

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

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Author

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Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO9: We will establish robust infrastructure, systems and processes that promote trust and confidence.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Strategy - Hungry

1. Introduction

This paper is a brief update on some key areas that have been a focus for attention in the period since the last Board meeting. Many of the areas will be considered in more detail in the agenda items and papers for the meeting.

2. Looking back

Performance management

This meeting pack contains the performance report for Quarter 1 to the end of June which has been shared with the members of the Board and published in July. The pack also contains updates on Fitness to Practise, the Registration and Advice Service and the Management Accounts to the end of July. We are also reporting on the outcome of the consultation on Continuous Professional Development which closed on 11 August and the proposed changes to the CPD process for next year 21/22. The performance report on Quarter 2 to the end of September will be available for the next Board meeting. In relation to the core operational areas the organisation remains on track in the delivery of the business plan within budget and against our key performance indicators.

Forge development

The transition to a new supplier, Cognizant, for the further ongoing development of the Forge system has gone well. Representatives of Cognizant made a site visit to the office in Sheffield in August and were able to meet with the members of the IT and Data Management Team and the Executive Leadership Team. This was a very useful meeting in underpinning the priority areas for development and the timescales required.

Meeting with Partners

Along with our Chair I had a series of meetings with some of our partners who Chair and sit on our various panels. Our partners are a very important part of the organisation and bring a broad range of experience and background to their work on the independent panels. The meetings were established as an opportunity for us to hear directly from them on their experience of working with Social Work England and offer them the opportunity to make suggestions for improvement. Overall, the feedback on their experience of our Hearings, Review and Education Quality Assurance teams was very positive and there was strong support for our approach. We also received some very useful feedback on how some of our processes could be improved which will be shared with the teams.

Education and training standards

The Education and Training Standards are the standards against which we will assess and approve social work education and training courses. The 2021 standards are a new set of standards which came into force on 1 September. The Education Quality Assurance team have now begun to carry out inspections against these standards. An update on progress will be provided at the next board meeting.

Enable system

Work continues on implementing the new operating system for finance, commercial and HR (Enable). Very good progress has been made on the finance and commercial management systems, the HR management system has proved more of a challenge, however it continues to move in the right direction with a good deal of support from the People Team.

3. Forward look

Professional Standards Authority review 2020

We are reaching the final stage of the performance review for 2020 and anticipate a final report to be published shortly. The report will provide us with useful insight into how we have developed our processes in our first year of operation against the Authority's Standards of Good Regulation. It will establish a benchmark from which we can action plan in preparation for the performance review for 2021.

Renewals and CPD

The annual renewal period for social workers began on 1st September and will continue to 30th November. We are anticipating a similar pattern of renewal activity through the three-month period with a relatively high level of activity in November. Projections to date indicate a similar pattern for the uploading of CPD in this period also. Social Workers have been encouraged to upload their CPD into their Social Work England accounts throughout the year, however as the pattern for uploads is similar to last year, we are anticipating a high level of activity in November. Of course, from an operations point of view high levels of activity puts a strain on processes, people, and systems, however plans are in place, and we have the benefit of the experience of last year – as do the social workers who registered with us last year!

Strategy and business planning

Included in the pack for this meeting is an outline of the planning process for the Business Plan 22/23. Part of the planning process will also include the outcomes from the strategic review sessions planned for the members of the Board and Executive Leadership Team in October. It will be important to take account of the current Comprehensive Spending Review, and other key policy developments in children's and adult's social care such as the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, Mental Capacity legislation and developments with Local Safeguarding Partnerships – Adult Mental Health Professionals and Adult Mental Capacity Professionals, the Department of Health and Social Care policy and planning for the reform of Adult Social Care, plans and timescale for the reform of professional regulation and the outcome of the review of UK professional healthcare regulator arrangements and the role of the PSA.

Progress on hybrid working models

Over the coming months we will have a focus on the continuing development of new working arrangements for teams within the organisation as we incorporate office working

back into our working environment. The arrangements will develop differently for different teams depending on business need, however we anticipate a shift on working patterns in the coming months, depending of course on how things evolve in the wider society and any amendments to government advice.

EDI

The survey (noted in my last report) on anti-racism in social work which we carried out in conjunction with the Principal Social Workers network and the What Works Centre (WWC) received 1600 responses. The WWC are analysing these, and we will be able to present the findings in mid-October. We continue to encourage the sector to share their details with us to enable us to report on social work demographics, and we hope to see an increase in this data as the registration renewal period commences.

Fitness to practice 'upstreaming' project

Our work on fitness to practise upstreaming continues and we have a dedicated Policy Manager working closely with fitness to practise directorate. We have just commissioned research to help us understand in more depth the reasons people are referring to us and how then we can work with employers, the sector, and the public to ensure future referrals are appropriate. The regional engagement team continue to carry out employer workshops in this area, and these are well attended. We should have greater insight in the coming months to assist with the development of local pilot interventions. A more detailed paper on this project will be brought to the Board in due course.

The Framework Document

We had anticipated that the work on our Framework Document would be completed in time for sign off at this Board meeting. However, the timescale for completion has allowed us to continue to work with our sponsors on the document and it is anticipated it will be ready for the next meeting. This will also allow time for further discussion with the Board.

4. Conclusion

This paper highlights just some of the key aspects of the organisation to present an overview of the areas we are currently focused on. Other areas are still under development or are running well as part of our business as usual.

Chief Executive's meetings with external organisations since the last Board meeting:

Since the last meeting I have met with:

Chief Executive at The United Kingdom Acquired Brain Injury Forum

Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority

Chief Executives of Health and Care professional regulatory bodies

Chief Executive at the British Association of Social Workers

Guidelines Commissioning Manager at NICE

Permanent Secretary and Arm's Length Body Chief Executive Officers

The Chair of the Social Worker of the Year Awards

Representatives from Cognizant

The Chief Social Workers for Children and for Adults

The Chief Executives of Social Work Regulators across the UK and Ireland