

Social Work England Board Meeting

Friday 28 July 2023, 10.30 – 13.00

at The Don, Social Work England

and by videoconference

AGENDA

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
		Welcome			Chair
1.	10.30	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest	Verbal	To note/declare	Chair
2.	10.40	Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2023	Paper 01	To approve	Chair
3.	10.50	Matters Arising and Action Log	Paper 02	To discuss and note	Chair; Executive Office Lead
4.	10.55	Chair's Report National Advisory Forum: board engagement review	Paper 03* Annexes 03a, 03b*	To note	Chair
5.	11.05	Chief Executive's Report	Paper 04	To discuss, advise and note	Chief Executive
6.	11.15	Policy Committee Chair's Report	Verbal	To note	Policy Committee Chair
7.	11.25	Remuneration Committee Chair's Report	Verbal	To note	Remuneration Committee Chair; ED People and Business Support
8.	11.35	ARAC Chair's Report	Paper 05*	To note	ARAC Chair
9.	11.45	Annual Report and Accounts 2022/2023	Paper 06	To note	Chair; Chief Executive
10.	11.55	Finance and Commercial Report Management accounts to 30 June 2023	Paper 07	To discuss and note	ED People and Business Support; Finance Business Partner
11.	12.05	Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023/2024	Paper 08	To approve	Executive Directors; Head of

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
					Business Planning and Improvement
12.	12.20	People Strategy 2023/2026	Paper 09*	To discuss and note	ED, People and Business Support
13.	12.30	Risk Appetite Statement	Paper 10*	To approve	ED, People and Business Support; Head of Business Planning and Improvement
14.	12.40	Early stages of Fitness to Practise: interventions for timeliness and quality	Paper 11	To discuss and note	Executive Director, Regulation; Assistant Directors, Regulation
15.	12.55	Any other business	n/a	To discuss	Chair
		Date of Next Meeting: Friday 27 October 2023		To note	Chair
	13.00	Meeting ends			

* Papers marked with an asterisk are 'private' to protect confidentiality according to our guidance for publishing board papers.

LIST OF ATTENDANCE

Board Members:	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Interim 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
Boardroom Apprentice:	Jennifer Waterhouse	Boardroom Apprentice
Staff in Attendance:	Alison Edbury	Executive Office Lead
	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Berry Rose	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Jonathan Monk	Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy
	Katie Florence	Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight
	Leanne Clarke	Finance Business Partner
	Linda Dale	Executive Director, People and Business Support
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Regulation
Sponsor Team:	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education (DfE)
	Andrew Wise	Department for Education (DfE)
Public Observers:	Representative	Unison
	Representative	Unison
	Representative	Professional Standards Authority
Staff Observers:	Khadija Rafiq	Hearings Officer
Minute taker:	Jenna Hodgson	Director's Assistant
Apologies:	n/a	



Minutes of the last meeting on Friday 19 May 2023

Agenda Item 2 Paper Ref 01

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

The Chair of the Board

Author

Alison Edbury, Executive Office Lead

Date

28 July 2023

Reviewed by

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for

Decision

Associated Strategic Objective

SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Operational delivery - Open

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Welcome and
2. Minutes of the
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Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting for approval
Friday 19 May 2023, 10.30am
at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

Board Members:	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Interim Chair
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Mark Lam	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Boardroom Apprentice:	Jennifer Waterhouse	Boardroom Apprentice
Social Work England staff in attendance:	Ahmina Akhtar	Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Alison Edbury	Executive Office Lead
	Holly Bontoft	Senior Lawyer, Head of Legal (for item 11)
	Jonathan Monk	Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy
	Joseph Matthews	Head of Data Protection and Information Governance and Data Protection Officer (DPO) for item 7
	Katie Florence	Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight
	Linda Dale	Executive Director, People and Business Support
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Regulation
	Rachel McAssey	Assistant Director, Regulation (Registration, Advice and Adjudications)
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement
Sponsor Team:	Catherine Pearson	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sue Howson	Department for Education (DfE)
Public Observers:	Ben Jones	Unison
	James Wilkinson	Unison
	Richard West	Professional Standards Authority
Staff Observers:	Matthew Green	MI Analyst

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	Khadija Rafiq	Hearings Officer
Minute taker:	Sophie Rees Rumney	Executive Assistant
Apologies:	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director

1. Welcome

- 1.1 Interim Chair, Dr Andrew McCulloch, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted apologies had been received from board members Jonathan Gorvin and Dr Sue Ross.
- 1.2 Mark Lam stated a declaration of interest for two business boards he joined in April and May as a non-executive director for JT Group and a non-executive director for Games Workshop Group plc.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Paper 01

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on Friday 10 March 2023 **were approved as a correct record.**

3. Matters Arising and Action Log

Paper 02

- 3.1 There were no matters arising.
- 3.2 The Chair reviewed the action log. All actions closed at or since the last meeting were **approved** as follows:
- **Action 54:** Chair to have one to one meetings with non-executive directors. *The board evaluation would be discussed by the Board at its May private strategy meeting.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 66:** Board members were welcome to contact Executive Director, People and Business Support to discuss the People Strategy in development. *Discussions have taken place and the People Strategy was presented to the Remuneration Committee on 6 April.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 67:** Executive Director, People and Business Support and Executive Office Lead to arrange a seminar style meeting with the Board to discuss the People Strategy. *The Chair had proposed that the business would be discussed as part of an awayday in June. This was arranged for Thursday 15 June.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 71:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to facilitate Board members input into finalising the business plan. *Completed and business plan now published on Social Work England website.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 72:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to progress Board sign off the business plan by end of March. *Completed and business plan now published on Social Work England website.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 73:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to keep the Board updated on the budget and business plan. *Completed and business plan now published on Social Work England website; monitoring of performance is planned for reporting to the Board during 2023/24.* **Action closed.**
 - **Action 74:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to check the amendments were in line with the Framework Document and accommodated the recent changes to

our governance structure. *This was checked and confirmed following the meeting; the Chair and ARAC Chair signed off the final version by email. **Action closed.***

The progress on the open actions was noted:

- **Action 69:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to implement an annual whistleblowing disclosures report for reporting to the Board annually. *Report planning in progress for joint reporting with sister regulators, GMC were leading on this. Report expected to be published Q2. **Open.***
- **Action 70:** Head of Finance and Commercial to plan an exercise to look at financial modelling for 2024/25. *This would be discussed at the June awayday, further update to follow for July board meeting. **Open.***

4. Chair's Report - verbal

4.1 The Chair had met the Department for Education sponsor team to formalise his personal objectives as interim chair for the upcoming year; these were in line with Social Work England's strategic objectives for 2023/24.

Action: The Chair to circulate his finalised objectives with the Board outside the cycle of meetings.

4.2 The Chair had recently met with first-year students from Birmingham University about their social work education and practice. Discussions had covered the differences between public perception, and the media perception of the profession. The Chair emphasised that social workers were highly regarded by many service users. The Chief Executive noted that this misalignment of perceptions had been identified in the Social Work in England report. Social Work England planned further research into the perception of social workers for the upcoming year. The communications team would continue to spotlight positive news stories of the profession to build confidence in social workers and the profession.

4.3 The Chair had attended a seminar on the boardroom apprenticeship scheme. Following a conversation with the Chief Executive, it had been proposed that Social Work England should submit an application for continuing with the scheme in year 2. **This was agreed by the Board.**

5. Chief Executive's Report

Paper 03

5.1 The Chief Executive referred to the final quarter performance report in the board pack and noted that Executive Directors would present their directorate reports in detail. In summary, he reported that the legacy cases remained on target for completion in June 2023. The additional funding to support the conclusion of the legacy cases, would also conclude at this point and therefore the fixed term contracts related to this activity would come to an end. On behalf of Social Work England, the Chief Executive thanked everyone who had helped conclude the legacy cases. **The Board recorded their appreciation to this cohort of colleagues for their contributions in concluding the legacy caseload.**

5.2 Excepting standards 15 and 17, all standards had been achieved in the Professional Standards Authority's (the Authority's) performance review 2021/2022. It was noted that improvements had been made towards standard 15 in clearing legacy cases, although it was expected that the timeliness and case progression would continue to be an area of focus and discussion with the Authority. The Chief Executive was confident that with the changes to our rules and regulations, progress could be achieved in relation to standard 17. Meeting

standard 3 for the first time, in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion, was a notable achievement.

- 5.3 The establishment of the Education and Training Advisory Forum was noted. There had been 2 meetings to date. The significance of the forum as an important area of engagement and in the implementation of the education and training strategy, in particular ‘readiness for professional practice’, was noted. The Chief Executive added that consultation on the approach to Best Interest Assessors was planned, and this would enable the Board’s contribution.

6. Remuneration Committee Chair’s Report – verbal

- 6.1 The Remuneration Committee Chair reported that the latest draft of the People Strategy, and its engagement plan was discussed at its last meeting. He congratulated the team involved with the People Strategy and recommended it to the Board.
- 6.2 The Committee had discussed the approach to the pay remit guidance for 2023/24 and had agreed next steps. Discussions had taken place with the former chair and the Chief Executive regarding the Chief Executive’s performance appraisal. Further information would be presented to the Board at an appropriate date.

7. Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) Chair’s Report Paper 04*

- 7.1 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Chair opened her report by thanking Dr Sue Ross who had recently joined the Committee. She also noted that she had submitted a Chair’s end of year report, this was introduced as part of the best practice approach adopted from the effectiveness review conducted earlier in the year.
- 7.2 The meeting had marked the end of the audit year for which ARAC had received annual opinion from Haines Watts, this was reported as adequate assurance. The new internal auditors, RSM presented the internal audit timetable for 2023/24. It was noted that RSM had brought forward the cyber security audit to Q2. The Chair thanked RSM for their flexibility on adjusting the audit schedule to meet business needs.
- 7.3 The good work that had gone into the Risk Appetite Statement for 2023/24 was noted; the statement was recommended for review and approval at the Board awayday in June. The Schedule of Delegations included in the pack were for the Board to note changes which were necessary to make following the Rules and Regulation changes. It was noted that an increase in complaints was reported in the end of year Corporate Feedback and Complaints report. This was mainly attributed to the increased volume of overseas applications and the time taken to process these, as well as communications relating to the progress of fitness to practise cases. Additional capacity had been agreed to process overseas applications. The planned Forge communications work package was expected to help resolve wider communication issues. Executive Director, People and Business Support confirmed that the first release of functionality to support communications under this work package was expected during Q2.

(Head of Information Governance Data Protection Officer joined the meeting).

- 7.4 The Board were informed that the recent increase in data breaches reported in the Data Protection Officer’s Annual Report had been discussed by the Committee. Executive Director, Regulation provided assurance concerning the mitigations in place, which included

a comprehensive approach to learning about information governance starting with induction through to mandatory annual learning and development through the Grow platform.

(Head of Data Protection and Information Governance and Data Protection Officer (DPO) left the meeting).

7.5 In concluding her report, ARAC Chair recommended 2 re-procurement business cases to the Board for approval. The business case for the re-procurement of 2 or more of external legal firms covered the period March 2024 to March 2027. The re-procurement of the Appian license, to underpin our case management system 'Forge' and public facing website, would be a 4-year contract in order to offer better value for money by fixing prices over a longer timeframe. **The Board endorsed the 2 business cases, and thanked ARAC Chair for the committee's contribution to the Board.**

8. Finance and Commercial Report

Paper 05

8.1 Head of Finance and Commercial reported that the management accounts presented an underspend of £1.2m in revenue expenditure, this was in line with the last report. The key contributor to the underspend related to the additional legacy case funding that had not been fully expended, due to the initial delay in confirming this funding. This had been reported to DfE and allocated to the 2023/2024 budget to complete the legacy cases in the first quarter of this financial year. There was also a small underspend of the capital budget, as had previously been reported. The accounts had been updated to include the amortisation of Forge expenditure. The amortisation amount for the quarter was £390k, close to the £400k estimated in January 2023.

8.2 Two contracts had been awarded, following business case approval October 2022; one for software licences, and the other for a digital development partner. Following a competitive tender process, both had been awarded to the incumbent suppliers. Planning for future capital requirements was raised by the Board. Executive Director, People and Business Support noted this would be discussed as part of budget planning at an earlier stage for the following year with the DfE Sponsor Department.

8.3 The National Audit Office would begin the external audit of last year's accounts up to 31 March 2023, week commencing 22 May 2023.

9. Quarter 4 Performance Report 2022/2023

Paper 06

9.1 Head of Business Planning and Improvement noted that this would be the last performance report against the 2020-23 strategy and that work was currently in motion for reporting to the board on 'Our Strategy 2023/26'.

Our regulatory approach

9.2 Executive Director, Regulation reported that during Q4, the regulation team had remained within the KPIs for processing registration applications. This was despite recruitment challenges, which have had a significant impact on capacity. Timeliness of processing registration by overseas applicants had been a particular issue in Q3 due to the removal of Gov.uk Verify, but improvements had been realised since the implementation of a new automated ID verification system. Plans and resources were in place to continue to manage overseas applications, and the student uplift period in Q2 2023/24, whilst also preparing for renewals in Q3. Assistant Director, Regulation (Registration, Advice and Adjudications)

reported that Head of Registration had met with local authorities and recruitment agencies who have been targeting overseas recruitment in an effort to triangulate our requirements with employers and recruitment agencies. The impact of this has enabled effective communication between third parties. Employers have also been reminded to check the registration status of potential employees to be alert to the potential for misuse of the protected social worker title, or any sanctions registrants may hold. Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement added that recent research suggested that there was a lack of pastoral support to aid international social workers' cultural adjustment into living and practicing in England. Social Work England's regional engagement leads planned to factor this into their wider conversation with the sector.

9.3 Executive Director, Regulation reported that areas of Fitness to Practise remain challenging with a high number of referrals into the triage system. To help prevent non-regulatory referrals coming to us, research was planned to examine how cases were being resolved locally. The Social Work England website would also be updated with clearer guidelines about making a referral. Input from our legal team and the single point of contact (SPOC) network through every stage of the process has been helping to promote efficiency within case progression, and to improve the opportunity for decisions to be made at an earlier stage. There were a small number of remaining legacy cases that were proving to be stubborn to conclude since we awaited third party information, for example from police records.

