They look to the future to ensure we can respond in an agile way to the changes and challenges ahead. They have coordinated and lead our consultation activity and will be preparing once again in the year ahead to go out to the sector to inform, engage and listen to a wide range of views on key aspects of our regulatory approach.

Engagement

Engagement and collaboration have been a priority for us throughout our first year and remain central to our regulatory approach.

Between June and November 2020, we hosted 40 national online events with 3,400 people attending in total. At these events we informed people about our work as the regulator and our CPD approach. 90% of those that attended said the event they attended met their expectations. 97% said they would recommend a Social Work England event.

“Social Work England is very visible to social workers and has made excellent efforts to engage with our very diverse population...so I'd just like to say ‘thank you’.”

Social Worker, Yorkshire and The Humber, November 2020

Key themes and recurring topics from our engagement

- The impact of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of social workers and their ability to practise effectively.
- The impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns on placements, for both students and providers.
- Our requirements around CPD and what makes an appropriate submission.
- Fitness to practise processes and understanding these more fully. This has included specific workshops for employers on when and how to refer to us.
- The current landscape of standards and frameworks across the sector.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Regional and local data on fitness to practise, registration, renewal, CPD, and workforce demographics.

As well as engaging with the sector, the team led on internal engagement work including:

- Sharing experiences of social work at internal all-staff meetings.
- Running reflective practice sessions and workshops.
- Creating strong link roles with each directorate.
- Bringing the social worker perspective into regulatory activity across the organisation.
- Supporting registration and advice teams during the first lockdown.
- Establishing a buddy system between board members and people in the sector.
- Launching the National Advisory Forum.

Research and publications

In May 2020 we published our first commissioned research reports. YouGov led research into social workers' attitudes and perceptions of their profession. Cragg Ross Dawson researched public perceptions of social work in England. These projects informed our early decision making and policy development. They also opened new lines of enquiry. We have since commissioned 3 further research projects to report in spring 2021.

- Social workers and their continuing professional development
- Social workers working as approved mental health professionals and best interests assessors
- Experiences of initial social work education and training

In January 2021 we published 'Social work in England: First reflections'. The interim report is the first of 2 interim reports that will lead to a final state of the nation report in 2023. The initial report is a first look into what we learned from our first year. It shares early themes arising from our regulatory activity and offers early insight into social work in England. We plan to publish the second interim report in January 2022.

Through our work with the principal social worker networks, we also produced a series of guidance documents for social workers, to specifically assist in the sector's response to the pandemic. These covered areas of practice such as virtual visiting, ethics and risk assessments, and wellbeing. These guidance documents were widely circulated and well received.

Post qualifying landscape

In our corporate strategy we set out our ambition to streamline and simplify the post-qualifying landscape. We aim to make it more effective and supportive for social workers, and to drive professional development. We are clear that this is long-term work, but we have started on the journey this year.

We have developed our understanding of the professional landscape. We can see ways to improve it by taking an approach that spans the whole career and the whole profession. We have analysed policy and engaged in early discussions with the government and some of the many voices we will need to collaborate with. In the coming year we will move our vision forward with detailed development and engagement activity.

4. People we work with and for

Strategic ambition:

Co-produce our work with everyone who has in interest in social work

Deepen the understanding and values of social work

Co-production

Co-production is at the heart of our work. In the past year we shaped our co-production by forming our National Advisory Forum.

We recruited 11 members to the forum. They included people with lived experience, practising social workers, academics and students. The group challenged us to increase the number of members with lived experience, so we recruited a further 5 in October. The National Advisory Forum acts as a critical friend. Their activity has ranged from co-producing our customer service standards to sitting on our monthly decision review group. They have also helped co-produce a number of guidance documents.

“Observing and taking part in the decision review group filled me with hope knowing active efforts are regularly made to reflect on and improve social work practice. It blew my mind to see input from someone with lived experience being sought out and taken on board alongside other stakeholders’ input, and then humbled me to experience taking part in the process first-hand. The idea and current implementation of the group is a beautiful thing and is visibly getting better each month.”

From a member of the National Advisory Forum

Social Work Week 2021

The National Advisory Forum co-produced our biggest conversation with the sector to date: Social Work Week 2021. As the specialist regulator, we were in the ideal position to host this first event of its kind and to co-produce its programme with the sector. Right from the start we wanted to demonstrate our leadership and commitment to working with the sector. We brought together networks and stakeholders to develop an ambitious programme of events on the following themes:

- Understanding your regulator
- Social work and me: living the professional standards
- Equality, diversity and inclusion: social work perspectives
- What's next for social work?

Social Work Week took place from 8 to 12 March 2021. We designed it to lead up to and complement the celebrations of World Social Work Day on 16 March. The virtual programme provided a unique opportunity to bring together social workers, people with lived experience of social work, students, academics and employers. We facilitated 73 events, including keynote speeches, presentations, workshops and wellbeing activities. Together they achieved 10,504 attendee logins. More than 1,000 people attended the keynote speech by Dr Prospera Tadam on 'Reflecting for action: why to take anti-racist practice seriously'. And over 600 people attended the 'Women in leadership' session, which coincided with International Women's Day.

Initial feedback about the week was overwhelmingly positive. We have received over 1,000 responses to our feedback surveys. Social engagement and conversation was also positive. On Twitter we received an average of 107 retweets and 317 likes per day, and over 500 account mentions. These and other insights will help us to deliver effective regulation and meet our ambitions to improve social work practice.

"The Social Work Week working group was collaborative throughout and the fact that the event itself was co-produced with the sector enhanced that commitment. I felt that the input of National Advisory Forum members to the working group was very much valued, and the different strengths of forum members were drawn upon. I found the experience of involvement in this work both rewarding and positive."

From a member of the National Advisory Forum

Case study: a focus on effective communication

Communication is a key lever to drive our ambition to enable positive change in social work. This has never been truer than the last year. We needed to support the public, social workers, stakeholders and our own people with clear messaging to help them navigate a complex environment of information, emerging advice and hyperlocal news.

Approach

With such a fast-moving picture, our goal was to respond with honesty and flexibility. Our collective communication efforts across internal communications, media, stakeholder engagement, digital, social media and marketing helped drive the pace and scale of our organisational response. Highlights included:

- working with the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care and Local Government Association to establish the Social Work Together campaign to respond to potential workforce pressures during the pandemic;
- bolstering internal communication channels and activity to keep our people connected through difficult times, including forums, awareness weeks, a weekly chief executive bulletin, a fortnightly staff newsletter, a revised intranet, and both weekly meeting and monthly all staff meetings;
- delivering a Government Communication Service award winning marketing campaign to support registration renewal and CPD;
- publishing and maintaining over 400 webpages, including over a third of which were new pages to support Social Work Week;
- carrying out 33 user research sessions for our website with representatives from our audience;
- ensuring our intranet, website and publications are inclusive in line with Cabinet Office accessibility regulations; and
- providing an integrated marketing campaign for Social Work Week including digital content, social media, branding and evaluation.

Some of the numbers...

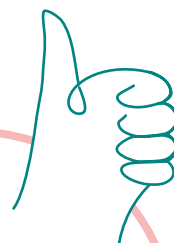
378,094

emails sent of Social Work Now,
our external newsletter



174

positive
and neutral
media stories



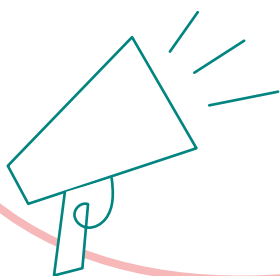
79

media enquiries



10,188,420

website page views
between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021



61

news articles
published on our website



67%

increase in followers on Twitter

185%

increase in followers on LinkedIn

39,947

video views

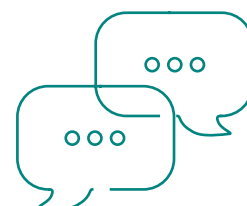
55

videos published



140+

intranet articles published



5. Our organisation

Our ambition:

Encourage innovative approaches across all areas of our work

Promote a positive culture focused on improvement and co-production.

Our people

Since 1 April 2020, our organisation grew from 174 to 219 people. We flexed our operating model to respond to COVID-19, which enabled us to use efficiency savings from travel and subsistence to increase our headcount. In doing so, we were able to respond to an increase in enquiries and higher than anticipated fitness to practise referrals.

We have a strong commitment to wellbeing. Our policies and procedures are co-produced to promote a fair, safe and inclusive working environment. Throughout the year we developed a workforce planning, succession and talent framework. We plan to put this framework in place later in 2021.

