Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting Friday 11 March 2022

Agenda Item 02 Paper Ref 01

Paper for the
Social Work England Board

Sponsor
The Chair

Author
Alison Edbury, Executive Office Lead

Date
20 May 2022

Reviewed by
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for
Decision

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

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite
N/A

Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting for approval
Friday 11 March 2022, 10.30am
at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

Board Members:	Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair
	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Deputy Chair, Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Mark Lam	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Social Work England staff in attendance	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Berry Rose	Head of Triage and Case Progression
	Jonathan Dillon	Executive Director, Fitness to Practise
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Engagement
	Sophie Rees Rumney	Executive Assistant
	Tracy Watterson	Executive Director, People and Business Support
Sponsor Team:	Louise Woodward	Department for Education (DfE)
	Michelle Mann	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sue Howson	Department for Education (DfE)
Public Observers:	Representative	Professional Standards Authority
	Representative	Association of Professors of Social Work (APSW)
	Representative	UNISON
	Representative	UNISON
	Representative	Professional Standards Authority
Minute taker:	Alison Edbury	Executive Office Lead
Apologies:	None	

1. Welcome

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members, Social Work England's sponsor team, and observers to the meeting.

1.2 New interests were declared. Mark Lam was recently appointed Vice Chair of Broadway Partners, a broadband telecommunications business backed by the private equity firm Downing LLP. Mark Lam declared that he had a share and financial interest in the business. Andrew McCulloch declared that his partner, Louise Villeneau, had just been appointed as interim Admissions Tutor at the Department of Social Work at Goldsmith's for the rest of the academic year. **The new declarations of interests were noted** and would be updated on the register of interests.

Action: Executive Office Lead to update the register of interests.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting Paper 01

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on Friday 21 January 2022 **were approved as a correct record.** The Chair noted that the minutes were very clear.

3. Matters Arising and Action Log Paper 02

3.1 The Chair reviewed the actions from the previous meeting. **All actions closed since the last meeting were approved.** Updates on the open actions were noted as follows:

- Action 4: Regional meet and greet opportunities. The provisional plans to host a meeting on Thursday 19 May, in advance of the Board meeting Friday 20 May, would be at Social Work England offices and involve the National Advisory Forum (NAF). Details would be circulated to Board members. **Action closed.**
- Action 17: Re-instating regional engagement and shadowing programme. The Board shadow/buddy programme with Regional Engagement Leads had been implemented by Participation Officer, Jack Harrison and this included members of the National Advisory Forum. Details had been circulated to Board members and National Advisory Forum members. **Action closed.**
- Action 45: Location details for all Board meetings to be updated. This information would be circulated by the end of March. We would continue to offer a 'blended' approach to include videoconferencing for any Board members not able to attend on site, and for guests and observers. **Open.**
- Action 46: Plan to have all updated Board and Committee terms of reference brought into a single document. The single document had been drafted to align with new Framework Document and was reviewed by the Board at the private strategy meeting 11 March 2022. The Board agreed to submit final comments by correspondence to Executive Lead in time for formal approval for the 20 May 2022 meeting. **Open.**

Action: Board members to email feedback or comments on the updated Terms of Reference to Executive Office Lead by 31 March 2022.

4. Chair's Report - verbal

4.1 Regular meetings had taken place between the Chair and Chief Executive including a Parliamentary reception for the Social Work Awards which had involved Social Work England. The Chair had been speaking with the Chief Executive of Bradford local authority.

4.2 The Chair referred to the situation in Ukraine and potential impact on social work services and in relation to Social Work England's business continuity plan. The Chair proposed to ask DfE and DHSC about their business continuity plans.

Action: Chair to ask DfE and DHSC about their business continuity plans and plans to support Ukrainian refugees.

4.3 The Chair noted that Michelle Mann, DfE sponsor team member, would be leaving the Department at the end of March. On behalf of Social Work England and the Board, the Chair thanked Michelle for her contribution in setting up Social Work England and for her support towards the success to date. He welcomed Sonia Mosley, who would be taking over from Michelle when she leaves.