9.4 The Board requested a briefing paper for the July Board meeting to understand the interventions that the Fitness to Practise team were working on to achieve caseload progression.

Action: Executive Director, Regulation to produce a paper for the July Board meeting addressing the interventions that the Fitness to Practise team were working on to achieve caseload progression.

The social work profession

9.5 Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement reported a busy period for policy, communications, and engagement. The Social Work in England state of the nation report had been received positively. The Policy team have responded to consultations and analysed the current political climate in relation to social work. Social Work England was working closely with the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care on the 'Stable Homes Built on Love' strategy implementation.

9.6 There had been a continued focus on education and training supported by an ambitious strategy and the establishment of the Education and Training Advisory Forum. Our Education Quality Assurance team remained busy and was dealing with the challenge of inconsistencies identified in the education landscape.

9.7 A new workforce roundtable had been established as a forum for leaders within the sector to propose actions. Expressions of interest for the forum had been opened to those in the social work profession.

9.8 Due to the delay of implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards framework, including the introduction of the Approved Mental Health Capacity Professionals (AMCPs), Social Work England would continue its focus on Best Interests Assessors.

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9.9 Social Work Week was successful and led the organisation to trend on Twitter for the first time. The event was now fully embedded in the social work calendar.

Our organisation

9.10 Executive Director, People and Business Support reported that staff retention had remained within the target at 85%. Retention may be affected in the coming period by the ending of the fixed term contracts in legacy casework; there was a support process in place for staff whose fixed term contracts were due to finish. The external recruitment market was thought to have improved as a higher volume of applications for vacancies had been noted.

9.11 Sickness absence had reduced from 4% to 3%. There had been a celebration event to mark the endpoint for the Positive Action Reciprocal Mentoring Scheme pilot.

9.12 The document management workstream for Forge had launched successfully and was now in operation. The draft Data and Insight strategy had been shared with the Policy Committee and was recommended for circulation to the Board for its awayday.

Action: The Board to receive the Data and Insight strategy as part of the Board awayday pack.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023/24 (final draft)

Paper 07*

10.2 Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) reported that the EDI objectives were now a central thread throughout 'Our Strategy 2023/26'. The Board was asked to agree and approve the board related actions of the EDI Action Plan 2023/24.

10.3 The Board applauded the EDI team for the improvements in gathering EDI data. The Board was keen to understand how the use of EDI data could help to identify and tackle potential inequities within the social work profession and in relation to regulatory processes such as fitness to practise. Head of EDI responded that the increase in diversity data would be able to support analysis of the fitness to practise processes in relation to cases involving social workers with identified protected characteristics for example. Shared learning around the fairness of fitness to practise processes was ongoing with other regulators.

10.4 The Board was asked to provide any feedback on the plan by 26 May, prior to its publication on Social Work England's website. **The Board approved the board related actions of the EDI Action Plan 2023/24.**

Action: The Board to advise on any final amendments to the EDI Action Plan by 26 May 2023.

(Head of Legal joined the meeting)

11. Schedule of Delegations

Paper 08

11.1 Executive Director, Regulation noted that following amendments to reflect the new powers created under the 2018 regulations, which came into force in December 2022, changes had been made accordingly to the operational schedule of delegations. **The changes were noted.**

12. Any other business

12.1 There was no other business discussed. The Chair thanked Social Work England colleagues for the quality of the papers and closed the meeting.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday 28 July 2023 10.30am.

The meeting ended at 12.15pm.

Summary of Actions

- The Chair to circulate Interim Chair objectives to the Board.
- Executive Director, Regulation to produce a paper for the July Board meeting addressing the interventions that the Fitness to Practise team were working on to achieve caseload progression.
- The Board to receive the Data and Insight Strategy ahead of the Board awayday.
- The Board to advise on any final amendments to the EDI Action Plan by 26 May 2023.

* Papers marked with an asterisk are 'private' to protect confidentiality according to our guidance for publishing board papers.



Summary of Actions from board meetings up to 28 July 2023

Agenda Item 3 Paper Ref 02

Paper for the
Social Work England Board

Sponsor
The Chair

Author
Alison Edbury, Executive Office Lead

Date
28 July 2023

Reviewed by
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for
Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective
SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite
Operational delivery - Open

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
N/A

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1. Summary

The actions below provide an audit trail of items closed at or since the last meeting on 19 May 2023. Actions still in progress or yet to complete since the last meeting are listed on the log that follows.

Closed actions recorded at and following the last meeting:

- **Action 75:** Chair to circulate his finalised objectives with the Board outside the cycle of meetings. *Completed. Action closed.*
- **Action 77:** Board to receive the Data and Insight Strategy as part of the Board awayday pack. *Completed. Action closed.*
- **Action 78:** Board to advise on any final amendments to the EDI Action Plan by 26 May 2023. *Completed. Action closed.*

Actions for review and decision at the 28 July meeting:

- **Action 76:** Executive Director, Regulation to produce a paper for the July Board meeting addressing the interventions that Fitness to Practise team were working on to achieve caseload progression. *This paper is presented to the Board as item 14 on the agenda. In progress.*

Updates on open actions are noted in the action log that follows.

2. Action required

The Board is asked to note the progress against the actions.

Social Work England Board Action Log

Action no.	Date of Meeting	Action	Owner	Due By	Update	Next review	Status
69	27/01/23	Executive Director, People and Business Support to implement an annual whistleblowing disclosures report for reporting to the Board annually.	Executive Director, People and Business Support	31/03/24	Report planning in progress for joint reporting with sister regulators, this is led by GMC. Report expected to be published Q2.	28/07/2023	Open
70	10/03/23	Head of Finance and Commercial to plan an exercise to look at financial modelling for 2024/25.	Executive Director, People and Business Support; Head of Finance and Commercial	27/10/23	Planning in progress for Q3.	28/07/2023	Open



CEO Report to the Board July 2023

Agenda Item 5 Paper Ref 04

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

Author

Colum Conway

Date

21 July 2023

Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Strategy - Open

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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1. Introduction

Since the last Board meeting there have been meetings of ARAC, Remuneration Committee and Policy Committee, the Chairs of these committees will be giving update reports at this meeting.

To note the Remuneration Committee reviewed the People Strategy, which is on the agenda for today's meeting, and the pay remit for 2023/2024 which has now been submitted to the Department for Education for consideration. ARAC received the external audit completion report and reviewed the Annual Report and Accounts which have now been completed and laid before parliament on the 18 July. The Policy Committee welcomed the new chair, Jonathan Gorvin, and reviewed its work plan for the year ahead to include an away day at Nottingham University in September.

In June the Board had a planning day with the senior team. This was a very useful discussion as we are beginning the implementation of our new 3-year strategic plan and our business plan for this year.

The independent board effectiveness review is now out for tender with the review expected to begin in October.

The recruitment process for the new Chairperson for Social Work England is now live on the Public Appointments website, the application deadline is the 4 September.

A key focus for the meeting today will be the Q1 performance report. The report indicates that we are on target with our business plan objectives and key performance indicators. As discussed on the planning day the format of the performance report has been updated for the new financial year with a focus on delivery against the business plan. Some areas require a more narrative based approach to reporting than others and we are continuing to work on presenting impact against objectives. I think this will be an ongoing process and we would welcome feedback.

To note the EDI data from renewals has had its initial analysis, the outcome of which will be published in September as outlined in the business plan. Progress is being made on the delivery of 3 pieces of commissioned research that have been ongoing during Q1 - public perceptions research, social work workforce research and practice education research.

As an update for the National Workforce Roundtable, we have established 3 workstreams from this wider group who have been working with colleagues from the sector to explore the issues relating to recruitment and entry into the profession, retention of social workers and international social work. The wider group met again on the 25 July.

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2. National Advisory Forum

The Chair has included a report on his engagement with the National Advisory Forum. Many of the forum members have now served their full term of 3 years. We have given them the choice to extend for 2 years, work with us on an ad hoc basis as an alumnus ‘co-production partner’ or step down. This has left us with 8 vacancies. We received 55 applications to our recruitment call across social workers and people with lived and learned experience of social work. The selection process is underway.

3. Registration Renewals

Registration renewals for 2023/2024 will open on the 1 September. We are encouraging social workers to renew as early as possible and ensure they complete all the stages of the renewal process including submitting their CPD evidence. Last year a small number of social workers left completing their renewal to the final hours of the final day deadline of 30 November and as a result failed to complete the process in the right way. We will continue to campaign and work with key partners to limit the number of social workers who leave renewals to the last moments. However, as we now enter our fourth year of renewals experience tells us that it seems very difficult to eradicate this number completely.

While we encourage social workers to submit CPD throughout the year the percentage who have done so this year remains low.

4. National Practice Group

I am a member of the National Practice Group who have oversight of some of the elements of the implementation plan for children’s social care reform – Stable Homes Built on Love. These elements include the Children’s Social Care National Framework and Children’s Social Care Dashboard, the government’s response to the consultation on both these areas proposals is due for publication shortly; the Early Career Framework, we are involved in this work at a number of levels; updating Working Together to Safeguard Children, currently out for consultation until 6 September; and Families First For Children Pathfinders, the first wave of co design local partners currently under consideration.

It is an ambitious and demanding work plan for the group, however work continues to move at pace, and I will keep the Board updated on key developments. As part of the overall implementation plan, we are also working on developing the role of Practice Educators and on our approach to the proposals around direct practice. This will be discussed further at the Policy Committee away day in September.

5. People

The Q1 performance report contains details in relation to our people, however I think it useful to highlight a few recent developments. The staff engagement survey has been

completed and the headline outcomes shared with the staff. Action plans are being developed across all levels of the organisation. A detailed paper will come to the next Board meeting.

To note the July payroll will include the non-consolidated £1500 cost of living payment as announced by the government at the beginning of June.

The legacy cases project came to an end at the end of June and with it the additional funding supporting 30 fixed term contracts (FTCs), mostly in the hearings team. I want to commend the level of support that was in place in the months preceding June to ensure those on fixed-term contracts had opportunities to pursue alternatives. In the end 10 people secured permanent roles within the organisation, 8 people have secured other FTCs in the organisation, 3 people will continue to work on FTCs for a further few months, and 9 people left the organisation. It is important to manage such a transition in the right way and the outcome has been as positive as it could have been for the us and for those involved.

As part of the ongoing development of our approach to hybrid working, we are planning the first of our in-person all team meetings at the office in Sheffield for 21 September. The focus for the meeting is to generate a greater sense of connectedness across the organisation.

6. Conclusion

Overall performance against objectives and KPIs has been good in Q1. There have been a number of key challenges which will remain and will likely have an ongoing impact on performance in the next quarter. The senior team have reviewed the objectives for Q2 and identified the resources, interdependencies and capacity needs across the organisation to ensure we are in the best a position to continue to address our key challenges.

7. Annexe

Annex 1: Chief Executive's meetings

Meeting with Department of Health and Social Care and Senior officials at the Department for Education

Regular meeting with the Permanent Secretary and ALB CEOs at DfE

Principle Social Workers Network

Irish Medical Council

National Practice Group

Think Ahead

Frontline

Ofsted

Professors of Social Work Network

International social work regulators network

Claire Coutinho MP Minister of Children, Families and Wellbeing

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Annual Report and Accounts 2022 to 2023

Agenda Item 9 Paper Ref 06

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

Author

Social Work England

Date

28 July 2023

Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Operational delivery - Open

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Summary

Social Work England's annual report and accounts 2022 to 23 were laid before Parliament on 18 July 2023.

2. Action required

The board is asked to note the laid annual report and accounts 2022 to 2023.

Social Work England
Annual Report and Accounts
2022 to 2023

2022
2023

Social
Work
England

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Social Work England
Annual Report and Accounts
For the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

A Non-Departmental Public Body

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

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 18 July 2023

HC 1648

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Overview from the chair and chief executive

Welcome to our annual report and accounts for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This report marks the end of our first 3 year corporate strategy as the specialist regulator of social work in England. Here we look back on this strategy, specifically in our third year. We reflect on our performance, what we've learned, and how we can improve.

This year has been one of transition. We've moved from startup to business as usual, bringing stability to our regulatory functions. We've stayed focused on closing legacy cases inherited from the Health and Care Professions Council (the HCPC). We've also gathered data on the types of concerns we receive. This will help inform our decision-making.

In fitness to practise, timeliness remains a challenge. We've grappled with a large volume of cases and delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, we've strengthened our processes and changed some of our rules and regulations. We also delivered a project to understand and address higher than anticipated referral rates.

Our registration renewal process demonstrates how effectively our services can run. This year, most social workers renewed on time. Most also met the new requirement to record 2 pieces of continuing professional development (CPD), demonstrating to the public that they remain capable of safe and effective practice. Through this process we gathered equality, diversity and inclusion

data from the majority of social workers. We now have a clearer picture than ever of our profession.

The national children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love, was launched by the government this year. Our presence on the implementation groups reflects our unique view of the profession. We look forward to helping to influence the impact of upcoming reform across children and adult services. Our approach to education and training, which we published in June, also aligns strongly with the government's strategy.

We know people look to us for insight into the profession. This year, we published our third Social work in England report. This 'state of the nation' report is the most comprehensive picture of the profession since it began in England. Together with our successful third Social Work Week, our goal is to spark a national conversation on the importance of social work.

Social workers are a direct line into the lives of millions of people, creating powerful potential for improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The pandemic and cost of living crisis are accelerating real demand for social change. We know, however, that the profession faces ever growing demands and recruitment and retention issues. It is therefore a challenge to achieve change on the required scale.

We're dedicated to listening to and working with the sector to find solutions.

As such, engagement and co-production are at the heart of all we do. Our National Advisory Forum remains essential in developing our work and holding us to account.

Following our [statement of intent](#) and [action plan](#), equality, diversity and inclusion are guiding principles of our new strategy. By engaging with the profession, we developed professional standards that include a focus on anti-oppressive practice. We're part of an anti-racism partnership to drive commitment from the sector. We will keep working to ensure our professional standards are embedded throughout the profession. We will continue to encourage social workers to exercise accountability and anti-racism in their practice and professional pathways.