We had 12 unplanned leavers during the year and met our target of a turnover of less than 10%. We have seen 20 internal promotions and 4 lateral moves, reflecting our ongoing commitment to developing our people.

In May 2020, we conducted our first people engagement survey. With a 74% response rate, it provides us with a robust baseline to identify trends.

The engagement score of 86% suggests our people have a high level of engagement. The highest scoring category with a 95% positive response was inclusion and fair treatment. The lowest scoring category was leadership and managing change at 77%.

Since the survey we have implemented a number of changes. We have improved our performance development framework. We have introduced weekly opportunities for our people to stay connected and developed case studies of internal promotions. We have also set up a social work shadowing programme involving our board and the decision review group, to help our people learn about different aspects of our work.

Positive responses by category

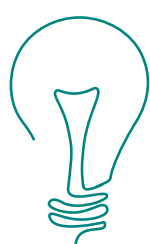


Learning and development

Despite challenges, we sustained our investment in learning and development over the year. We adapted to provide virtual development opportunities.

The learning and organisational development team led the facilitation of internal courses. They supported subject matter experts to deliver training in data protection and information technology. They also enabled our regional engagement leads to hold reflective sessions.

Our people, partners and our board attended multiple courses throughout the year, totalling 2,163 attendances overall.



180
courses
attended



283
sessions
delivered



90
internal courses
for groups

90
external courses
for individuals/groups



1,269
hours of
learning



2,163
attendances
overall



17
people
undertaking
professional
qualifications

Leadership and management

We launched our first aspiring managers programme this year. We also established a new problem-solving programme, 'action learning set' facilitation with our managers. This forms part of our new management development programme, which we will launch in full in May 2021. Together these programmes represent a level of over 30% participation across our organisation.

Partners

Our partners are social workers, legal professionals and members of the public contracted to provide independent expertise. As of 31 March 2021, we have 181 partners, with the following roles.

- Professional associates for education and equality, diversity and inclusion
- Continuing professional development assessors
- Fitness to practise panel chair adjudicators
- Legal advisors
- Registration advisors
- Education quality assurance inspectors

Effective IT systems and digital services

Our robust and responsive information technology expertise enabled us to switch to homeworking overnight. It also enabled us to move from physical to remote events, including supporting Social Work Week.

We achieved Cyber Essentials certification, a recognised industry standard. We're now working towards Cyber Essentials Plus. We've established strong links with the National Cyber Security Centre. We also carried out 2 independent security penetration tests on our core systems and infrastructure.

During 2021 to 2022, we will replace our 3 finance, human resources and procurement systems with a new integrated system, Enable, that will:

- enhance functionality;
- provide better management information; and
- better support our people.

Freedom of information and individual data rights requests

Throughout the year we have continued to refine and develop our approach to how we manage our data. We received 258 individual data rights requests for which a response was due within the reporting period. 203 of these were data subject access requests (DSARs), and the remainder comprised other requests such as for the erasure of personal data that we hold. All except one of these requests were responded to within the statutory timeframe, which is usually no later than one month from the date of receipt of the request.

We also received 88 Freedom of Information requests for which a response was due within the reporting period. All were responded to within the statutory timeframe, which is usually 20 working days following the date of receipt. The information was not held in respect of 31 of these requests. Part of the information was held in respect of 20 of the requests, and all of the information was held in respect of 37 of the requests. Where part or all of the requested information was held, it was disclosed in response to 48 of the requests and exempted from disclosure in response to 9 of the requests.

Internal quality assurance and improvement

We have established an internal quality assurance and improvement framework and approach. This provides us with assurance that our regulatory functions are operating in a way that ensures good quality outcomes and supports the continuous improvement of these functions.

This work is undertaken by our internal quality and improvement team who ensure that they remain independent of our regulatory functions and serve as a critical friend. The team is responsible for 3 key areas of work:

1. Quality assurance of regulatory functions
2. The provision of performance data to the Professional Standards Authority
3. Our corporate feedback and complaints process

This year, we conducted 11 reviews and audits which led to several improvements, including external and internal guidance, information we provide to stakeholders and the quality of written decisions.

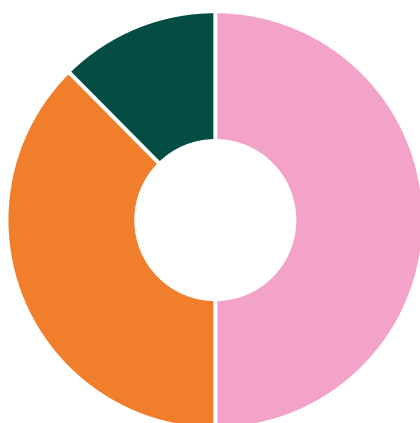
We embedded our feedback and complaints processes and applied our learning. In doing so, we have improved:

- social workers' online account functionality and user experience;
- guidance for social workers on recording and uploading CPD;
- clarity on registration requirements;
- information on the voluntary removal process;
- learning and development for our people; and
- processes around recording changes to gender identity.

How we use our funds

Total expenditure

Total expenditure £17.12m
(2019 to 2020 £9.87m)



- Staff and related costs: £8.6m
(2019 to 2020 £6.56m)

Consists of wages and salaries and other related staff costs of £8.49m, board costs and travel and subsistence of £0.12m.

- Other operating costs: £6.40m
(2019 to 2020 £2.08m)

Consists of legal and professional fees of £5.35m, depreciation of £0.59m, research and development costs of £0.14m and other operating costs of £0.32m.

- Infrastructure costs: £2.12m (2019 to 2020 £1.23m)

Consists of IT infrastructure costs of £1.63m and premises related costs of £0.49m.

Sustainability and the environment

We are committed to good environmental practice and social responsibility. We work to a framework that includes government greening commitments and UN sustainable development goals.

We use government procurement frameworks wherever possible. Through sustainable procurement we meet our needs in a way that benefits society and the economy as well as the organisation. At the same time, the process minimises damage to the environment.

Our offices are in an area that is part of a regeneration scheme that has received national recognition. It won the National Green Champion, Construction Category Award at the International Green Apple Awards. We have replaced over 204 fluorescent light fittings with LEDs to increase our energy efficiency and lower our carbon footprint.

Business travel

A positive impact of COVID-19 was reduced business travel and whilst we will resume travel, we are keen to implement a blended approach to reduce travel carbon.

	2020 to 2021 £	2020 to 2021 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)	2019 to 2020 Tonnes of CO ₂ e
Car	£2,343	1.46	11.72
Taxi, rail and bus	£652	0.15	12.45
Air	£490	0.22	5.71
Total business travel expenditure	£3,485	-	-
Total Tonnes of CO₂e⁴	-	1.83	29.88

⁴ Carbon dioxide equivalent

Waste

All our mixed office waste is sorted for recyclable items. Our waste management supplier recovers energy from non-recyclable items wherever possible to minimise waste sent to landfill. They turn finished landfills into havens for wildlife and capture gas to turn into renewable power. Our confidential waste management providers guarantee that they recycle 100% of paper as toilet tissue, kitchen roll or paper towels and our printer lease includes recycling used ink cartridges.

Respect for human rights, dealing with anti-corruption and anti-bribery

As a public sector body, we must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights. For us, this is more than an obligation, but something we integrate into our day to day business, relating to:

- decision making;
- the design of policies, including internal policies; and
- the delivery of services.

This is in line with public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 and UN sustainable development goal 10 'reduced inequalities'.

We expect all our employees, board members and partners and any third parties working on our behalf to conduct their business in an open, honest and fair manner. This is in keeping with the Nolan Principles, the Fraud Act 2006 and the Bribery Act 2010.

Everyone working with and for us has mandatory anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption training. We regularly review our policies in these areas and our gift and hospitality policy.

Financial commentary

The following commentary summarises our net expenditure and financial position as at 31 March 2021. Further detail can be found in the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements.

Our financial statements are classified to the central government sector and will therefore be consolidated into the Department for Education's 2020 to 2021 annual accounts.

Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

During the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, income of £9.123m was received in the form of registration fees from Social Workers. Further detail can be found in note 2 of the financial statements.

We also received £9.777m from the Department for Education in the form of grant in aid; to be used in furtherance of our objectives.

Revenue expenditure for the same period was £17.12m. Expenditure incurred is inclusive of staff and other staff related costs including board costs of £8.6m, IT infrastructure costs of £1.63m, legal and professional fees of £5.35m, and depreciation of £0.59m. Further detail can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements.

Statement of financial position

Non-current assets obtained in the year cost a total of £2.041m; £1.84m was incurred on a digital customer relationship management system, which continues to be under development, £0.201m on IT equipment, furniture and fittings and leasehold improvements.