5. Chief Executive's Report Paper 03

5.1 The Chief Executive noted there had been an Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meeting and the first new Policy Committee meeting since the last Board meeting and the Chairs would be reporting at this meeting. Also, for this meeting the Board were asked to consider the 2022/23 business plan and budget. He was delighted to announce that last week the DfE had confirmed an additional £5.5m funding to address the inherited legacy Fitness to Practise cases and this was included in the budget for the new financial year.

5.2 Work had started on the new corporate strategy 2023/26, consultation with internal and external stakeholders was planned for later in the year. We recently closed our consultation on remote hearings and email communications and have sent an outcome report to DfE for Ministerial consideration. The DfE have launched the consultation on proposed amendments to our rules and regulations.

5.3 The organisation was back to the planned approach to hybrid working as reported to the Board last November. Recruitment was underway for the Executive Director, People and Business Support post.

5.4 Executive Director, Fitness to Practise reported that the substantive case load was below 900, this was 150 cases ahead of target. There would be a full performance report against the final quarter at the May meeting.

5.5 Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Engagement reported that this was the first year that events have been independently co-produced for Social Work Week. 4,432 attendees had signed up to Social Work Week so far, some sessions were expected to involve 800+ people.

5.6 The Chair thanked the DfE for the additional funding that had been granted. He thanked the Chief Executive for his report.

6. Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair's Report Paper 04

6.1 The ARAC Chair reported that the National Audit Office (NAO) had appointed EY as Social Work England's independent external auditors.

6.2 The Chair provided an update on the internal audits and the internal audit strategy as prepared by Haines Watts. An assessment of substantial assurance had been reported for three internal audits: Registration Fees, Budgetary Control follow-up and Payroll and Benefits. The substantial assurances were commended by the ARAC Chair who noted this was a significant achievement considering the size and maturity of Social Work England. Procurement and Contract management had reported an adequate assurance with four relatively minor recommendations that had been addressed.

6.3 The contract with Haines Watts would be extended to March 2023 to provide continuity in completing the audits planned for 2022/23. ARAC had reviewed the Internal Audit Strategy and recommended it for the Board's approval. It was agreed the Internal Audit Strategy would be circulated to the Board for sign off by correspondence.

Action: Executive Office Lead to circulate the Internal Audit Strategy to the Board for sign off by correspondence.

7. Finance and Commercial Report Paper 05

7.1 Head of Finance and Commercial presented the management accounts up to 31 December 2021. Revenue expenditure, net of fee income was lower than budget. The variance was due largely to higher-than-expected fee income, in particular fees from overseas registrants. The year-end forecast indicated that the full year outcome, for both revenue and capital, would be close to budget.

8. Policy Committee Chair's Report Paper 06

8.1 As the new Policy Committee Chair, Andrew McCulloch reported on behalf of the Committee and provided the Board with an overview of policy matters discussed at the inaugural meeting in February.

8.2 The Chair reported that the Committee had agreed to seek guidance from the Board on the best approach for the Board and its committees to engage with the National Advisory Forum.

8.3 The Committee had discussed policy issues concerning the Liberty Protection Safeguards consultation, learning outcomes, and the different dynamics concerning children's and adult's services and their stakeholder networks. The future work programme of the Committee would continue to be mapped out and this should include a consideration of how Social Work England uses its data and insights as part of constructive engagement within the social work system.

8.4 All Committee members endorsed the positive start to the work that was outlined. Executive Director, Strategy, Policy and Engagement thanked Andrew McCulloch and Adi Cooper for their support and contributions. The Chief Executive noted the dynamic nature of the current policy environment and expected that this would impact on Social Work England and the work of the Committee.

8.5 The Chair of the Board thanked the Policy Committee Chair and its members for setting out their ambitions and he encouraged the involvement of other members of the Board as appropriate.