2023 saw Lord Patel of Bradford OBE step down as chair of our board. Under Lord Patel's leadership, we established ourselves in partnership with the sector

and launched in 2019. He oversaw new rules and regulations, professional standards, fitness to practise processes, and registration and CPD requirements, amongst other changes. Each was a major step towards our objectives of raising standards in the profession, and improving public safety and confidence in social work.

We're confident that the work we've done so far has made an impact. We're pleased to have met 16 of the 18 standards in our third performance review by the Professional Standards Authority. This result is a reflection of continued hard work across the organisation to deliver long-term, positive change.

As we close one chapter, we begin another by moving forward with our new strategy. In our first 3 years we laid strong foundations. Now, we're ready to drive more change for the benefit of all who need social work in their lives.



Andrew McCulloch

Dr Andrew McCulloch
Interim Chair of the Board,
Social Work England



Colum Conway

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

Performance report



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Performance overview

The performance report explains who we are, our purpose, how we are organised and our performance against our objectives.

Overall, our performance for 2022 to 2023 was in line with what we set out to achieve in our [business plan](#) for the year. Page 18 to page 57 provide a detailed analysis.

Our purpose

Social Work England was established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ('the Act'). We are the single-profession regulator for social workers in England. Our powers and obligations are set out in part 2 of the Act and the Social Workers Regulations 2018 ('the Regulations'). The Regulations were amended on 16 December 2022, as set out in this published [briefing note](#). The changes covered a wide range of areas, including changes to our data sharing powers. Further details can be found on page 29.

We operate as a non-departmental public body and are classified as a central government organisation. We agreed our framework document with our sponsor 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. The Department of Health and Social Care has responsibility for adult social workers.

As stated in the Act, and like the other health and care regulators, our overarching objective is the protection of the public.

Our corporate strategy for 2020 to 2023 set out our strategic aims.

In pursuing our overarching objective we aim to (do all of the following):

- protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public
- promote and maintain public confidence in social workers in England
- promote and maintain professional standards for social workers in England

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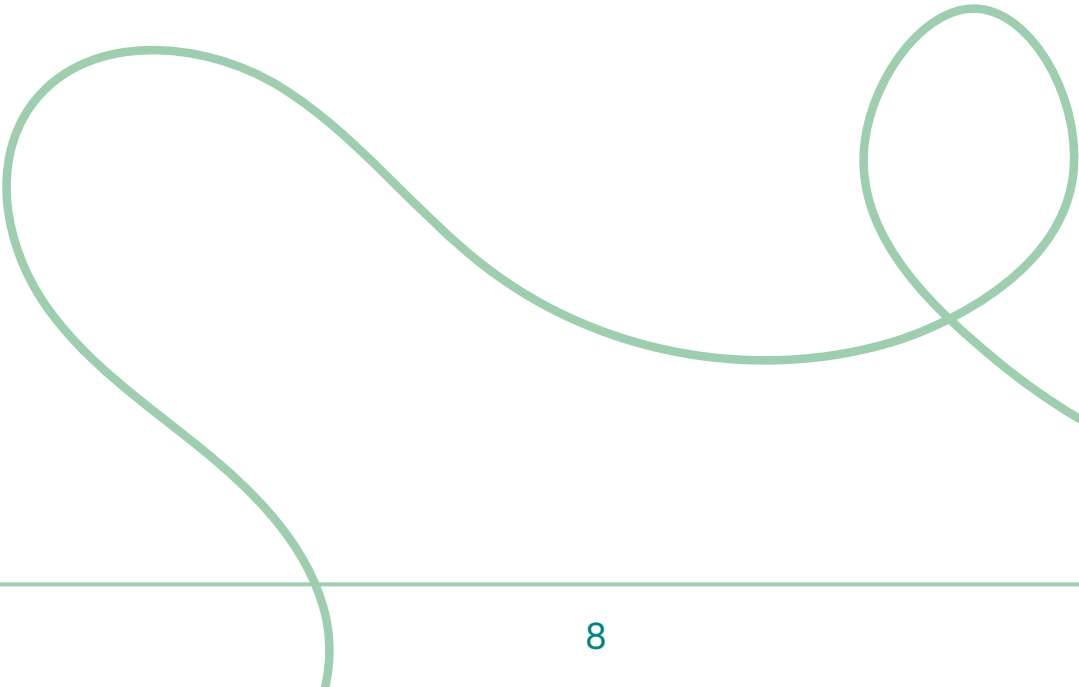
The Regulations detail the framework within which we regulate social workers. We're responsible for delivering key regulatory functions by (doing all of the following):

- setting profession-specific education and training standards and approving training courses
- setting profession-specific standards for fitness to practise
- maintaining a register of all social workers in England
- running a fitness to practise system
- monitoring and reporting on continuing professional development
- approving post qualifying courses and specialisms

The Regulations were amended on 16 December 2022, following consultation. The amendments reflected learning from our first 2 years of operation. They gave greater clarity to our processes, removed operational inefficiencies and addressed unintended anomalies in the original drafting. They covered a wide range of areas including changes to our data sharing powers. They allowed a social worker to voluntarily remove themselves from the register during fitness to practise processes, with our approval. Changes also streamlined our interim orders process.

Professional Standards Authority

The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care oversees our work alongside the work of other health and care regulators. They review and scrutinise our performance against their standards of good regulation. They also review our independent adjudicators' decisions on fitness to practise concerns.



Our leadership

Chief Executive



Colum Conway

People and Business
Support



Linda Dale
Executive Director

Regulation



Philip Hallam
Executive Director

Professional Practice and
External Engagement



Sarah Blackmore
Executive Director

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Our values

Our values shape and steer how we work. We're proud of our values and what they mean to us:

- **Fearless:** Influence and drive change where needed.
- **Independent:** Carry out our work without undue influence from anyone.
- **Ambitious:** Have high aspirations for the social work profession, for regulation and for ourselves.
- **Integrity:** Work with integrity in every aspect of our business.
- **Collaborative:** Work with experts in the social work profession.
- **Transparent:** Be honest and open about what we're doing and how we're doing it. Seek and act on feedback

Performance overview

Our corporate strategy for 2020 to 2023 set out our strategic ambitions to raise the standards of social work and education and training, deliver radically different regulation and to build confidence in the profession. It described how activity and impact would be measured across the following 5 key areas:

- Our regulatory approach
- Education and training
- The social work profession
- People we work with and for
- Our organisation

This year's annual report reflects on what we've achieved in the third and final year of our first corporate strategy.

Overall, our performance for 2022 to 2023 was in line with what we set out to achieve in our business plan for the year. Page 18 to page 57 provide a more detailed analysis.

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Our regulatory approach: Registration and renewal

- We achieved all of our targets for providing registration and advice in 2022 to 2023 and have continued to maintain an accurate public register of all social workers in England.
- 96,886 people completed their application to renew their registration as a social worker during the annual registration renewal period. This year, we increased our requirement for continuing professional development (CPD) from one to 2 pieces. We also asked for social workers’ diversity data to help us build a clearer understanding of the register. As at 31 March 2023, 93,949 or 94% of social workers in England had shared their diversity data. We’re now analysing this in more detail to ensure that our policies and processes are fair and equitable.
- In response to the pandemic in March 2020, the government gave us powers to temporarily register social workers, allowing previously registered social workers in England the opportunity to temporarily return to practise using the protected title of social worker. Temporary registration ended on 30 September 2022. 6,214 social workers who held registration on a temporary basis were removed from the register.
- We continue to receive a high number of applications to join our register from social workers who qualified overseas. The median time taken to process overseas applications has increased during the year. Additional resources are being invested to ensure applications can be processed more quickly.



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Our regulatory approach: Fitness to practise

- A significant area of focus this year has been to conclude the legacy caseload inherited from the Health and Care Professionals Council. We have maintained increased capacity in our fitness to practise service, using additional funding from the Department for Education to work through legacy cases. By 31 March 2023, the number of legacy cases has reduced to 134 cases from the original 1,459 cases. The remaining legacy cases will continue to take priority and we expect the majority to be completed in the first quarter of 2023 to 2024.
- We assessed 1,610 cases that were referred directly to us. We progressed 468 to case examination and closed 1,142 with no further action. Timeliness in progressing our cases to conclusion has remained a challenge, and over the course of the year we met 2 of our 5 fitness to practise targets. External factors that have contributed to this timeliness challenge have included pressures on the people and organisations from whom we need information as we investigate concerns. Pressures on the court system and the NHS have also limited our ability to progress our cases. We continue to expand our understanding of the number and nature of the concerns we receive and to refine how we manage these concerns at all stages of the fitness to practise process.

Education and training

- Our target was to make reapproval decisions on at least 33% of courses by 31 March 2023. We have almost met this target, reapproving 81 courses (31%) out of the 265 courses that needed reapproving. We remain on track to complete all reapproval inspections by the end of the 3-year cycle.
- We published our long-term plan for social work education and training in June 2022. It highlights 7 areas we're focusing on to improve quality, consistency and ensure that all social work graduates qualify with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet our professional standards. As a first step, we have developed and consulted on skills and behaviours statements that will eventually be part of our regulation.
- We appointed a practising social worker as an associate advisor in education and training, and established an education and training advisory forum to act as a critical friend and support us in implementing guidance

- We have drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals and approved mental capacity professionals. Introduction of the approved mental capacity professional role has, however, been delayed until after the end of the current Parliament. We have therefore paused further work on these standards and the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards framework will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

The social work profession

- Our third Social Work Week took place in March 2023 with almost 7,000 attendees joining our 19 headline sessions. The week represented a powerful moment, bringing professionals and people with lived experience together to learn, connect and influence change. For the first time, regulators from the 4 nations came together to present their experience of practice education and showcase the breadth of learning.
- Learning from our regulatory activities, engagement and research fed into our latest Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report, published in March 2023. The report was co-produced with our National Advisory Forum and shared what we've learned about the profession from our unique perspective as the regulator.
- We welcomed the publication of the children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love. We have joined the national practice group that will support and oversee implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard.

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The people we work with and for

- We recognise the pressure social workers have been operating under this year and the issues around recruitment and retention, agency work and supporting new social workers to thrive. We convened a workforce roundtable, inviting leaders from across the sector to consider solutions together.

Our organisation

- We achieved strong performance in responding to corporate complaints (99%), subject access requests (99.7%) and freedom of information requests (98%), but narrowly missed our stretching targets of 100% timeliness in these areas. We are reviewing the way we measure performance in future years.
- We launched our strategy for 2023 to 2026 in March 2023. Alongside our standard plain text and PDF versions, to make the strategy accessible to as many people as possible, we also published an introductory video and an easy read version.
- To ensure we're well placed to deliver our vision for the next strategy period, we've made several changes to our structure and organisation. We've introduced a new assistant director level to strengthen leadership capacity, re-organised our directorate structure, and introduced new arrangements for planning and performance management. We've also developed our first people strategy, data and insight strategy and sustainability plan for 2023 to 2026, aligned to our strategic vision.
- We recruited, trained and developed an additional 65 partners in the past 12 months, to provide the independent expertise and decision-making that we need

Key risks

- The primary risks in relation to our regulatory responsibilities, and the actions we have taken to manage and mitigate these risks, are summarised below. Our actions have kept key risks within our organisational tolerance this year. We expect to see further impacts in future years.

Title	What we've done to mitigate this risk in 2022 to 2023
We are unable to progress fitness to practise cases within reasonable timescales with existing resources	We continue to stress the importance of engaging with the fitness to practise process at an early stage. We've established single points of contact at local authorities across England. This network helps manage and respond to requests, so we can progress cases as quickly as possible. Early feedback suggests that it has had a positive impact on case progression. We offer local authorities the opportunity to learn how and when to refer fitness to practise concerns to us. And we've created guidance to assist these officers.
We fail to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications to register in a timely way	We've made improvements to our registration and renewal processes, ensuring that our systems were fully operational and able to respond to peak times of demand. We've increased capacity to process overseas applications to join our register.
Our education quality assurance process is not robust enough to identify poor quality provision	We've consulted on readiness for professional practice guidance, new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals and set up a social work education and training advisory forum to advise on key developments.
Our governance and assurance frameworks are not robust enough to enable good and transparent decision-making	We've further developed our assurance framework and agreed an implementation plan for 2023 to 2024. We've reviewed and amended our internal governance meetings to strengthen accountability.
We fail to understand and respond to changes in the external environment	We've established a policy committee to discuss strategic, political and workforce changes. We've convened a national roundtable to look at workforce issues within social work. We've joined the national practice group that will support and oversee the implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard, and we will remain engaged in this work and continue to explore implications for our future role as regulator.

More detail on our corporate risks can be found in the accountability report on page 58.

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Measuring and reporting our progress

We measure progress against our objectives (in all the following ways):

- The executive leadership team track performance and milestones on a monthly and quarterly basis, including against key performance indicators.
- Our board reviews our performance quarterly.
- Our quality assurance team conducts process reviews and internal audits to ensure that our departments and regulatory functions operate effectively and align with our statutory purpose to protect the public.
- Our regular Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings support the board in their responsibilities by providing assurance in the areas of audit, risk management, governance and internal control.
- 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.
- We continue to engage with the Professional Standards Authority¹. They conducted a monitoring review this year, rather than a full performance review. We met 16 of the 18 standards of good regulation including, for the first time, the standard on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 2 standards we didn’t meet related to our fitness to practise function, on both the time taken to conclude cases and the time taken to make decisions regarding interim orders. Changes we have made this year to our legal framework, and to our processes, will assist in addressing these issues.

¹ Authority Performance Reviews - PSA professionalstandards.org.uk

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Looking ahead

Our new strategy, developed in partnership with people with lived and learned experience of social work builds on the achievements, challenges and learning from the organisation’s first 3 years. The strategy focuses on 3 main areas where we aim to have an impact on the next stage of our journey:

- 1. Prevention and impact
- 2. Regulation and protection
- 3. Delivery and improvement

Next year we look forward to building on our establishment as a regulator. We will continue to work determinedly to resolve challenges around timeliness in case progression for our fitness to practise operation. This will include working closely with our sponsor department to explore how best to improve on reducing the number of cases awaiting hearing. By the end of June, we will have concluded our project to progress the outstanding legacy caseload we inherited. This means we can focus on managing our own caseload, driven by our own targets and measures of success as set out in our business plan.