As at 31 March 2021, cash and cash equivalent balance was £5.214m.

Impact of COVID-19

Due to staff working at home and fitness to practise hearings being conducted remotely online, our expenditure on travel and subsistence was £0.82m less than originally budgeted. This was offset by increases in other areas of operational expenditure, including increased administration costs for hearings due to the complexity of managing the associated technology.

As we had previously facilitated home working for staff, additional expenditure to further support staff with home working had limited impact on the financial outcome of the year.

We did not receive any extra funds for COVID-19. None of our people were redeployed or furloughed as an impact of COVID-19.

Impact of EU Exit

To date, leaving the EU has had limited financial impact. We will continue to keep under review any impact relating to the recognition of social workers from other countries.

Going concern

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2022 and the 3-year financial forecast for the period ending 31 March 2025 has been submitted to the Department for Education for inclusion within the comprehensive spending review 2021.

As envisaged in these forecasts Social Work England will continue to receive registrant fee income, which will offset a significant proportion of its operating expenditure. The remaining forecasted balance is to be financed by the Department by way of grant in aid. The Department for Education's estimates and forward plans include provision for Social Work England's continuation and ongoing funding. Based on this information, the board considers that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

We do not expect any material financial impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which would impair our role as a regulator.

Long term financial perspective

Our long term strategy is to become self-financing rather than be reliant upon grant in aid funding. Our future financial operating models are being developed on this basis.

Next steps

Our corporate strategy was published on 5 May 2020 and our annual business plan 2021 to 2022 details what we will do in year 2 of the strategy.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
07 July 2021

Accountability report



Corporate governance report

The purpose of the corporate governance report is to explain the composition and organisation of our governance structure. It also explains how they support the achievement of our objectives.

Directors' report

Our chair, board and chief executive have decision making authority at board level as per the governance framework. They are supported by the executive leadership team and staff in discharging their duties.

Register of interests

We maintain a register of interests which contains details of company directorships and other significant interests held by non-executive board members. This is published on our website and updated regularly.

Report on personal information breaches

All departments and non-departmental public bodies are required to report personal data related incidents that have occurred during the financial year in their annual reports, in accordance with the standard disclosure format issued by the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office defines a 'personal data related incident' as a loss, unauthorised disclosure or insecure disposal of protected personal data. We have had 54 personal data related incidents within this reporting period.

No incidents have been deemed to meet the threshold of risk which would require them to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office. All have been reported monthly to the board or the audit risk and assurance committee.

Statement of accounting officer's responsibilities

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Secretary of State has directed us to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Social Work England and of its income and expenditure, statement of financial position and cash flows for the financial year. In preparing the accounts, the accounting officer is required to comply with the requirements of the financial reporting manual and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Secretary of State, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the financial reporting manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

The Permanent Secretary, as principal accounting officer of the Department for Education, has appointed me, Colum Conway, as chief executive and accounting officer for Social Work England. The responsibilities of an accounting officer, include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the accounting officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding assets, are set out in Managing Public Money, published by HM Treasury. As the accounting officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that our auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

Governance statement

The purpose of the governance statement

This governance statement describes the corporate governance and risk management frameworks used in the 2020 to 2021 financial year. We operate within a framework agreed with the Department for Education.

Governance framework

Our board is supported by 2 sub-committees in delivering our core governance functions: the remuneration committee and the audit, risk and assurance committee.

Board and committee attendance in 2020 to 2021

The current non-executive and executive directors of our board and their meetings attendance are recorded as follows.

Board member	Position	Appointment date	Meetings attended
The Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair	Reappointed on 19 March 2021	6/6
Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director	1 September 2018	6/6
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	6/6
Ann Harris	Non-Executive Director	19 July 2019	6/6
Mark Lam	Non-Executive Director	11 January 2019	6/6
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	6/6
Dr Helen Phillips	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	6/6
Baroness Tyler of Enfield	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5/6

Our board

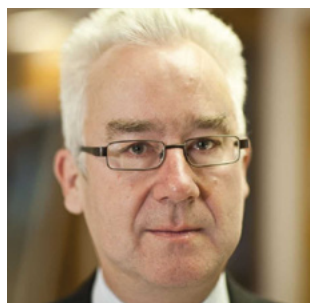
At 31 March 2021, the board consists of the chair, chief executive officer, Colum Conway, and 6 non-executive directors appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Each member brings a distinct set of skills and expertise in areas including regulation, policy, finance, digital technology, and business planning. The Secretary of State for Education reappointed the chair, Professor The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE on 19 March 2021 for a second 3 year term.



The Lord Patel of
Bradford OBE



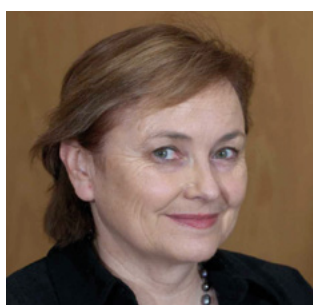
Colum Conway



Dr Andrew
McCulloch



Ann Harris
OBE CPFA



Baroness Tyler of
Enfield



Dr Helen Phillips



Jonathan Gorvin



Mark Lam

Our board oversees the full range of the organisation's regulatory responsibilities. The board holds the chief executive officer and the executive leadership team to account. It also provides a strategic steer for the organisation. The board oversees performance and the use of resources and ensures a sound system of internal control and risk management. Its responsibilities include:

- establishing and taking forward the organisation's strategic aims and objectives;
- ensuring compliance with statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds; and
- demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times.

Non-executive directors input on a wide range of organisational and operational issues. They oversee the delivery of our functions and objectives as a specialist regulator. On top of board meetings, they contribute to a variety of groups, meetings and stakeholder events. Board members also 'buddy' with executive directors and regional engagement leads. Our buddying scheme provides our board with insight into our operations and our operating environment.

Our board meetings take place in public. Since March 2020 meetings have been held online. During the year, excluding our sponsor team, 17 members of the public attended a board meeting. We also invite our people to observe board and audit, risk and assurance meetings. In doing so, they deepen their knowledge and understanding of the role of the board.

Details of committees reporting to the board

Audit, risk and assurance committee

The audit, risk and assurance committee advises the board and accounting officer on the following.

- The strategic processes for risk, control and governance and the governance statement
- The accounting policies, the accounts, and the annual report of the organisation
- The Scheme of Delegation, and in line with this, proposed expenditure over £500,000
- Management's letter of representation to the external auditors
- Planned audit activity and results of both internal and external audit
- Adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's management letter
- Assurances relating to the management of risk, including data protection risks and oversight of data protection obligations, and corporate governance requirements for the organisation
- The proposals for tendering and appointment of internal auditors or for purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services
- The strategy, remuneration and the work of the National Audit Office for the audit work undertaken on the annual accounts
- Anti-fraud policies, whistleblowing policies and processes, and arrangements for special investigations

The chair of the board is responsible for appointing the chair of the audit, risk and assurance committee. The audit, risk and assurance committee membership consists of:

- the chair (a non-executive director who is independent of the chair of the board and the chair of the remuneration committee);
- non-executive directors; and
- the chief executive (accounting officer).

Committee member	Position	Date of appointment	Meetings attended
Colum Conway	Chief Executive	1 September 2018	5/5 ⁵
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5/5
Ann Harris	Chair	19 July 2019	5/5
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5/5

Remuneration committee

The work of the remuneration committee is bounded by the levels of remuneration and terms and conditions of service (including pensions) within the general pay structure approved by the Department and HM Treasury and on the understanding the Secretary of State's approval is required to amend these terms and conditions.

The purpose of the board's remuneration committee, is to:

- Advise the board who then advises the Secretary of State for Education annually on the remuneration of the chief executive;
- Support the succession planning for the chief executive and executive directors;
- Advise the board on appointing chief executives after the first chief executive; and
- Advise on the remuneration of the executive directors.

The chair of the board is responsible for appointing the chair of the remuneration committee.

There was one remuneration committee meeting in June 2020, attended by members and board members as follows:

⁵ Two risk-focused sessions took place additional to the audit, risk and assurance committee meetings.

Committee member*	Position	Date of appointment	Meetings attended
The Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair of the board	Reappointed on 19 March 2021	1/1
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	1/1
Ann Harris	Observer, Non-Executive Director	19 July 2019	1/1
Mark Lam*	Chair of remuneration committee	11 January 2019	1/1
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	1/1
Dr Helen Phillips*	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	1/1
Baroness Tyler of Enfield*	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	1/1

The membership of the remuneration committee was reviewed in June and membership now comprises:

- the chair (a non-executive director who is independent of the chair of the board and the chair of the audit, risk and assurance committee);
- non-executive directors who are not existing members of the audit, risk and assurance committee; and
- the chair of Social Work England and other non-executive directors attend as appropriate apart from the chair of the audit, risk and assurance committee.