8.6 The Chair of the Board asked that the Committee prepare a short paper for the Board on the engagement approach with the National Advisory Forum. He also recommended that the Committee should propose policy issues to the Board to consider for deep dive topics for future meetings.

Action: Policy Committee to prepare a short paper for the Board on the engagement approach with the National Advisory Forum.

Action: Policy Committee workplan to include deep dive topics for discussion at future Board meetings.

9. Risk Appetite Statement 2022/23 Paper 07

9.1 Head of Business Planning and Improvement said that the Risk Appetite Statement had been updated following consultation with ARAC, Executive Leadership Team and the Senior Leadership Team. New risk categories 'business continuity' and 'equality, diversity and inclusion' had been added and the appetite for reputation had been changed from 'hungry' to 'open'. The Business Planning Manager had led a training session for new members of the Board who reported this had been well-received.

9.2 **The Board approved the Risk Appetite Statement 2022/23.**

10. Business Plan 2022/23 and Key Performance Indicators (draft) Paper 08

10.1 Head of Business Planning and Improvement reported that the October strategy day had informed the direction and context for the business plan including learning from 2021/22. It sets out what Social Work England aims to achieve in the last year of the current corporate strategy, whilst we look forward to developing a new strategic plan for 2023/26. KPIs have been kept the same where possible to be able to make comparisons. There had been a change to the Fitness to Practise KPI from the number of cases to the age of cases, since the caseload was now reduced to a manageable level. Feedback from the Board and the NAF was being sought on the Business Plan.

10.2 The Board's feedback overall was positive. The Board recommended that data and insights should be included as a priority area for the business plan and should be part of a further discussion for the corporate strategy; the Board was also keen to discuss at a future strategy session how the platform established for EDI could be further developed. The Board agreed that timelines should be reviewed for consistency and that the KPIs should be reviewed, otherwise the Board considered the plan to be in a good place and that document itself was accessible and well presented.

Action: Head of Business Planning and Improvement to incorporate feedback and review timeline for consistency and the KPIs.

10.3 The Chair thanked the Board for the helpful feedback and Head of Business Planning and Improvement for the work on the Business Plan.

11. Budget 2022/23 (final draft) Paper 09

11.1 The budget for 2022/23 was presented by Head of Finance and Commercial. The budget included an additional amount of grant in aid funding to be provided by the Department for Education (DfE) in support of our efforts to reduce the number of outstanding legacy cases inherited from the previous regulator.

11.2 Areas of increased expenditure for 2022/23 were noted in relation to Forge capital expenditure and depreciation costs; and the increase across the payroll due to the rise in National Insurance costs.

11.3 **The budget for 2022/23 was approved by the Board.**

12. Framework Document February 2022 Paper 10

12.1 Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal reported that following the Board's approval by correspondence, the Framework Document had been signed and officially laid in House Libraries on 15 February 2022. It was presented at the meeting for formal approval by the Board.

12.2 **The Board formally approved the new Framework Document February 2022.**

12.3 The Board thanked the DfE and Executive Director, Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal and colleagues for all their work on updating the Framework Document.

13. Any other business

13.1 Executive Director, People and Business Support thanked Adi Cooper and Sue Ross for their contributions to the International Women's Day event organised by Social Work England. There had been good feedback received from colleagues who attended the lunchtime talk on 8 March 2022.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday 20 May 2022 10.30 am.

The meeting ended at 11.33am

Summary of Actions

- Executive Office Lead to update the register of interests.
- Board members to email feedback or comments on the updated Terms of Reference to Executive Office Lead by 31 March 2022.
- Chair to draft a paper requesting advice from DfE and DHSC on how to prepare for business continuity in the light of the Ukrainian refugee situation.
- Executive Office Lead to circulate the Internal Audit Strategy to the Board for sign off by correspondence.
- Policy Committee to prepare a short paper for the Board on the engagement approach with the National Advisory Forum.
- Policy Committee workplan to include deep dive topics for discussion at future Board meetings.
- Head of Business Planning and Improvement to incorporate feedback and review timeline for consistency and KPIs.