We will focus on continuous improvement of the approaches and systems which underpin our work. Key to this are our digital services through which so much of our engagement with the public and the profession takes place.

Our new people strategy will help us attract and retain the talent we need to deliver the ambitions in our business plan and for our new strategy. Along with our equality, diversity and inclusion plan, our people strategy will also enhance our role as a diverse and inclusive employer that puts people at the heart of change.

In supporting the implementation of the government's ‘Stable Homes, Built on Love’ strategy, we will look to explore the role of regulation and be innovative as part of the implementation process over the next few years. We will have a strong focus on education and training, ensuring our education and quality assurance process is reviewed and improved. We will implement our strategy in this area, build the advisory group and ensure a strong vision and ambition for education and training into the future.

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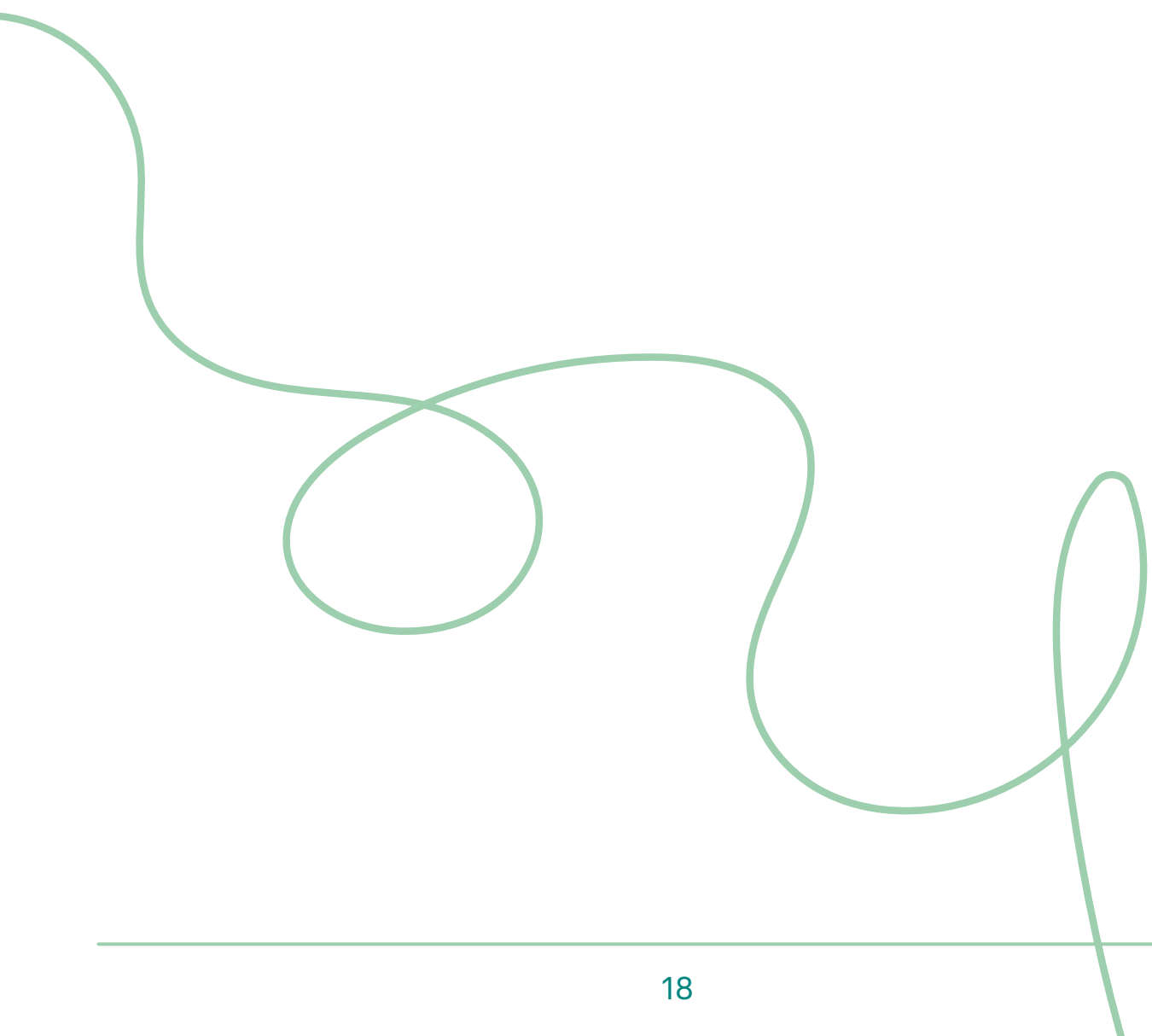
Performance analysis

This section provides an analysis of our performance. We've been working to the ambitions set out in our strategy for 2022 to 2023.

Being the regulator is a privilege and carries responsibilities. We operate within a clear legislative framework and choose to be guided by 2 main principles:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to all that we do.
- We listen, engage and co-produce with those directly influenced by our work.

These principles are embedded in our work across the year and we highlight examples throughout this performance analysis.



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1. Our regulatory approach

Strategic ambition:

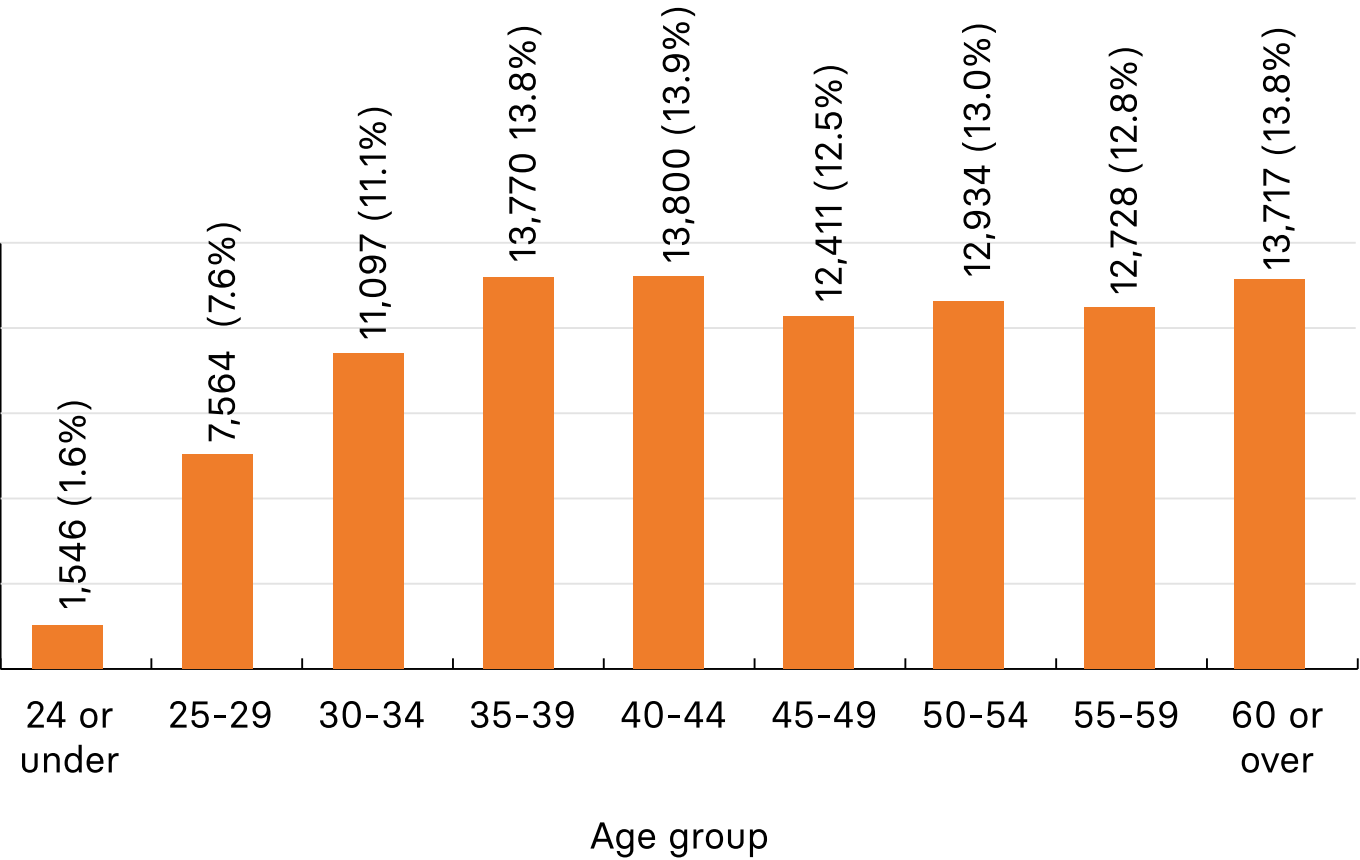
- A new regulatory approach – we will learn, reflect and test boundaries
- Collaborate and engage, developing understanding and leadership in regulation

The social work register

All social workers who want to work in England must be registered. We’re responsible for maintaining an accurate and up to date public register of social workers in England.

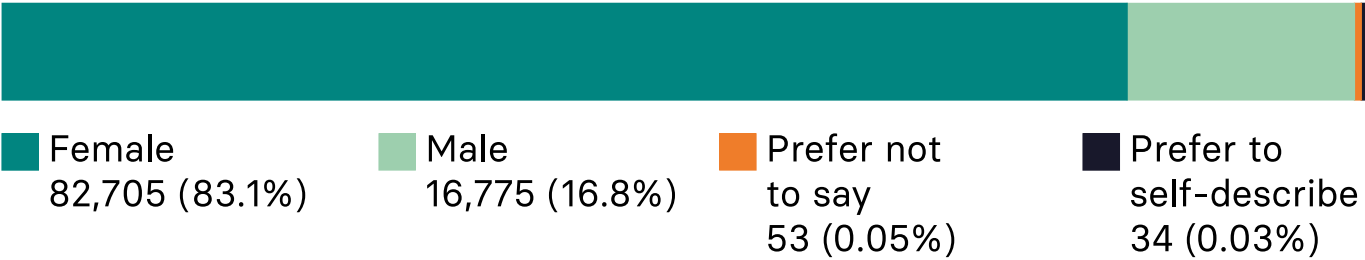
The register constantly changes as people join and leave the profession. Pages 19 to 21 provide a snapshot of the profession from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Number of social workers by age



Social workers by gender identity

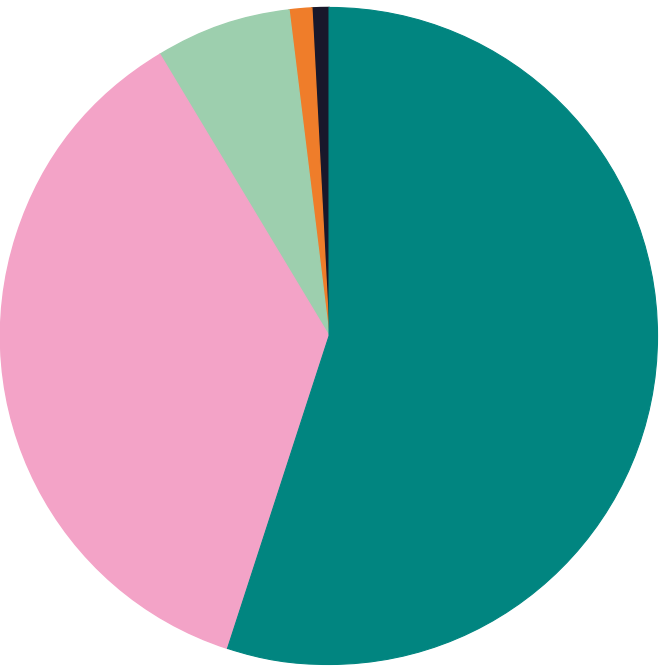
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



Leavers data

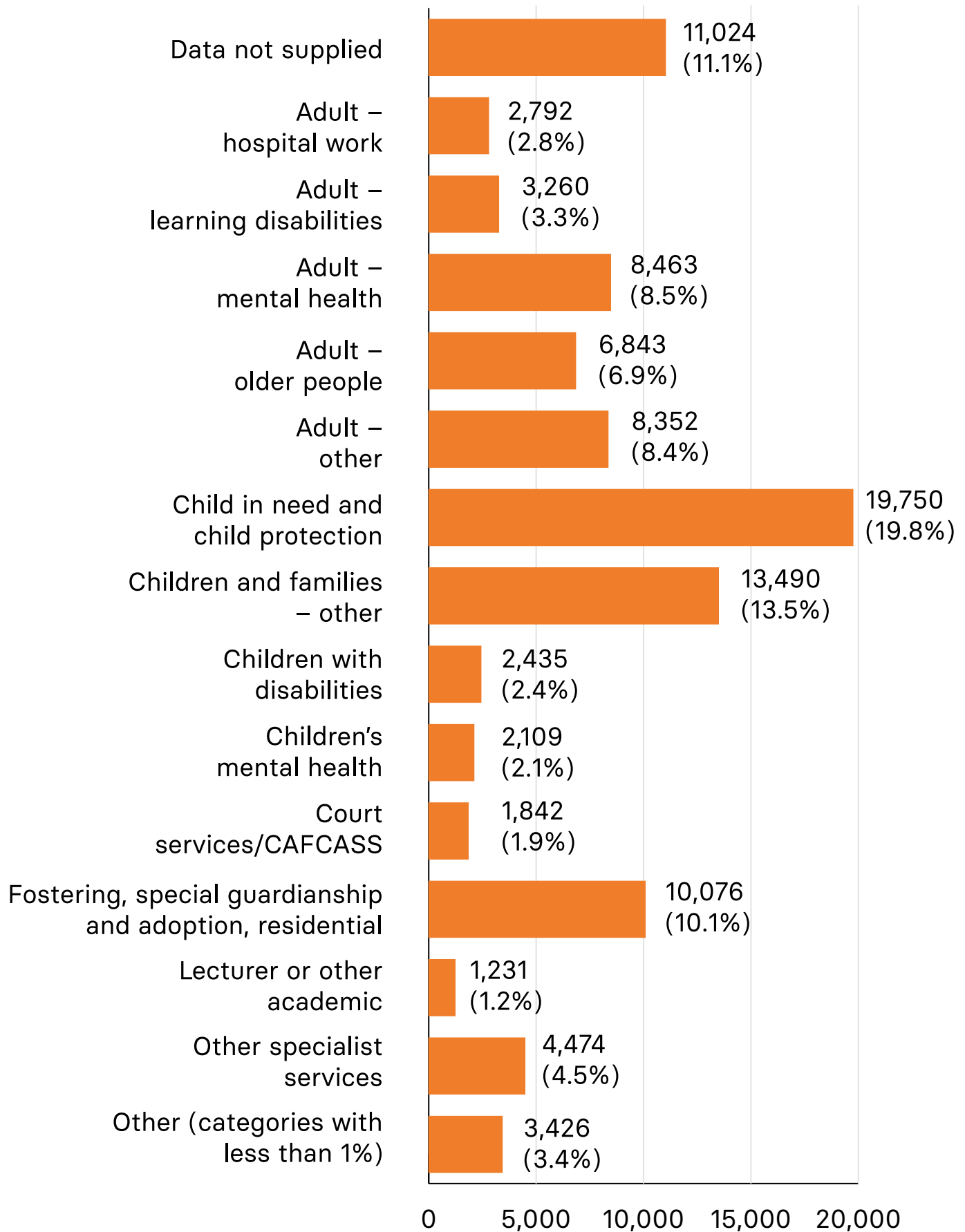
Reasons for leaving (grouped):