The remuneration committee chair reports to the chair of the board after each meeting. The Department for Education and our internal and external audit teams have free and confidential access to the chair of the remuneration committee. The chief executive is not involved in any decisions relating to their own remuneration.

Board effectiveness review

In July 2020 we commissioned a review of board effectiveness. We aimed to improve the planning and administration of the board and its committees. Following the review we made changes including:

- introducing a chief executive's report and dashboard to form the core of board discussions;
- reconfiguring the governance team into an executive office;
- creating stronger alignment between the business of the board, business planning and the executive leadership team;
- coaching senior leaders on what makes a quality board paper; and
- using a digital platform to support greater efficiency.

Management control activities

The chief executive has delegated responsibility from the board for leading the organisation on a day-to-day basis and is the executive decision maker at board level. The chief executive determines which duties are discharged through members of the executive leadership team, individually through line management arrangements, and works with the board to discharge duties as a collective.

The executive leadership team meet weekly to maintain momentum on delivery of objectives, planning, risks, resources and priorities. They provide oversight of progress and performance, review risks and issues, and agree on matters to be escalated to the board as appropriate.

Whistleblowing policy

Our internal whistleblowing policy was reviewed in January 2021. Our policy encourages our people to speak up if they have a concern that they reasonably believe is of public interest about the conduct of others or the way in which we run ourselves. Our partners also have a raising concerns and whistleblowing policy included within the partner handbook.

During this year, no whistleblowing concerns have been raised. We have an annual mandatory e-learning whistleblowing module for our people and partners and this module is also part of the induction training for new joiners.

We have an anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy that is reviewed and updated annually. There were no instances of fraud found or suspected instances of fraud, bribery or corruption reported during the year.

Risk management

Context

The way we balance threats and opportunities in pursuit of our strategic ambitions is set out in our risk appetite statement and set annually in line with business planning processes.

Risk appetite statement

Our board members and executive leadership team decide the level of risk we are willing to take as we pursue our objectives and review this annually. Our risk appetite reflects:

- our role as a specialist social work regulator;
- our 3-year corporate strategy;
- our organisational development; and
- our resources.

We have an open risk appetite in terms of people, culture, strategy, shaping the regulatory landscape, innovation and learning. This means we are willing to accept some risk as we work towards our objectives in these areas.

We have a more cautious approach to risks around finance and our regulatory function. And we accept minimal risk when it comes to compliance, data protection and cyber security.

Corporate risk register

Our risk register provides assurance that we have a clear picture of our risk environment and the mitigations and controls in place to manage risks effectively. Our risk appetite also enables good judgement and decision making.

While we categorise our risks, we recognise the interplay between different risks and the potential for risk mitigations in one area to increase risk in another area.

Our risk categories

Cyber security	Operational delivery
Data protection	People and culture
Finance	Regulatory functions
Innovation and change	Reputation
Legal	Strategy

Risk management

We identify, assess, manage, review and record risks in line with our risk management policy. Our approach involves:

- identifying and managing risks at the strategic, corporate and operational levels;
- using risk appetite to determine risk response;
- integrating assurance and internal control review; and
- creating an organisation-wide culture that builds increasing risk maturity.

Each risk is owned by the chief executive or a director. The leadership team and our heads of function identify and assess specific threats and opportunities through programme and project management. The board and audit, risk and assurance committee receive regular reports on our risks.

We report risk to the executive leadership team each month. We also report to the audit, risk and assurance committee at each meeting, and to the board at every other meeting.

Corporate risks

Outlined below are risks that we have identified as the greatest inherent to our role as regulator for the period ending 31 March 2021.

Risk	What impact has our actions had on the inherent risk?	Key controls and mitigations for 2020 to 2021
We are unable to meet fitness to practise referral demand or process cases within our resources	 Mitigations have prevented the risk from worsening	• Performance management • Increased workforce • Engagement to improve complaints management and referral practice • Improvements to case management system • A targeted, experienced team to resolve legacy cases

Risk	What impact has our actions had on the inherent risk?	Key controls and mitigations for 2020 to 2021
A data breach, unlawful data processing or poor practice or governance in relation to personal data leads to harm and reputational damage	 Mitigations have reduced the risk	• Staff training • Learning from data incidents • Executive leadership team and annual report and audit committee review of risks • Information governance steering group • Data sensitivity labelling and controls on documents and emails in Office 365

Risk	What impact has our actions had on the inherent risk?	Key controls and mitigations for 2020 to 2021
We fail to anticipate and respond to changes in the external environment which may threaten the efficiency or effectiveness of our work	 Mitigations have reduced the risk	• A policy workplan that is regularly reviewed by executive leadership team and the board • Analysis of what we have learned during COVID-19 and how the organisation may function in the future

Risk	What impact has our actions had on the inherent risk?	Key controls and mitigations for 2020 to 2021
Our course approval and reapproval process has a significant impact on the quality or quantity of students joining the profession	 Mitigations have reduced the risk	• Clear guidance on standards, approval and monitoring • Processes to consult with and obtain feedback from providers • An approvals process developed with input from stakeholders including those with lived experience of aspects of the course provision

Risk	What impact has our actions had on the inherent risk?	Key controls and mitigations for 2020 to 2021
Our governance structures and processes are not embedded and do not lead to effective decision making	 Mitigations have reduced the risk	• Application of recommendations from the board effectiveness review • Establishment of the executive office

Information risk and GDPR

We designed our information governance strategy to provide assurance on how we approach and protect the personal data we hold. We apply the strategy through activities and tools including:

- staff training and briefings;
- internal policies;
- reviews of legal contracts;
- data protection impact assessments;
- reporting and learning from data incidents; and
- controls in our IT systems.

The data protection officer advises on compliance with our legal and regulatory responsibilities in respect of the GDPR and other data protection law. The data protection officer addresses these matters in an annual report, which is provided to the board. The information governance steering group reviews incidents on a regular basis. We also brief the audit, risk and assurance committee on significant incidents and incident trends. We keep both the committee and the executive leadership team informed of existing data protection risks. The organisation is also subject to internal audit in this area.

Effectiveness of the internal control framework

As accounting officer, I review the effectiveness of our system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of the internal auditors, by feedback from the heads of who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework and by comments made by the National Audit Office in their audit completion report. We are also subject to review by the National Audit Office, including statutory audit and value for money reports, and the Department for Education.

Internal audit

Our internal audit strategy provides the board, the audit, risk and assurance committee and the organisation with an independent and objective opinion on risk management, control and governance and their effectiveness in achieving our objectives.

During 2020 to 2021, we had a larger internal audit plan to provide greater assurance over a range of processes which could present significant risk due to the introduction and embedding of new controls, systems and people.

Overall, in our opinion, based upon the review performed during the year, Social Work England:

- **has adequate and effective risk management;**
- **has adequate and effective governance; and**
- **has adequate and effective control processes.**

Haines Watts' internal audit annual report 2020 to 2021 states

Conclusion

As accounting officer, I acknowledge and accept the recommendations of the internal auditors.

A process is in place to track and report all outstanding actions from audit reports and their progression to completion; the executive leadership team oversee this and the audit, risk and assurance committee get a report to assure them that the actions are delivered.

The limited assurance for budgetary controls highlighted the fact that with changes in staff and distractions of COVID-19, there had not been the expected progress on embedding full financial controls, systems and processes. The auditors had been asked to come back to undertake a follow up audit as further assurance that the controls are fully in place and being managed.

Remuneration and staff report

Remuneration report – subject to audit

The remuneration and staff report sets out our remuneration policy for all staff and board members. It also provides details of actual costs.

Remuneration policy

Our employees are public servants. The Treasury, Cabinet Office and Secretary of State approve our pay levels.

Department for Education secondees are civil servants and paid in accordance with the Civil Service pay structure. Local authority secondees are local government workers and paid in accordance with the relevant local authority. We have a secondee from the General Medical Council and they are paid in accordance with that regulator.

As a non-departmental public body, we must adhere to the pay guidance set each year by Cabinet Office. The guidance sets out the requirement for departments to provide data to HM Treasury's OSCAR database. This data must cover pay for the department and its non-departmental public bodies and agencies. The pay remit must be approved by the Secretary of State for Education. Our people are subject to levels of remuneration and terms and conditions of service (including pensions) within the structure approved by the Department for Education and HM Treasury. We need the Secretary of State's approval to amend these terms and conditions.