Total number of leavers 6,299



- Social workers no longer registered - failed to renew 3,470 (55.1%)
- Social workers no longer registered - voluntary removal 2,283 (36.2%)
- Social workers no longer registered - failed to meet CPD requirements 431 (6.8%)
- Social workers no longer registered - removed 70 (1.1%)
- Other – Deceased, fraudulent entry, administrative reasons 45 (0.7%)

Number and percentage of social workers by area of practice



Diversity data

This year we asked for social workers' diversity data to help us build a clearer understanding of the register. We can only make decisions and accurately reflect the social work profession based on the data we hold.

As at 31 March 2023, 93,949 or 94% of social workers in England had shared their diversity data. In our early analysis we compared the data with the [Census 2021 for England and Wales](#). We published this comparison in our [Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report](#). We're now analysing the data in more detail. This is to ensure that our policies and processes are fair and equitable.

Annotations

We annotate the register to show which social workers have told us they practise as (either, or both of the following):

- an approved mental health professional (AMHP)
- a best interests assessor (BIA)

It is not mandatory for social workers to request an annotation. Social workers have been able to request an annotation since 2 December 2019. By 31 March 2023, 1,803 social workers on our register held one annotation (or both).

We drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals. We also drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental capacity professionals, the successor qualification to best interests assessor (BIA).

Please note: on 5 April 2023 the Department of Health and Social Care announced a delay in the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards framework. This framework includes the introduction of the approved mental capacity professional role. It is being delayed until after the end of the current Parliament. We have therefore paused any further work on these standards, pending any further update from the government. The existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards framework will remain in place for the foreseeable future. We will be setting out plans shortly around our regulatory support for the best interests assessor role under this framework.

Temporary registration

In response to the pandemic in March 2020, the government gave us powers to temporarily register social workers. Social workers previously registered in England could temporarily return to practise using the protected title of social worker.

Temporary registration ended on 30 September 2022. 6,214 temporary registrants were removed from the register.

Registration

Registration renewal – 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022

Social workers are required to renew their registration with us on an annual basis. This allows us to ensure information about those on our register is up to date. It also demonstrates to the public that social workers continue to be capable of safe and effective practice. This year, 96,886 people completed their application to renew their registration during the renewal period.

3,773 people did not renew their registration by the deadline. This number is consistent with previous years. We removed these people from the register. This is because they (did one of the following):

- chose not to renew their registration
- didn't complete all 3 renewal steps, causing their registration to lapse
- voluntarily removed themselves from the register

6,753 social workers joined the register.

Misuse of title

When we receive information that suggests that someone may be using the protected title of social worker in England whilst not on our register, we are required to investigate. In the last year, there were 164 of these misuse of title cases (up 45% on the previous year). Cases included people who continued to practise after being removed from the register at the end of the registration renewal period. It also included those who continued to practise after the end of temporary registration.

Anyone can tell us about possible misuse of title, and we continue to receive concerns from members of the public as well as employers. None of the misuse of title cases we investigated this year met our threshold to prosecute in line with our prosecution policy.

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Continuing professional development (CPD) and CPD review

This year we increased our CPD requirement from one to 2 pieces. We also added the requirement to reflect on CPD with a peer, reinforcing the importance of peer reflection and supervision.

These changes demonstrate the following 2 parts of the CPD standard:

- Using supervision (standard 4.2)
- Contributing to an open learning culture (standard 4.5)

The number of social workers renewing their registration was not affected by the increase in CPD requirements.

Each year we carry out a CPD review and randomly select 2.5% of social workers. A team of 10 independent assessors did our most recent CPD review between January and March 2023.

Overseas applicants

During the 2021 to 2022 registration year, we received 1,685 applications from overseas applicants. This was up 67% from 2020 to 2021. Over half of these applications came from the following 3 countries:

- South Africa
- Zimbabwe
- India

Our registration and advice team maintain a list of overseas social work qualifications that we’ve assessed since becoming the regulator. This list now includes 592 qualifications that we’re confident are comparable to those available in England.

Registration and advice

Over the last year, our registration and advice team have delivered a consistent service to enquirers, applicants and social workers. They managed:

- 36,672 phone calls
- 25,691 emails

It took us a median of 8 minutes to answer phone calls and a median of 2 working days to respond to emails.

It is not mandatory to include category data for phone calls or emails in our system. However, we have category information for 12,416 (34%) of the phone calls received. The majority, 9,364 (75%), of these phone calls were about registration.

We have category data for 11,163 (43%) of the emails we received. The majority of these emails, 7,958 (71%), were about registration.

Fitness to practise

On 1 April 2022, there were 2,115 open fitness to practise cases.

We've dedicated significant focus to conclude the legacy caseload inherited from the HCPC. We have maintained increased capacity in our fitness to practise service, using additional funding from the Department for Education. By 31 March 2023, we reduced the number of legacy cases to 134 cases (from the original 1,459).

The following sections show (both of the following):

- the volume of activity during the year
- the proportion of cases that progress to each stage of the fitness to practise process

All numbers are based on cases that we concluded during the year (meaning we know the final outcome). This includes cases that we started in previous years.

Social Work England cases (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023)

We made 1,610 assessment decisions across the pre-triage and triage stages of our fitness to practise process. Of these:

- 468 decisions were to progress cases to the case examination stage
- 1,142 decisions were to close cases with no further action

Case examiners made 525 decisions. Of these:

- 209 were to refer to a hearing
- 239 were to take no further action
- 77 were to close cases by means of accepted disposal

Where we found there was a realistic prospect of impairment at the case examination stage, we applied the following accepted disposal sanctions:

- a suspension order in 4 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 12 cases
- a warning order in 61 cases

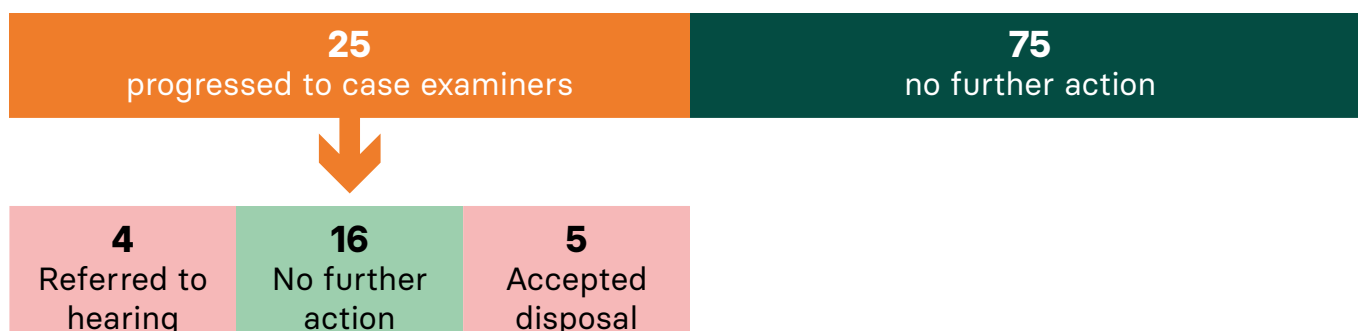
We decided 57 cases at hearings. Of these:

- we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired in 36 cases
- we found no impairment in 21 cases

Where we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following sanctions:

- a removal order in 10 cases
- a suspension order in 18 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 3 cases
- a warning order in 4 cases
- no further action in 1 case

For every 100 Social Work England cases where a final outcome is known



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Legacy cases (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023)

We made 216 assessment decisions at the investigations stage. Of these:

- 84 decisions were to progress cases to the case examination stage
- 132 were to close cases with no further action

Case examiners made 131 decisions on legacy cases over the year. Of these:

- 86 were to refer to a hearing
- 26 were to take no further action
- 19 were to close cases by means of accepted disposal

Where we found there was a realistic prospect of impairment at the case examination stage, we applied the following accepted disposal sanctions:

- a conditions of practice order in 3 cases
- a warning order in 16 cases

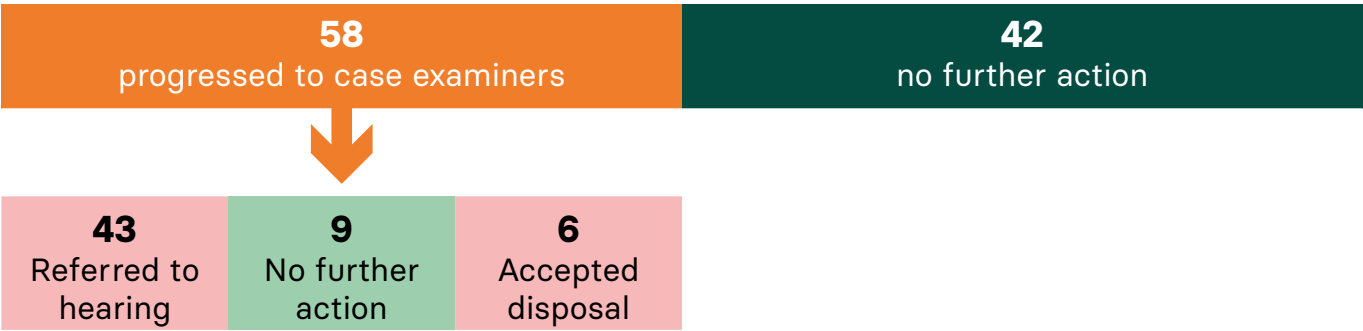
We decided 133 legacy cases at hearings. Of these:

- we found that the social worker’s fitness to practise was impaired in 90 cases
- we found no impairment in 43 cases

Where we found that the social worker’s fitness to practise was impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following sanctions:

- a removal order in 35 cases
- a suspension order in 37 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 12 cases
- a warning order in 3 cases
- no further action in 3 cases

For every 100 legacy cases where a final outcome is known



Reflecting on fitness to practise

Our fitness to practise function has expanded its understanding of the number and nature of the concerns we receive. We've continued to refine how we manage these concerns at all stages of the process.

This year we received 1,769 referrals, of which 1,461 have a known source. Of these:

- 339 were from employers of social workers
- 861 were from members of the public (primarily people who use the services of social workers)
- 261 were received from other sources

At the triage stage of our process, we referred 88% of the concerns we received from employers into our investigation process. 85% of referrals from the public were not appropriate for us to investigate in our role as the regulator. For example, we cannot (do either of the following):

- influence court proceedings
- investigate concerns about social care services or employers of social workers

On our website we are clear about the types of concern we can consider.

Timeliness in the fitness to practise process has remained a challenge this year. External factors have contributed to this challenging situation. For example, pressures on (all of the following):

- the people and organisations we need to source information from
- the court system
- the NHS

Legacy cases from the HCPC continued to account for a significant part of our work this year. With additional funding, we increased the number of hearings held in the second half of the year. This helped us work towards our goal to bring these cases to conclusion.

We continue to stress the importance of engaging with the fitness to practise process at an early stage. We operate case reviews to assist social workers who have restrictions on their practice. In doing so we support them to successfully demonstrate when they have remediated the concerns that led to their restrictions.

Case study

Supporting a social worker through case review

We inherited a number of fitness to practise cases from the HCPC. One case involved a social worker with an interim conditions of practice order. The social worker had breached their conditions so our case review team called for an early review.

The hearing panel upheld the order, calling for increased supervision and reflection. At the final hearing, the panel found minimal evidence of remediation and risk of a repeat incident and so they imposed a suspension order.

The social worker was initially disengaged however we gave them extra support to engage with the recommendations of the reviewing panel. At the next review, the social worker produced a wealth of evidence of reflection, reading and CPD. From this, it was clear that the social worker was able to look beyond how their misconduct impacted on themselves. They now understood how their actions affected the reputation of their profession.

The panel determined that the social worker had demonstrated full insight and accountability. They said: "We (the panel) bore in mind that there is a public interest in allowing a competent social worker to return to work, and this was a social worker who was passionate about the role." So they concluded that the suspension order should lapse upon expiry.

With our support, this social worker was able to show considerable, genuine improvements and return to unrestricted practice.

Changes to our legal framework

Over the year we consulted on amendments to our rules on fitness to practise and registration. We also worked with the Department for Education on amendments to the Regulations. Learning from our first 3 years of operation informed these changes.