Executive leadership team remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

Executive leadership team	Salary £000	Non consolidated performance award £000	Benefits in kind £100	Pension benefit £000	2020 to 2021 total £000	2019 to 2020 total £000
Colum Conway	145 - 150	5 - 10	0	7	155 - 160	155 - 160
Sarah Blackmore	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Jonathan Dillon	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Philip Hallam	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Greg Ross-Sampson Fixed term contract from 13 June 2019 to 7 April 2021	80 - 85	0 - 5	0	4	90 - 95	60-65
Tracy Watterson ⁶	80 - 85	0 - 5	0	12	95 - 100	85 - 90
	(30 - 35) secondment	(0 - 5) secondment	0	(10) secondment	(45 - 50) secondment	
	(45 - 50) employment	(0 - 5) employment	0	(2) employment	(45 - 50) employment	
Adnan Bashir (1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020)	-	-	-	-	-	95-100
Nadine Pemberton (to 29 December 2019)	-	-	-	-	-	70-75
Alison McKinna (to 7 May 2019)	-	-	-	-	-	40-45

⁶ Tracy Watterson was on secondment from the Department for Education to 30 September 2020 and an employee of Social Work England from 1 October 2020.

Board members remuneration

Name	Position	Appointed	2020 to 2021 fees £000	2019 to 2020 fees £000
The Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair	Reappointed on 19 March 2021	70 - 75	70 - 75
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5 - 10	5 - 10
Ann Harris	Non-Executive Director	19 July 2019	5 - 10	0 - 5
Mark Lam	Non-Executive Director	11 January 2019	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dr Helen Phillips	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5 - 10	5 - 10
Baroness Tyler of Enfield	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018	5 - 10	5 - 10

Members of the board are not entitled to any pension benefits.

Total non-executive board expenses for the year were nil.

Fair pay disclosure

The government financial reporting manual requires us to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the organisation's highest paid director and the median remuneration of its workforce.

In 2020 to 2021, nil (2019 to 2020, nil) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £22,445 to £152,500 (2019 to 2020, £21,715 to £147,500). Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid director during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021 was £152,500 (2019 to 2020 £147,500). This was 4.83 (2019 to 2020 3.98) times the median employee remuneration, which was £31,583 (2019 to 2020 £37,047). The increase in the difference between the highest paid director and the median remuneration is because the majority of roles recruited were mid to lower-level salaries.

Pension scheme

The National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) provides our pension scheme. NEST is an unfunded multi-employer defined contribution scheme. Employees are auto enrolled in the pension scheme and can opt out if they choose. The number of employees who were members of the pension scheme increased by 49 in 2020 to 2021. The employee contribution is a minimum of 3% and our employer contribution is 5%.

Employers' pension contributions for the period ending 31 March 2021 were £327,547 based on 5% of pensionable pay.

No one retired early on ill-health grounds.

Salary

Salary includes gross salary and overtime. This report is based on accrued payments made by Social Work England and therefore recorded in these accounts.

Benefits in kind

Benefits in kind is the monetary value of benefits in kind. It covers any benefits provided by Social Work England and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as taxable.

Non-consolidated performance awards

As part of our approved pay remit, we have a budget to give non-consolidated awards in relation to performance. These figures include any such awards paid or agreed in the 12 months up to 31 March 2021.

Reporting of exit, compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages

There was no exit compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages in the year ending 31 March 2021.

GDPR article 21 staff disclosure

No staff members asked for their entitlements not to be disclosed.

Staff report

Part A: subject to audit

Analysis of staff costs

	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2020 to 2021 Total £000	2019 to 2020 Total £000
Wages and salaries	6,926	334	7,260	5,267
Social security costs	746	-	746	478
Pension costs	328	-	328	217
Total	8,000	334	8,334	5,962

'Others' are staff engaged on our objectives via short term contract, for example agency or temporary workers. We pay a flat fee for agency staff, which includes social security and holiday pay. This note discloses the total sum as wages and salaries.

Others also includes the salary and on-costs of inward secondments from the Department for Education, General Medical Council and Suffolk County Council. This note discloses the total sum as wages and salaries.

Staff Composition

At 31 March 2021 Social Work England's headcount for employees was 219.

Staff composition analysis	2020 to 2021 total	2019 to 2020 total
Social Work England permanent	151 (68.9%)	129 (72.5%)
Social Work England fixed term	64 (29.2%)	39 (21.9%)
Other	2 (1%)	6 (3.4%)
Secondment	2 (1%)	4 (2.2%)
Total	219 (100%)	178 (100%)

Part B: Unaudited

Staff by level and gender

Levels	Permanent males	Other males	Permanent females	Other females	Permanent non-binary	Other non-binary	Total
Chief Executive	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Executive leadership team	2	1	2	0	0	0	5
Heads of function	5	1	10	0	0	0	16
Other	46	19	89	41	2	0	197
Total	54	21	101	41	2	0	219

'Other' includes fixed term appointments, secondees and agency or temporary workers.

Average headcount during the period:

Permanent employees	Others	Total
144	54	198

This represents the average across the year. 'Others' includes fixed term appointments, secondees and agency or temporary workers.

Our people

The following sections are not subject to audit.

Our staff policies and practices

Our people are our most important asset. During this, our first full year of operations, we have grown by 26%. This growth has happened during COVID-19.

It has been a huge challenge recruiting people who have never seen the office or met colleagues in person, and helping them to feel part of the culture. We have been able to meet these challenges through a combination of:

- a comprehensive induction programme;
- our meet the chief executive sessions for new starters;
- our buddy system;
- our weekly internal communications;
- our weekly connect touchpoints; and
- our monthly whole organisation meetings.

This is in addition to the support we give everyone through regular one to ones, team building and cross directorate work.

“So much happened in 2020, that really brought to the forefront again, many racial injustices. It was essential for me on a personal and professional level to join this group, to have a voice with others of lived experience and not just ‘talk the talk but walk the walk’.”

From a Race Equality Network member

Our forums and networks are thriving. We have a Think Well group, Queer Collective, People Forum and Race Equality Network. We encourage everyone to bring their whole selves to work. We’ve created ‘Your voice’ as an online space dedicated to and populated by our people. It provides a platform for anyone to talk about and share information that is important to them, ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

"I feel privileged to be a part of our Queer Collective and I am so proud of colleagues who contributed to Social Work England's gender identity guidance. To see their lived experience brought to the table in the development of this piece of work is reassuring, and the final document is much more sensitive and forward thinking as a result. I've been grateful for the time and space the collective has been given to support the learning and development of our colleagues too - delivering a short history of LGBTQ+ rights in the UK at a recent all-team meeting is a real highlight of my career to-date."

From a staff networks' representative

Our wellbeing support includes mental health first aiders and a 24/7 employee assistance programme. Our people can access free counselling, advice and signposting on issues including wellbeing, finance, relationships and trauma. We also have an occupational health service to support those in ill health to remain in work and/or support return to work following absence. This aspect of our work fits with UN sustainable development goal of 'good health and wellbeing'.

"Being part of the Race Equality Network has given me scope to support innovation and collaboration in a meaningful way. Work with like-minded individuals who are committed to encouraging people to consider how greater equality could be used to create a better and inclusive workplace that truly embodies our value of being fearless. There is more that unifies us than divides us and being part of the Race Equality Network is instrumental in amplifying voices within Social Work England."

From a Race Equality Network member

Our instant e-voucher recognition scheme, Applause, has been crucial to maintaining visibility of work across the organisation. We award vouchers to individuals in recognition of their outstanding contributions. From the scheme's introduction in May, over the year we awarded 343 vouchers. In December we moved ownership from the executive leadership team to an Applause panel. People from across the organisation comprise the panel and meet monthly to make decisions.

"Applause is a great opportunity to reflect on the work of colleagues and if you notice someone has done something brilliant then it's a great thing to be able to provide them with something to recognise that."

From an Applause nominator

"It was a complete surprise. It also made me reflect positively on something that had been enormously challenging at the time, so it was great to see that my efforts had been acknowledged in this way."

From an Applause nominee

Sickness absence

Compared to 276 days in the period 2019 to 2020, we lost 683 days to sickness absence during the 12-month period 2020 to 2021. This equates to approximately 3.6 per employee per year. The amount of absence time is the same as the UK labour market figure for 2020.⁷ Our sickness rate for the year is 0.69%, which is lower than the UK labour market rate of 1.8% for 2020.

We handle absence through individual case management. We also offer wellbeing support, an employee assistance programme and occupational health services. People with long-term sickness returned to work over the year.

⁷ Data reference: Sickness absence in the UK labour market - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Diversity statistics

Information on the gender split of our workforce, as recorded on our HR system, can be found below.