Amendments to rules on electronic communication and remote hearings (April 2022)

We consulted on and implemented amendments to (all of the following):

- our fitness to practise rules
- the removal from the register rules
- our registration appeals rules

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we changed our hearings processes to send notices electronically and hold hearings remotely. Our amendments made these changes permanent.

Further amendments to our rules (July 2022)

These changes covered a broad range of measures to streamline our regulatory processes.

They introduced a route to discontinue an allegation before it reaches the adjudicators. They also brought the requirements for restoring a social worker to the register after time away from practice or education, in line with registration requirements.

We also consulted on how we might use legally qualified chairs in our fitness to practise proceedings.

Amendments to regulations and further amendments to our rules (December 2022)

The Department for Education consulted on changes to our Regulations from March to May 2022, publishing their response in August. Following this consultation, we further changed our rules to reflect the changes in the Regulations.

We refreshed and published 21 pieces of guidance to support our revised legal framework. The changes to our Regulations, rules and guidance came into effect on 16 December 2022.

The changes covered a wide range of areas. They included changes to our data sharing powers. They allowed a social worker to voluntarily remove themselves from the register during fitness to practise processes, with our approval. Changes also streamlined our interim orders process.

Case review team

Our case review team support and monitor (both of the following):

- suspended social workers
- social workers with conditions of practice on their registration

It's sometimes possible for a social worker to return to unrestricted practice if they demonstrate remediation. This means showing us how they've addressed the concerns that led to restrictions on their practice.

67 social workers returned onto the register at the end of their cases this year. This success indicates the value of the support we offer social workers with remediation.

The wider landscape and ensuring appropriate referrals

We ran activities to better understand how local authorities manage complaints about social workers locally. We also wanted to improve

the way we engage social work employers in the fitness to practise process.

We've established single points of contact at local authorities across England. This single point of contact network helps manage and respond to requests, so we can progress cases as quickly as possible. Early feedback suggests that it has had a positive impact on case progression.

The network (does all of the following):

- improves communication and access to the documents we need for our investigations
- improves employer oversight of investigations involving their employees
- helps us better understand the context of concerns
- allows us to more easily access information about the social worker's practice

To engage on a local level, we've also set up a network of local authority designated officers. The purpose of the network is to disseminate our key messages across England. They also ensure referrals are not made too early or unnecessarily. This is to support our work to ensure we are receiving appropriate referrals.

We offer local authorities the opportunity to learn how and when to refer fitness to practise concerns to us. And we've created guidance to assist these officers. Together we've also agreed principles on the most useful time for the network to invite us to key information sharing meetings.

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**

Our approach to education and training

We approve and monitor all new and existing qualifying social work courses in England. This includes (all of the following):

- undergraduate degrees
- postgraduate degrees
- apprenticeships
- fast track courses

In our reapproval of courses, we've spoken to (all of the following):

- students
- course leaders
- placement providers
- practice educators
- employers
- people with lived experience of social work

We found out what is working well and identified some challenges.

We learned that course providers deal with a confusing landscape, with multiple frameworks, guidance and requirements from different organisations.

To address this issue, we published our long-term plan for social work education and training in June 2022. It highlights 7 areas we're focusing on to improve quality and consistency. Work towards reforming qualifying education is part of our new strategy. Our goal is that all social work graduates will qualify with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet our professional standards.

We appointed a practising social worker as an associate advisor in education and training. He helped us develop our approach for 2023 to 2026.

Our first step was to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours statements, which will eventually be part of our regulation. They include a specific focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and anti-oppressive practice. We held a public consultation and published the response in January 2023.

Social work education and training advisory forum

We invited anybody involved in social work education and training to express their interest in joining our new forum. We appointed representatives from across the sector, including (all of the following):

- social workers
- course providers
- employers
- organisations
- practice educators
- people with lived experience of social work

The independent forum acts as a critical friend. They offer insight and expertise, as well as a link to stakeholders. They'll support us in implementing guidance for course providers.

Practice education

Our 2021 education and training standards require social work students in England to spend at least 200 days learning in practice settings. The role of the practice educator is fundamental to this standard. They teach, supervise and assess students on placement.

We want to develop a closer relationship with practice educators by (doing all of the following):

- assuring their training
- supporting their practice
- ensuring the suitability and competence of social workers in this role

Our research shows practice educators want a relationship with us and welcome greater recognition. This year we commissioned further research into their role in preparing future professionals.

The government published the 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' strategy in response to 3 independent reviews of children's social care. This strategy reflects our ambitions for practice educators. We've discussed its education and training elements with the Department for Education, including a new early career framework. We'll continue to liaise with the department closely on the strategy.

Quality assurance of social work courses

We completed the first year of our initial 3 year reapproval cycle in August 2022. We're currently delivering the second year of reapprovals, ending August 2023.

As of 31 March 2023 there were 83 providers of qualifying courses, delivering a combined total of 297 courses. The number of courses has remained stable over the last 3 years.

Our target was to make reapproval decisions on at least 33% of courses by 31 March 2023. We have almost met this target, reapproving 81 courses (31%) out of the 265 courses that needed re-approving.

Our education quality assurance team delivered 48 inspections this year, covering 129 courses. They conducted 28 of these inspections remotely.

The team inspect alongside partner inspectors, including (all of the following):

- lay inspectors
- registered social workers
- approved mental health professionals
- best interest assessors

Inspections help us understand how courses are embedding equality, diversity and inclusion. We want students from all backgrounds to feel encouraged to train as social workers. They should have consistent experiences and achieve consistent outcomes.

Our 2021 standards introduced the requirement for course design and delivery to involve people with lived experience of social work.

Our inspections and annual monitoring process help us remain up to date, identify innovation and highlight best practice. Before we became the regulator, some courses had not been inspected for several years. The majority of course providers have welcomed our input and together we've built positive relationships.

Our robust approach means students can feel confident their course will prepare them for practice. The public can also feel confident that all new social workers in England are trained to a consistent standard.

Case study

Co-production in higher education

Courses must provide opportunities for students to learn from the diversity of the communities they will work with. This requirement is set out in our [2021 education and training standards](#).

Effective co-production ensures that curriculums are evidence based and continually evolving.

At Anglia Ruskin University, the Service User and Carer Involvement group brings together people with lived and learned experience of social work.

They work together on co-producing core modules, revalidation and course development. Members of the Service User and Carer Involvement group (do all of the following):

- sit on admissions panels
- take part in practical exercises, reflection sessions and assessments
- co-produce research papers and training

The group's oversight and leadership means co-production is embedded across the university's several sites and social work courses. It's a valued part of the student journey, from day one to graduation. Students learn a relationship-based approach to practice, and are prepared for their placements.

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3. The social work profession

Strategic ambition:

- Create a different approach to standards and professional development
- Provide a picture of social work in England

Publications

In March 2023, we published our Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report. Learning from our regulatory activities, engagement and research all fed into the report.

In the report, we share what we’ve learned about the profession from our unique perspective as the regulator. We hope it will inform national conversations on the importance of social work.

Co-production is about giving people who are affected by our work the opportunity to participate in and influence our work. We co-produced the report with the social work profession. In particular, members of our National Advisory Forum were key to producing the report. They also wrote an open letter thanking the profession, acknowledging good practice and sharing words of encouragement.

We will carry on sharing outputs, insights and data from the report over the next year.

Case study

Shaping our state of the nation report

As with the first 2 reports, co-production was once again at the heart of developing our latest Social work in England report [state of the nation report](#).

Our steering group included colleagues from across the organisation and volunteers from our National Advisory Forum. The group agreed we needed to talk to the people the report is about.

We facilitated 2 online events for the profession and public to share their experiences and priorities. Our regional engagement leads also ran separate events. Through these conversations, the themes and structure of the report began to take shape.

Our National Advisory Forum and regional engagement leads used their contacts to source a wide range of case studies highlighting other people’s experiences of social work.

We’re proud to have published a co-produced report, which reflects the voice of both the profession, and people with lived experience. After publication, we also co-produced a Social Work Week session with members of the National Advisory Forum at which they shared findings from the report and the process behind it.



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CO-PRODUCTION **COLLABORATION** **ACTION**

TRAINING 297 PROGRAMS

Committed to creating a **LEARNING COMMUNITY**

CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITIES of COVID

INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY + CULTURAL SENSITIVITY KEY!

Employers, Practitioners/ students, Those with LIVED experience

SOCIAL WORKERS

Ongoing challenges of COVID

100,654 SOCIAL WORKERS WHO ARE MORE DIVERSE than GENERAL POPULATION

VACANCIES, COMPLEX NEEDS, ↑ PRICES, ↑ REFERRALS

LEARNING

CPD 220,937 pieces of CPD

Co-Production

National Advisory Forum, In REGULATION + POLICY, In EVENTS, In PRACTICE

2.3 per SOCIAL WORKER, TRAINING MOST POPULAR

This illustration was first produced by Nifty Fox during Social Work Week in March 2023.

Research

Our research continues to strengthen our approach to consultation and regulatory functions.

In January 2023, we commissioned research into (all of the following):

- public perceptions of the social work profession
- attitudes toward us as regulator
- the professional standards

We expect the outcomes in summer 2023. We will compare the data with [similar research](#) we published in May 2020. We'll then see how perceptions have evolved and use the insight to inform future plans.

We've also commissioned research into issues affecting workforce recruitment and retention. This will help us to better understand vacancies across the sector. We want to know how workplace culture affects employers' abilities to recruit and retain employees. Workforce pressures could increase levels of risk to the public, so the outcomes will be important to our future approach. We'll evaluate this research in the next year. It will feed into our objective of collaborating with sector leaders, to develop a clear and shared understanding of risks to the public. We can then agree how to manage those risks.

Policy

Our policy work interprets, shapes and influences the environments in which we regulate. Across the year, we responded to developments in politics, Parliament and legislation. Our new policy committee is a sub-committee of our board and offers scrutiny of our work.

We welcomed the publication of the children's social care strategy: 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. We also welcomed the opportunity to be part of the national practice group. The government established this group to support and oversee their implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard. We'll respond to the formal government consultations in the first quarter of 2023 to 2024.

We've continued to seek views from the profession, expert groups and the public to inform our work. During the year we delivered 6 consultations, on areas including (all of the following):

- our next strategy
- amendments to our rules
- new guidance on required knowledge, skills and behaviours required for social work practice
- draft standards for approving specialist social work courses

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We recognise the pressure that social workers have been operating under this year. We’ve witnessed the issues around recruitment and retention, agency work and supporting new entrants to thrive. Each of these issues poses a risk to the effectiveness of social work.

We welcomed leaders from across the sector to our workforce roundtable to consider solutions together. The group includes representatives from government, employers and professional bodies. They’ll now meet every 6 weeks, with sub-groups focused on (each of the following):

- recruitment
- retention of experienced staff
- agency and other working practices

Internally, we continue to monitor relevant sector and world developments. We highlight how they affect our work in our regular internal policy summaries. Our policy leads engage with leadership and management throughout the year and manage any potential regulatory risks.

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

Working with the sector

We share common goals with those we regulate. We all want to protect the public, enable positive change and improve people’s lives. It’s vital to our success that we have ongoing conversations with the profession.

As well as listening to social workers, we use these conversations to feed back to the sector. They’re an opportunity to share our learning, understanding and ideas for taking the profession forward. Staying informed, engaged, and close to issues of regulatory risk helps us find collective, long-term solutions.

This year we’ve focused on promoting the value we add to the profession. We’ve also worked to increase our visibility as the specialist regulator.

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We work closely with everyone with an interest in social work. This includes (all of the following):

- people with lived experience of social work
- social workers
- social work students
- stakeholders
- networks
- principal social workers

This year, we (did all of the following):

- hosted 3 national roundtables to examine workforce recruitment and retention
- established an education and training advisory forum
- invited other organisations to join the anti-racist steering group
- had a stand and presented at the Community Care Live conference
- presented to mental health student social workers at Think Ahead summer institute
- presented on education and training at the Skills for Care Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (AYSE) conference
- presented at the Professional Standards Authority’s Safer Care for All conference
- presented at the National Organisation of Practice Teaching conference
- presented at the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services conference on our work on workforce issues

National Advisory Forum

Our National Advisory Forum is a group of people with lived and learned experience that acts as a critical friend. They offer support and challenge to our work, providing a depth of insight into people’s experiences and expectations of social work practice. We value, respect and consider the contribution and view of each member equally.

This year, we have involved the forum in nearly 50 pieces of work. The forum has been involved in and strengthened the recruitment of 6 senior leadership roles. It also contributed to our policy programme, research commissioning and state of the nation report, business planning and development of our strategic plan. In addition, representatives actively participate in our policy committee and equality, diversity and inclusion steering group.

Case study

A summary of our year in co-production

Our National Advisory Forum was the main driving force behind our developments in co-production this year. This includes:

- forming our new strategy
- planning, delivering and evaluating Social Work Week 2023
- securing strong representation on our new policy committee
- developing and delivering co-production training

The forum recently published an article in the British Journal of Social Work titled ‘Knocking on the Regulator’s Door ... or is It an Open Door?’. The excerpt below reflects the impact of co-production on individuals involved.

“Being involved in the group has been very eye-opening. I’ve become aware of issues within social work practice that I didn’t know existed. Efforts to address issues by the organisation and the fact that so many voices (like mine) are listened to, when making decisions on those issues is very liberating.

“Realising I could have a say in real-world issues that affect me and others like me, has gone a long way in helping me feel more secure in the systems set up for my welfare. And being able to feedback my own experiences into those systems, reminds me that my experiences are valued and could hopefully help someone else in the future.

“Since joining the National Advisory Forum and beginning my journey in co-production, I am a far more confident person and no longer feel as alone as I once did in the early days of my career in disability awareness.”

Next year, we’ll recruit new members, develop a second round of training and work in new ways with co-production partners.

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Social Work Week 2023

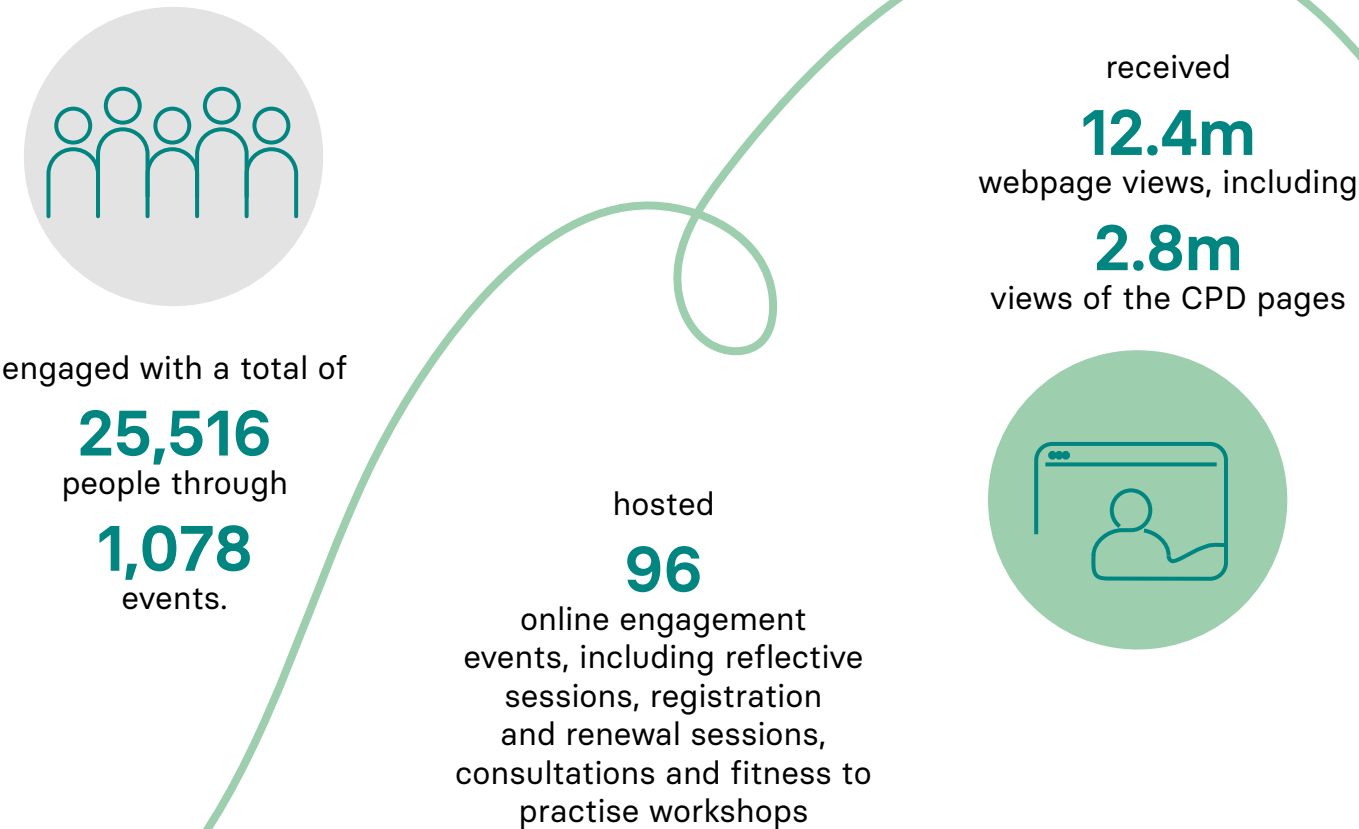
The impact of Social Work Week has continued to grow year on year. Coinciding with World Social Work Day in March, this year's event attracted attention from across the UK and internationally.

Almost 7,000 attendees joined our 19 headline sessions, an average of 363 at each. Our hashtag #SocialWorkWeek2023 reached 1.7 million social media users and trended on Twitter. The week represented a powerful moment, bringing professionals and people with lived experience together to learn, connect and influence change.

As well as elevating the profile of the profession, we used the week to explain our strategic aims. We listened to different perspectives and considered where we must collectively do better to prevent harm. Equality, diversity, and inclusion were core themes, and we examined how we can create forward movement on tackling racism.

Communications and engagement

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, through our communications and engagement activity, we (did all of the following):



reviewed and
published over

40

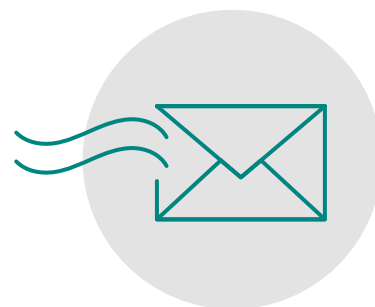
pieces of new or
revised guidance and
policies



responded to

82

media enquiries



sent 7 editions of
our newsletter,
which at the 31
March 2023 had a
total of

88,470
subscribers

were referenced in

263

positive and neutral
media stories

grew our
stakeholder
contacts to
include

619

organisations and
2,008
individuals

kept key
stakeholders
up to date with
significant
moments with

42

mailshots



spoke at

9

national
conferences and
events



saw our Twitter
followers grow by

14%



saw our LinkedIn
followers grow by

25%

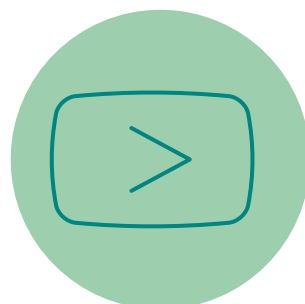
published

43

videos on
YouTube, with

60,700

views across the
channel



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5. Our organisation

Strategic ambition:

- Encourage innovative approaches across all areas of our work
- Promote a positive culture focused on improvement and co-production

Changes to our organisation

To ensure we’re well placed to deliver our vision for the next strategy period, we’ve made several changes. These include (all of the following):

- introducing an assistant director level to strengthen leadership capacity
- restructuring from 4 directorates to 3 with new responsibilities and accountabilities
- developing new arrangements for planning and performance management to improve accountability

Our board has also changed. The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE stepped down as chair on 28 February 2023. The Secretary of State for Education appointed existing deputy chair Andrew McCulloch as interim chair for up to one year, commencing 1 March 2023.

Our people

Over the last year, our organisation grew from 225 people to 256. The Department for Education supported this growth by providing additional funding. We used this funding to close legacy fitness to practise cases inherited from the HCPC.

We saw 29 internal promotions and 6 lateral moves. We continued to meet our target retention rate of 85%, reflecting our ongoing commitment to our people.

We carried out our third people engagement survey this year. We used a new methodology that helps us compare with other public sector organisations. The survey achieved an overall engagement score of 76%. This is above the average for public sector organisations (65%). The results shows that our people have a high level of engagement and are generally motivated in the workplace.

70% would recommend Social Work England as a great place to work.

Our lowest scoring areas were in (both of the following):

- access to tools and systems
- how leaders connect to the daily reality of people’s work

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These scores were still above the public sector average. Our directorates and teams undertook comprehensive engagement to develop the planned actions in response to the survey.

Aligned with our new strategy, we also developed our first people strategy. We co-produced this through discussions with both internal and external stakeholders.

Rewarding our people

We continued to improve our rewards package. This helps with retention and keeps us competitive as an employer. See the remuneration and staff report on page 74 for details.

We enhanced our peer-to-peer recognition scheme. This included encouraging our people to consider innovation, equality and diversity in their nominations.

We also introduced new employee benefits this year. These include a benefits portal offering discounts from retailers, and a cycle to work scheme.

Equality, diversity and inclusion at work

We’ve signed up to the Mindful Business and Race at Work charters and built on our Disability Confident scheme.

We were proud to receive a bronze award for our Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion.

We’ve continued to champion and support a range of internal employee networks. Doing so ensures that we consider the lived experience of our people in our decision-making.

We launched workplace adjustment passports this year. These offer a flexible way to support employees with physical or mental health conditions, disabilities, and any other individual needs. We’ve also expanded our mental health first aiders programme.

Building a diverse workforce encourages trust and confidence in us as both regulator and employer. For this reason we asked employees to share equality and diversity data, details of which are in the remuneration and staff report on page 83.

We embedded our new approach to equality impact assessments, helping employees better assess the equality impact of their work. We saw an increase in these assessments for key products and services, including Social Work Week and regional engagement events.

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Learning and development

We expanded our learning and development platform, Grow, this year. We’ve (done both of the following):

- rolled Grow out to partners, sharing mandatory content and annual refresher training
- worked collaboratively with the Department for Education to create and deliver mandatory learning on fraud awareness

We relaunched a coaching programme for our operational leads, assistant directors and executive leadership team. We also launched our positive action mentoring programme to embrace and nurture diversity in our workforce. 35 people applied, and 17 mentoring partnerships are now in place. We’ve offered training and reflective sessions to applicants. We’ll evaluate the programme by the end of the coming year.

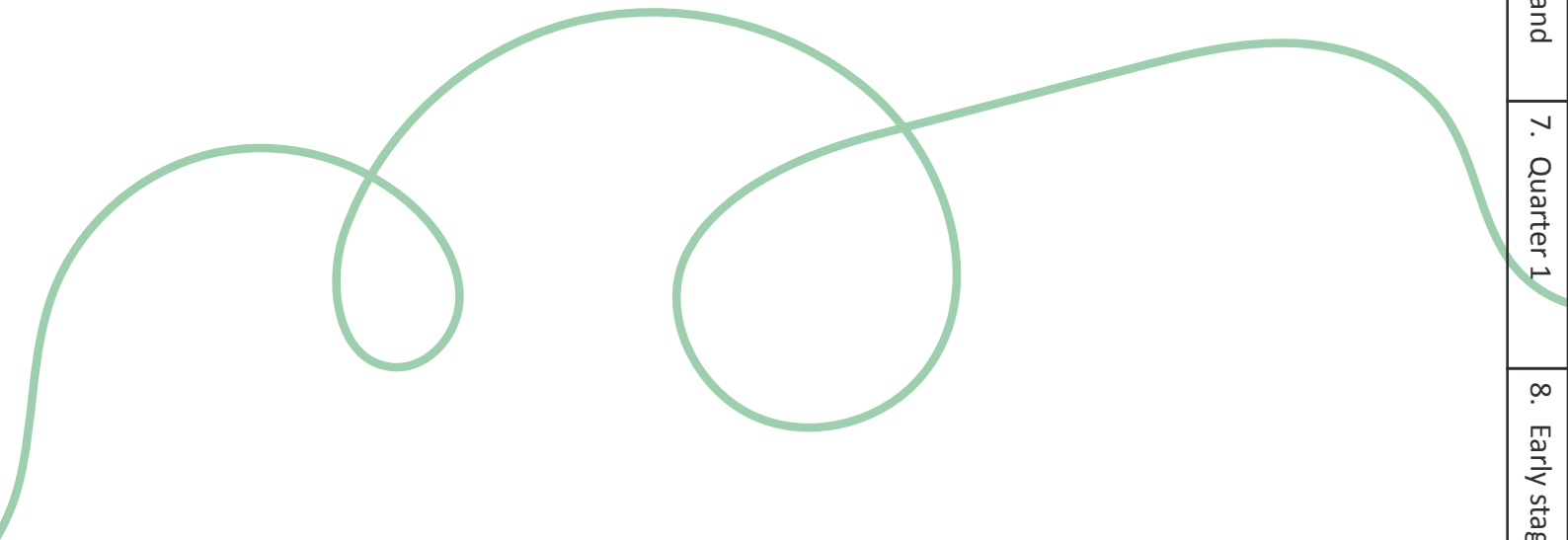
Feedback from positive action mentoring participant:

“Reciprocal mentoring has been a transformative experience for me. It’s incredible how much I’ve learned from my mentoring partner, as they always bring a fresh perspective that challenges my own assumptions.”

Our partners

Our partners are social workers, legal professionals and members of the public. They enable an objective approach to our decision-making by providing independent expertise, impartiality and transparency.

We recruited, trained and developed an additional 65 partners in the past 12 months.



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Freedom of information and individual data rights requests

Over the year we received 434 data rights requests that required a response within the reporting period. 430 were data subject access requests. The remainder included requests such as the erasure of personal data that we hold. We responded to 433 (99.8%), within the statutory timeframe, which is usually one month from receipt.

We also received 168 freedom of information requests that required a response. We responded to 165 (98%) within the statutory timeframe, which is usually 20 working days from receipt. Of the requests we received, we:

- did not hold the information for 80 (47.6%)
- held part of the information for 24 (14.3%)
- held all of the information for 64 (38.1%)

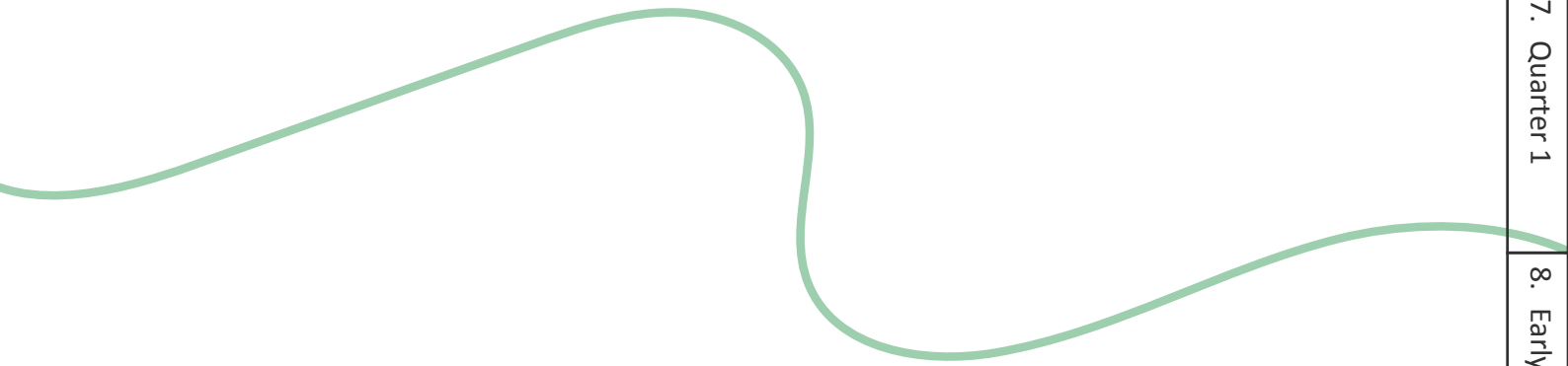
Where we held part or all the requested information, we disclosed it in full in response to 41 (46.6%). We applied an exemption on disclosure to part of the held information in 31 (35.2%), and in full in 16 (18.2%).