Gender identify for whole workforce	2020 to 2021	2019 to 2020
Female	65%	63%
Male	34%	36%
Non-binary	1%	1%

Gender split for executive leadership team	2020 to 2021	2019 to 2020
Female	33%	33%
Male	67%	67%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Gender split for heads of	2020 to 2021	2019 to 2020
Female	63%	73%
Male	37%	27%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Alongside the information gathered through our HR system, we also gathered additional anonymised data in our first equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring survey in March 2021. This survey had a 68% response rate.

66% of respondents were female, 32% of respondents were male, 1% preferred to self-describe and 1% preferred not to say.

88.8% of respondents were white, 11.5% Black, Asian and minority ethnic and 0.6% preferred not to say.

79.1% of respondents considered themselves to be heterosexual/straight, 6.8% bisexual, 5.4% gay man, 2% gay woman, 2.7% preferred to self-describe and 4.1% preferred not to say.

9.5% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability, 89.2% did not consider themselves to have a disability and 1.3% preferred not to say.

Our ability to gather and analyse data will be improved with the introduction of our new corporate system in April 2021.

Consultancy spend

No expenditure on consultancy was incurred during the year ending 31 March 2021.

Off-payroll engagements

Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

Off-payroll engagements: Board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility.

Engagements by category	2020 to 2021	2019 to 2020
Number of off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or, senior officials with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year	0	0
Number of individuals that have been deemed board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility during the financial year. This figure should include both off-payroll and on-payroll engagements	14	16

We consider that all board members and executive directors have significant financial responsibility, and they are reimbursed through payroll.

Parliamentary accountability report

Parliamentary accountability disclosures: audited

A1 losses statement

Losses statement	2020 to 2021	2019 to 2020
Number of fruitless payment cases	102	133
Value		
Fruitless payments	£25,000	£15,000

A fruitless payment is a payment which cannot be legally avoided because the recipient is entitled to it even though nothing of use to Social Work England will be received in return. During 2020 to 2021 this includes staff travel tickets purchased but unable to be used and payments made to partners in relation to cancelled fitness to practise hearings. The increase in the value of fruitless payments in 2020 to 2021 compared to 2019 to 2020 was due to the impact of COVID-19.

A2 Special payments

There were no special payments during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021.

A3 Fees and charges

Income of £9.123m was received in the form of registration fees (£2.994m 2019 to 2020). More analysis can be found in note 2 of the financial statements on page 92.

Total expenditure for 2020 to 2021 was £17.118m (£9.873m 2019 to 2020); net expenditure for the year was £7.995m (£6.879m 2019 to 2020). Further analysis can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements on page 93 and page 94.

As Social Work England became the regulator on 2 December 2019, the fee income and expenditure for 2020 to 2021 represented the first full year of operations.

A4 Remote contingent liabilities

There were no remote contingent liabilities during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
07 July 2021

The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of Social Work England for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The financial statements comprise: the Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including the significant accounting policies. These financial statements have been prepared under the accounting policies set out within them. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Social Work England's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of Social Work England's net expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis of opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's Revised Ethical Standard 2019. I have also elected to apply the ethical standards relevant to listed entities. I am independent of Social Work England in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Social Work England's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Social Work England's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of account for Social Work England is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Reporting Manual which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises information included in the annual report, but does not include the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, the financial statements and my auditor's certificate thereon. The Board and the Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Social Work England and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the performance and Accountability report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

-
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
 - I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
 - the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Board and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Board and the Accounting Officer, is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- internal controls as the Board and the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.
- assessing Social Work England's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board and the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Social Work England will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included the following:

- Inquiring of management, Social Work England's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Social Work England's policies and procedures relating to:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including Social Work England's controls relating to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and Managing Public Money.
- discussing among the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and posting of unusual journals;
- obtaining an understanding of Social Work England's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that Social Work England operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Social Work England. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included Children and Social Work Act 2017, Managing Public Money, Employment Law and tax Legislation and
- other risk assessment procedures performed relating to fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulations and regularity

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Audit Committee and in-house legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members including internal specialists and significant component audit teams and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

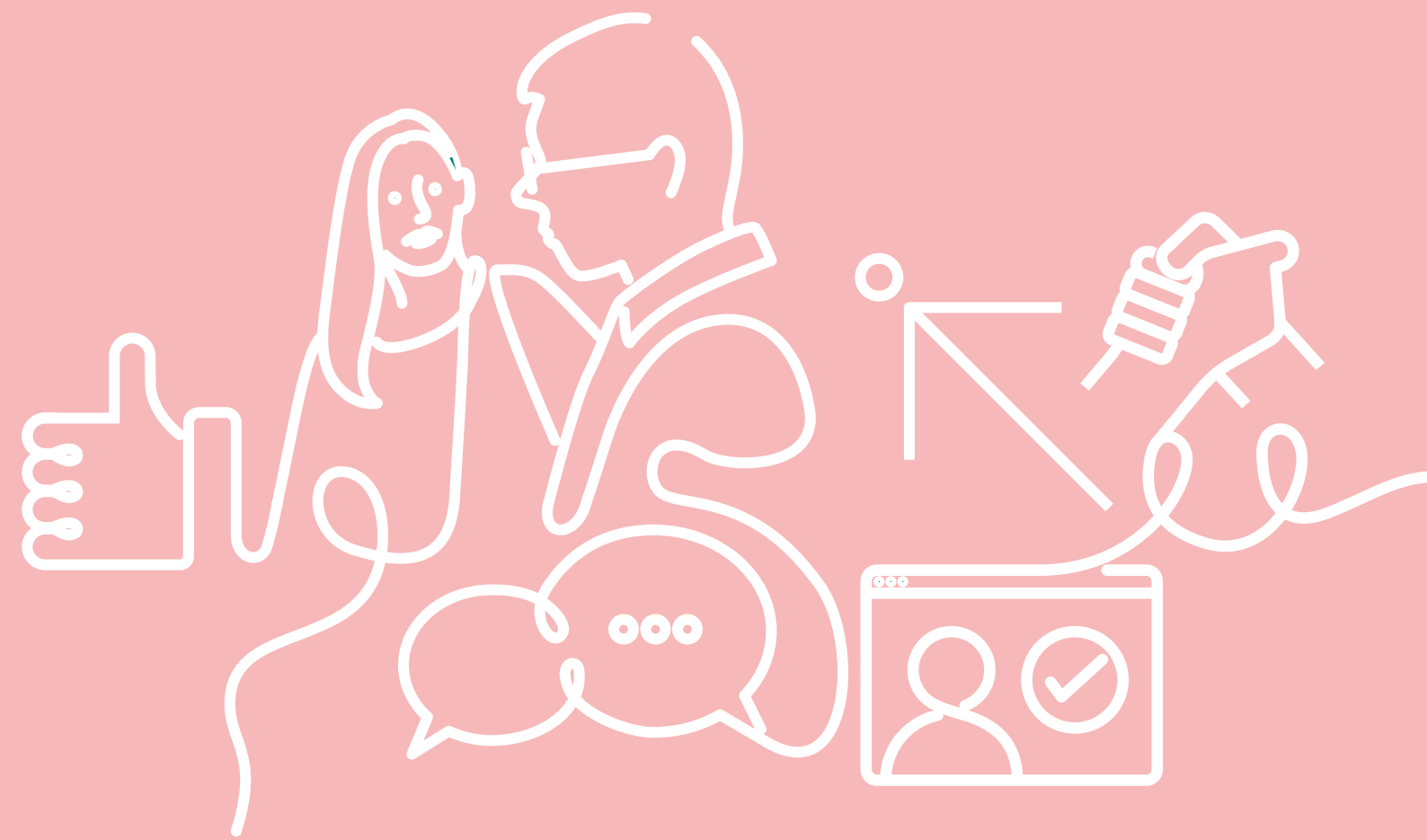
I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

Date 09 July 2021

Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London SW1W 9SP

Financial statements



Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021

	Note	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Income	2	(9,123)	(2,994)
Staff costs	3	8,334	5,962
Expenditure	4	8,784	3,911
Net operating expenditure		7,995	6,879
Net expenditure for the year		7,995	6,879

The values contained within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure relating to 2019 to 2020 represent the 12 months ending 31 March 2020 during which we began operating as the regulator of social workers in England for a 4-month period, commencing on 2 December 2019.

There are no discontinued operations.

There are no other recognised gains or losses.

The notes on page 85 to page 98 form part of these accounts.

Statement of financial position

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2021

	Note	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	8	1,195	1,580
Intangibles	9	4,418	2,578
Total non-current assets		5,613	4,158
Current assets			
Receivables	5	789	289
Cash and cash equivalents	6	5,214	5,300
Total current assets		6,003	5,589
Total assets		11,616	9,747
Current liabilities			
Payables	7	(5,219)	(5,126)
Total current liabilities		(5,219)	(5,126)
Total assets less current liabilities		6,397	4,621
Non-current liabilities			
Payables	7	(292)	(298)
Total non-current liabilities		(292)	(298)
Assets less liabilities		6,105	4,323
Taxpayers' equity:			
General fund		6,105	4,323
Total taxpayers' equity		6,105	4,323

The notes on page 85 to page 98 form part of these accounts.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

07 July 2021

Statement of cash flows

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021

	Note	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost	SoCNE ⁸	(7,995)	(6,879)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	586	498
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	5	(500)	(43)
Increase/(decrease) in payables	7	87	3,226
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(7,822)	(3,198)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	8	(201)	(684)
Purchase of intangibles	9	(1,840)	(1,858)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(2,041)	(2,542)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Exchequer supply from sponsor department	SoCTE ⁹	9,777	8,314
Net cash inflow from financing activities		9,777	8,314
Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts)		(86)	2,574
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at beginning of the year	6	5,300	2,726
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at end of the year	6	5,214	5,300

The notes on page 85 to page 98 form part of these accounts.

⁸ Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

⁹ Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2021

	Note	General fund £000
Balance at 31 March 2019		2,888
Grant in aid from sponsor Department		8,314
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	SoCNE	(6,879)
Balance at 31 March 2020		4,323
Grant in aid from sponsor Department		9,777
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	SoCNE	(7,995)
Balance at 31 March 2021		6,105

The notes on page 85 to page 98 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the financial statements

1. Accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the government financial reporting manual 2020 to 2021 issued by HM Treasury, as set out in a statutory accounts direction issued pursuant to paragraph 18(3), schedule 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The accounting policies contained in the financial reporting manual apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the financial reporting manual permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the circumstances of Social Work England for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The policies adopted by Social Work England are described below.

They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the financial statements.

1.1 Reporting period

The figures in the financial statements are prepared for the 12-month period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

1.2 Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.3 Income

Social Work England has adopted IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers (IFRS 15).

Social Work England receives the following income streams and accounts for them as follows:

Grant income (IAS 20)

Social Work England records all draw down of grant in aid as financing, as we regard draw down of grant in aid as contributions from our controlling party giving rise to a financial interest. Social Work England records draw down of supply/grant in aid as financing in the Statement of Cash Flows and draw down of supply/grant in aid to the General Reserve.

Registration fees

Fee income is collected under statute by Social Work England. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury has approved Social Work England to

retain this fee income to offset against their expenditure. Therefore, the Exchequer has no right of access to these funds.

Fee income comprises of registration and renewal fees, restoration fees and scrutiny fees. The annual registration period runs from 1 December to 30 November.

Registration and renewal fees are collected in advance and are calculated based upon the length of time remaining before the end of the current fee year. For registration fees relating to new applicants, the fee must be paid in full once an application has been deemed successful. Renewal fees can be paid in full in advance of the new fee year or can be paid in 6-monthly instalments twice a year via direct debit.

Under IFRS 15, the point of recognition of registration and renewal fees is based upon when the performance obligation of the contract is satisfied, and the benefits have been fully received by the social worker. Social Work England fulfils its performance obligation by maintaining a social worker's registration over the annual registration period, registration and renewal fees are recognised in the statement of financial position as deferred income and are released to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure proportionately over the period that the fee relates to.

Deferred registration fee income that is recognised within the statement of financial position relates to the following financial year only and is recognised as a current liability.

Restoration fees

Restoration fees are applicable where a social worker has previously been registered with Social Work England (or prior to December 2019, the HCPC) but has left the register for a period of time and wishes to restore to the Social Work England register. Restoration fees are paid when an application to restore is submitted. Restoration fees are non-refundable and represent the time and resources involved in assessing a restoration application, therefore restoration fees are recognised immediately within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

Scrutiny fees

Scrutiny fees are applicable to those whose social work qualification was gained outside of the UK. The scrutiny fee is paid when an application to join Social Work England's register is submitted and the fee is non-refundable. It represents the time and resources involved in assessing this type of application and therefore is recognised immediately within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.4 Areas of judgement

The preparation of these financial statements requires Social Work England to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. These assumptions are based on historic and other factors that are believed to be reasonable, the results of which form the basis for making judgements. The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. The main estimates in these financial statements are:

- IFRS leases: Judgement is made regarding the cost of inflation and cost of capital when determining the net present value of future lease payments.
- Accruals and prepayments: judgement as to when revenue earned or expenses incurred impact the financial statements, irrespective of the transfer of physical payment, and the associated impact on the assets and liabilities within the statement of financial position.
- The recognition of intangible assets involves two critical judgements by management. The first judgement is over the projected feasibility of the intangible asset once it has been completed. Intangible assets are only recognised when management are satisfied that the organisation has or can secure the technical and operational skill set to complete the development of the intangible asset. The second critical judgement is the identification of costs that are required to be included in the assets carrying value. Costs are only included if they are direct costs wholly incurred in developing and bring into use the future intangible asset.

1.5 Going concern

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2022. The 3-year financial forecast for the period ending 31 March 2025 has been submitted to the Department for Education for inclusion within the comprehensive spending review 2021.

Social Work England will receive registrant fee income during the year ending 31 March 2022 which will offset a significant proportion of its operating expenditure. The remaining forecasted balance is to be financed by the Department by way of grant in aid. The Department for Education's estimates and forward plans include provision for Social Work England's continuation and ongoing funding. Based on this information, the board considers that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

We do not expect any material financial impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which would impair our role as a regulator.

1.6 Segmental reporting

In accordance with IFRS 8: Operating Segments (IFRS 8), Social Work England has considered the need to analyse its income and expenditure relating to operating segments. Social Work England has assessed that all lines of operation fall within the same geographical location and regulatory environment as envisaged by IFRS 8.

Since segmental information for total assets and liabilities is not regularly reported to the chief operating decision maker and in compliance with the financial reporting manual, it has not been produced in the accounts.

1.7 Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases whenever the terms of the leases transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of the leased assets to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Operating leases are charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure (SoCNE) as expenditure is incurred.

1.8 Pensions

Social Work England has adopted IAS 19 Employee Benefits (IAS 19) to account for its pension scheme. All employees are auto enrolled into Social Work England's defined contribution pension scheme (NEST), Social Work England contributes 5% of gross salary, and this contribution is recorded as expenditure in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.9 Other employee benefits

The value of untaken holiday leave at year-end is accrued as it is earned.

1.10 Property, plant and equipment

The minimum level of capitalisation for expenditure on property, plant and equipment is £2,000. In the case of IT equipment and furniture, all items recorded as capital expenditure are capitalised and if they fall below the capitalisation threshold, they are grouped together and recorded as bulk assets. The asset value on capitalisation is measured at cost plus all direct costs, such as installation, attributable to bringing them into working condition.

1.11 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the valuation of buildings and other property, plant and equipment by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. Assets under construction are not depreciated.

Asset lives are in the following ranges:

1. Computer equipment 3 years;
2. Fixtures and fittings 3 years; and
3. Leasehold improvements term of lease

1.12 Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated at historic cost of acquisition less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. Intangible assets include those classified as assets under construction prior to them becoming fully developed and operational.

Amortisation is provided on a straight-line basis at rates calculated to write off the cost less the estimated residual value of each asset or combined group of assets over its/their expected useful economic life. Individual assets or a combined group of assets costing £2,000 or more are capitalised and subsequently amortised.

Amortisation is not provided for until the asset or group of assets are fully developed and in use. The annual rate of amortisation for each class of intangible asset held as at the financial year end is as follows.

- Software licences shorter of 2 to 5 years or licence period
- Software systems development costs 3 to 5 years

The carrying value of non-current assets is assessed annually and any impairment is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure. The estimated useful life and residual values of non-current assets are also assessed annually.

1.13 Financial instruments and risk

Social Work England applies IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures and IFRS 9 Financial Instruments. Financial Instruments (IFRS 7) disclosure requires Social Work England to disclose information on the significance of financial instruments to its financial position and performance:

Liquidity risk

Parliament votes annually on the financing of Social Work England's net revenue resource requirements, as well as its capital expenditure. With no borrowings, Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant liquidity risks.

Interest rate risk

Social Work England's financial liabilities carry either nil or fixed rates of interest. Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant interest rate risk.

Foreign currency risk

All material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling. Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant currency risk.

IFRS 9 Financial Instruments defines a financial instrument as “any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity.” Social Work England determines the classification of its financial assets at initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised initially at fair value, normally being the transaction price plus directly attributable costs.

1.13.1 Financial assets

Financial assets include cash and cash equivalents, trade and other receivables. Social Work England determines the classification of its financial assets at initial recognition. Financial assets are recognised initially at fair value, normally being the transaction price plus directly attributable costs. Social Work England does not hold derivative financial instruments.

Subsequent measurement of financial assets depends upon their classification into IFRS 9's 3 categories: amortised cost, fair value through profit or loss and fair value through other comprehensive income.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and on demand deposits.

Trade and other receivables

These are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market. They arise principally through the provision of services but also incorporate other types of contractual monetary assets. Initially trade and other receivables are recognised at fair value plus associated transaction costs that are directly attributable to their acquisition or issue. Under IFRS9 these are held at and are subsequently carried at invoiced value or amortised costs using the effective interest rate method, less provision for impairment.

1.13.2 Financial liabilities

Social Work England recognises its financial liabilities at their face value on initial recognition. Subsequently they are held at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Trade and other payables are the only classification of financial

liability that Social Work England holds. Trade and other payables are recognised at invoice value and arise principally from the receipt of goods and services.

1.13.3 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash in hand and on demand deposits.

1.14 Shared services

Social Work England has access to and makes use of a centralised shared finance service provision offered by the Department for Education. The finance service provides the following areas of support:

- Financial ledger system
- Management of bank accounts
- Supplier payments, and
- Preparation of monthly accounts workbooks

Social Work England has not been recharged for these services during the financial year ending 31 March 2021 due to the relatively low volume of activity when compared to other arm's length and non-departmental public body organisations.

1.15 IFRSs in issue but not yet effective

In order to comply with the requirements of IAS 8 accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and errors, Social Work England must disclose where it has not applied a new IFRS that has been issued but is not yet effective. Social Work England has carried out a review of the IFRSs in issue but not yet effective, to assess their impact on its accounting policies and treatment.

IFRS 16 was issued in January 2016 but has not yet been adopted within the financial reporting manual. Social Work England has chosen not to early adopt these requirements which have an effective date after the date of these accounts.

IFRS 16 requires that all leases with a lease term of greater than 12 months are recognised on the balance sheet as a finance lease. This will result in the recognition of a right-to-use asset, measured at the present value of future lease payments, with a matching liability. The pattern of recognition of the expenditure will result in depreciation of the right-to-use asset and an associated finance cost being recognised. It is expected that IFRS 16 will be adopted within the financial reporting manual from 2021 to 2022.

Impact on Social Work England

The main effect of the adoption of IFRS 16 will be for lessees, which will result in any former operating leases being brought on-balance sheet. The effect on lessor accounting for the new standard is limited in scale; and remains largely unchanged. Social Work England does not have significant lessor activities.

2. fee income

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Income	9,123	2,994
Donations in kind (other income)	-	-
Total	9,123	2,994

Fee income received in 2020 to 2021 comprises:

Registration and renewal fees

Initial registration fees relate to social workers who make a new application to join the Social Work England Register. The fee is paid in full once an application is deemed successful and is calculated based on the length of time remaining before the end of the current fee year. Full year registration fees are £90.

Renewal fees are due annually and will be paid by social workers who wish to remain on the Social Work England register. The renewal fee for the 2021 to 2022 fee year is £90.

Restoration fees

Restoration fees are applicable where a social worker has previously been registered with Social Work England (or prior to December 2019, the HCPC) but has left the register for a period of time and wishes to restore to the Social Work England register. A restoration fee is paid when an application to restore is submitted and is a non-refundable amount of £135 which represents the time and resources it takes to assess a restoration application.

Scrutiny fees

Scrutiny fees are applicable to those whose social work qualification was gained outside of the UK. The scrutiny fee is paid when an application to join Social Work England's register is submitted. The fee is a non-refundable amount of £495 which represents the time and resources it takes to assess this type of application.

3. Staff costs

	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2020 to 2021 total £000	2019 to 2020 total £000
Wages and salaries	6,926	334	7,260	5,267
Social security costs	746	-	746	478
Pension costs	328	-	328	217
Total	8,000	334	8,334	5,962

'Others' include inward secondees from the Department for Education, General Medical Council and Suffolk County Council as well as agency staff. Further details around staff and pensions costs can be found in the accountability report, remuneration and staff report.

4. Operating expenditure

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Staff related costs	156	252
Legal and professional fees	5,355	1,230
Board costs	107	110
Premises costs including rates and service charges	267	240
Utilities	44	29
Catering	-	40
Marketing	17	25
Rentals under operating leases: land and buildings	178	164
IT and telecommunications costs	1,630	794
Travel and subsistence	9	240
Bank charges and interest	33	15
External audit fees	49	49
Internal audit fees	20	32
Research and development	136	104
Other expenditure	197	73
Bad debt write-off	-	16
Total	8,198	3,413

Professional fees include the cost of partners. Our partners are registered social workers, legal professionals and members of the public who provide expertise to assist with carrying out our regulatory function.

Board costs relate to the fees paid to the chair of the board, The Lord Patel of Bradford and the non-executive directors as disclosed in the remuneration and staff report.

IT and telecommunications represent non-capital IT costs as well as the cost of implementing a new finance and HR system.

Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Amortisation	-	-
Depreciation	586	498
	586	498

Depreciation is charged on all property, plant and equipment expenditure shown in note 8 property plant and equipment. All intangible asset expenditure as shown in note 9 is currently classed as assets under construction, and therefore not amortised.

5. Receivables

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other receivables	113	2
Prepayments	676	287
Total	789	289
Amounts falling due after one year	-	-

6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Balance at 1 April	5,300	2,726
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balances	(86)	2,574
Balance at 31 March	5,214	5,300

The balances were held at Government Banking Service.

7. Payables

Amounts falling due within one year	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Trade and other payables	264	369
Accruals and deferred income	4,955	4,757
Total	5,219	5,126
Amounts falling due after one year	292	298

Accruals and deferred income include deferred registration fee income of £2.736m relating to the registration year December 2020 to November 2021.

8. Property, plant and equipment

	Land and Buildings £000	Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings £000	IT £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation				
At 1 April 2020	1,229	317	636	2,182
Additions	36	2	163	201
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	1,265	319	799	2,383
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2020	(273)	(123)	(206)	(602)
Depreciation charge	(248)	(117)	(221)	(586)
At 31 March 2021	(521)	(240)	(427)	(1,188)
Carrying value:				
31 March 2021	744	79	372	1,195
31 March 2020	956	194	430	1,580

9. Intangible assets

	2020 to 2021 Assets under construction £000	2019 to 2020 Assets under construction £000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April	2,578	720
Additions	1,840	1,858
At 31 March	4,418	2,578
Amortisation		
At 1 April	-	-
Amortisation charge	-	-
At 31 March	-	-
Carrying value at 31 March	4,418	2,578

Intangible assets represent assets under construction which relate to the costs to date of developing a suite of digital services required to enable Social Work England to carry out its regulatory role.

10. Operating leases

Obligations under operating leases comprise of	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Buildings	178	185
Later than one year and not later than 5 years	303	491
Later than 5 years	-	-
	481	676

Social Work England has entered into operating lease contracts for office accommodation, with a break clause after 5 years and the first 20 months being rent free. Social Work England also entered into an additional operating lease contract for further office accommodation which aligns to the original operating lease and has a break clause after 4 years.

11. Capital commitments

Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these accounts	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
Property, plant and equipment	-	
Leasehold improvements	-	-
Furniture and fittings	-	6
Intangible assets		
Assets under construction	3,114	1,700
	3,114	1,706

Assets under construction relate to the remaining work required to complete development on Social Work England's suite of digital services, this work is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2022.

12. Related party transactions

Social Work England is sponsored by the Department for Education and for the purposes of these accounts, the Department is regarded as a related party. There were material transactions with the Department for Education in respect of grant in aid, secondment of staff and the provision of IT services. In addition, Social Work England is co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care, with which there were no financial transactions.

Board member and non-executive director, Dr Andrew McCulloch is chair of GMC Services International who have provided expertise in drafting the rules around fitness to practise, registration and education and standards.

At 31 March 2021, there was nothing owing to GMC Services International included in payables.

	2020 to 2021 £000	2019 to 2020 £000
GMC Services International	20	72

13. Events after the reporting period date

The accounts were authorised for issue by the accounting officer on the date of the certification by the comptroller and auditor general. These accounts do not consider events after that date.

There were no adjusting or non-adjustable events after 31 March 2021 up to and including the date of certification.

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