Digital services

We significantly changed our annual renewals process to enable us to collect equality and diversity data. We maintained 100% system capacity and functionality throughout our renewals period, giving social workers access up to the deadline date.

Based on learning over our first 3 years, we’ve improved our digital service delivery. We migrated our services onto our own cloud-based infrastructure platform, giving us more control, security and cost efficiency.

Following re-tendering, we appointed our digital services development partner for the next 4 years, ensuring service continuity and value for money.



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Case study

Developing our digital framework to improve our online services

Improving our digital delivery framework to align with Government Digital Services standards allowed us to overhaul our registration renewals service too.

Social workers’ equality, diversity and inclusion data had a low completion rate. We were aware that we needed to improve our understanding of these characteristics. So in May 2022 we decided to introduce a requirement that registrants provide this data.

Over the following 3 months we used our digital delivery framework to address low data capture by (doing all of the following):

- analysing and defining the problem
- designing a solution combining the services of data capture and renewal
- conducting user research with the National Advisory Forum
- using feedback to improve the design
- ensuring the proposed solution met General Data Protection Regulation
- refining the requirements to get the solution ready to develop
- planning delivery within very tight timescales
- testing the product against requirements and accessibility

We developed and tested the approach to ensure that it met requirements and was fully accessible. Rigorously following the framework kept us on track to deliver the system changes by the start of the renewal period.

By applying government service design principles, we streamlined 2 services into one. As a result, completion rates have risen from under 5% to 94.3%. It also gives us the benefit of having one less service to maintain.

We can now provide deeper insight into the diversity of social workers, while supporting compliance with general equality duty. Plus, our digital services team has a robust delivery framework to use when improving other services.

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Data and insight

Analysing and understanding our data informs improvements we make to our regulatory approach. It keeps our processes fair, effective and evidence based. It also helps us identify opportunities to make better use of our resources.

We’ve developed a data and insight strategy for 2023 to 2026 that will (do all of the following):

- ensure the necessary skills, systems and technology for our strategic ambitions
- uphold the responsible and transparent use of our data
- improve our regulatory processes while demonstrating consistency and fairness
- be a trusted, knowledgeable source of information on the profession
- use a comprehensive evidence base to increase our efficiency and cost effectiveness

Governance and assurance

We agreed the principles and approach to our assurance framework with our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. We’ll implement it in 2023 to 2024.

Our quality assurance team conducted 3 process reviews and 6 internal audits this year. They assured that our departments and regulatory functions operate effectively and align with our statutory purpose to protect the public.

During the year we became a prescribed person for whistleblowing under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. We’ve since implemented a policy on whistleblowing by members of the public, with mandatory training across the organisation.

We continue to engage with the Professional Standards Authority. They conducted a monitoring review this year, rather than a full performance review. This third review reflects continued hard work as we move towards long-term delivery.

We met 16 of the 18 standards of good regulation including, for the first time, the standard on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 2 standards we didn’t meet related to our fitness to practise function. This was due to the time taken to (both of the following):

- conclude cases
- make decisions regarding interim orders

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We have made changes to our legal framework and processes. These changes will help us address timeliness for interim orders. They will also assist with the time it takes to conclude cases at all stages of the fitness to practise process. We've committed to work through the majority of the legacy cases by the end of June 2023.

As part of our focus on continuous improvement, we introduced a dedicated role to support corporate feedback and complaints. This helps us capture and respond to learning.

Sustainability and the environment

We're located in Sheffield. Our neighbourhood benefits from Sheffield City Council's ground-breaking Grey to Green environmental and economic development strategy. We're a tenant of North Bank, leasing 17,785 square feet, or 23.4% of the building. This multi-occupancy office building has a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of very good. Its Energy Performance Certificate was upgraded from grade E to C in 2022.

Significant energy price increases have affected us, like many organisations, this year. We're committed to being sustainable and contributing positively to environmental and societal challenges. These 2 things led us to develop a sustainability plan for 2023 to 2026, with shared ownership and responsibility. It combines (both of the following):

- our corporate social responsibilities
- our environmental, social and governance commitments.

The plan aligns with both the greening government commitments and our strategy for 2023 to 2026. It focuses on near-term areas that we can most influence and can build on in later years. They include people and communities, procurement, decarbonisation and waste minimisation.

Our report on sustainability performance for 2022 to 2023 follows statutory requirements. It is in accordance with the Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual. It's also within the scope of the greening government commitments, subject to the information we can fully disclose. We have not been able to disclose our gas consumption for this year and the prior year as specific usage since the proportion of our gas consumption is charged to us as part of our service charge.

Mitigating climate change

Greenhouse gas emissions

All our energy emissions fall under scope 3: other indirect greenhouse gas emissions. They occur as a consequence of our activity but aren't owned or controlled by us.

Scope 1, direct emissions, is not applicable as we don't own energy sources or hire or lease car fleets. Neither can we fully disclose for scope 2, energy indirect emissions. Our lease agreement doesn't give us decision-making power over our energy, gas and water suppliers. We've calculated carbon emissions for our energy usage and business travel using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's corporate standard.

We do not have any accredited carbon offset purchases.

Consumption

Following the lifting of government guidance to work from home early in 2022, hybrid working has become our norm. We've seen an upturn in travel, with employees travelling to work in the office and for business. This post-lockdown shift provides context to the year on year changes we report below.

	Unit	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Electricity ²	Kilowatt hours	143,319	135,180
Gas	Kilowatt hours	not available*	not available*
CO ₂	Tonnes	29.9	26.1
Expenditure	£	£104,086	£26,534

*Data unavailable on specific usage by Social Work England since the proportion of our gas consumption is charged to us as part of our service charge.

All our utilities are recharged monthly by our landlord. Our landlord changed in June 2022, hence the difference in the data for 2022 to 2023. Although our consumption levels for electricity have not significantly changed, the cost of our energy supply dramatically increased. To increase energy efficiency we use LED lights that switch on and off according to room occupancy.

² Note: To be as transparent as possible with available data, we've calculated our electricity consumption from invoices from our landlord.

Business travel

Our hybrid model of home and office working achieves flexibility and supports our efforts towards net zero by 2050. We minimised our need to travel by using video conferencing for hearings, board meetings and other stakeholder meetings where appropriate. We also updated our travel and subsistence policy, encouraging employees to use public transport as the more environmentally friendly and economically viable option.

	2022 to 2023 £	2022 to 2023 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)	2021 to 2022 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)
Car	5,811	3.55	2.15
Taxi, rail and bus	33,260	6.49	0.21
Air (see the breakdown of air travel in the table below)	2,935	2.47	0.11
Total business travel expenditure	42,006	-	-
Tonnes of CO ₂ e	-	12.22	2.47

Breakdown of air travel	2022 to 2023 distance travelled (Miles)	2022 to 2023 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)
Domestic short haul (economy)	3,050	-
International short haul (economy)	3,198	-
Total	6,248	2.47

Waste

This year we produced 2.04 tonnes of general waste, including IT waste. 98% of this waste has been turned into energy and 2% was recycled. No waste went to landfill. We introduced dry mixed recycling in our office at the end of the year through our new main supplier contract. The information we are able to disclose on waste disposal is limited to the information provided below due to suppliers full reporting functionality not being available until March 2023.

We had 2 contracted suppliers and 1 free of charge service provider to meet our waste disposal needs. We used an ISO1400 certified supplier to recycle our IT that was not suitable for our buy back scheme. The service provider has a zero to landfill policy and where possible, products are refurbished and sold on for further use. We use a specialist supplier to deal with confidential waste; expenditure up to 31 March 2023 was £585. All other waste disposal costs were £1,004. Total expenditure on waste disposal to 31 March 2023 was £1,589.

Single-use plastics

We're committed to reducing consumer single-use plastics in line with the government's 25 year environment plan. We now have plans in place to track our progress towards this commitment and will be able to disclose fully on this next year. Our hydro taps encourage staff to use reusable water bottles and glasses. We provide reusable crockery and facilities to store and reheat food to encourage homemade lunches. We also changed some of our suppliers to those who use plastic-free packaging.

Paper use

During 2022 to 2023 we procured 70 reams of A4 paper, compared with none in 2021 to 2022. We seek to reduce the use of paper by taking a digital-first approach. Where we use paper, we limit its consumption by requiring double-sided printing.

Reducing our water use

Our water use is part of our utilities service charge and we calculate usage on a pro-rated square footage basis. The building owner informed us that there is no water meter installed. We manage our water use to our best abilities by having hydro taps and dishwasher facilities installed.

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Sustainable procurement

Our commercial plan sets out how we deliver value for money, minimise our environmental impact and consider sustainability and social value through effective procurement and contract management. We comply with all applicable legislative requirements and always strive to improve our knowledge in this area.

Where practical we use the Crown Commercial Service framework contracts in order to establish suppliers’ compliance with environmental standards. As part of our due diligence, we vet potential suppliers and seek to only work with those complying with anti-slavery laws.

Nature recovery and biodiversity

We do not have any natural capital or landholdings. Our new sustainability plan includes providing biodiversity training for employees in 2023 to 2024.

Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and digital

Our digital services enabled us to facilitate remote and hybrid working. Compared to our working model before the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve now reduced employee travel, use less carbon and are improving air quality. We recognise that CO₂ emissions at home offset these changes.

During 2022 to 2023, we sent no equipment to landfill. We enabled reuse through a buy back scheme for depreciated laptops. We donate the funds, which this year totalled £17,462.51, to our nominated charities Assist Sheffield and Sheffield Cathedral’s Archer Project.

As noted above, we recycled other IT equipment through a company that is United Kingdom Accreditation Service accredited to international standards.

Communities and partnerships

This year we joined a network of other health and care regulators. Together we’re embedding the importance of sustainability responsibilities across the regulatory system and sharing best practice.

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Financial commentary

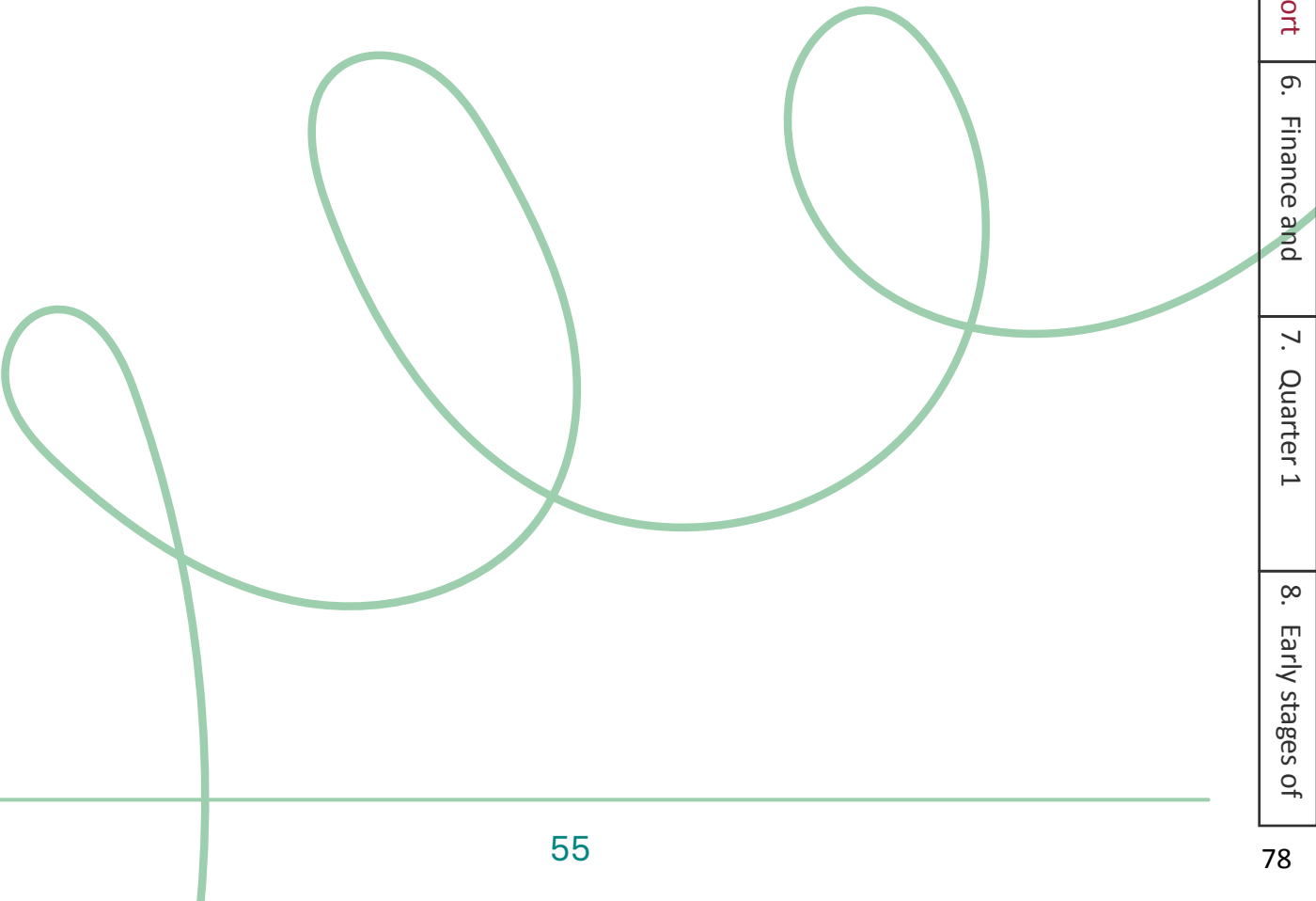
The following commentary summarises our net expenditure and financial position as at 31 March 2023. Further detail can be found in the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. As an arm’s-length body our financial statements are classified to the central government sector and will therefore be consolidated into the Department for Education’s 2022 to 2023 annual accounts.

Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

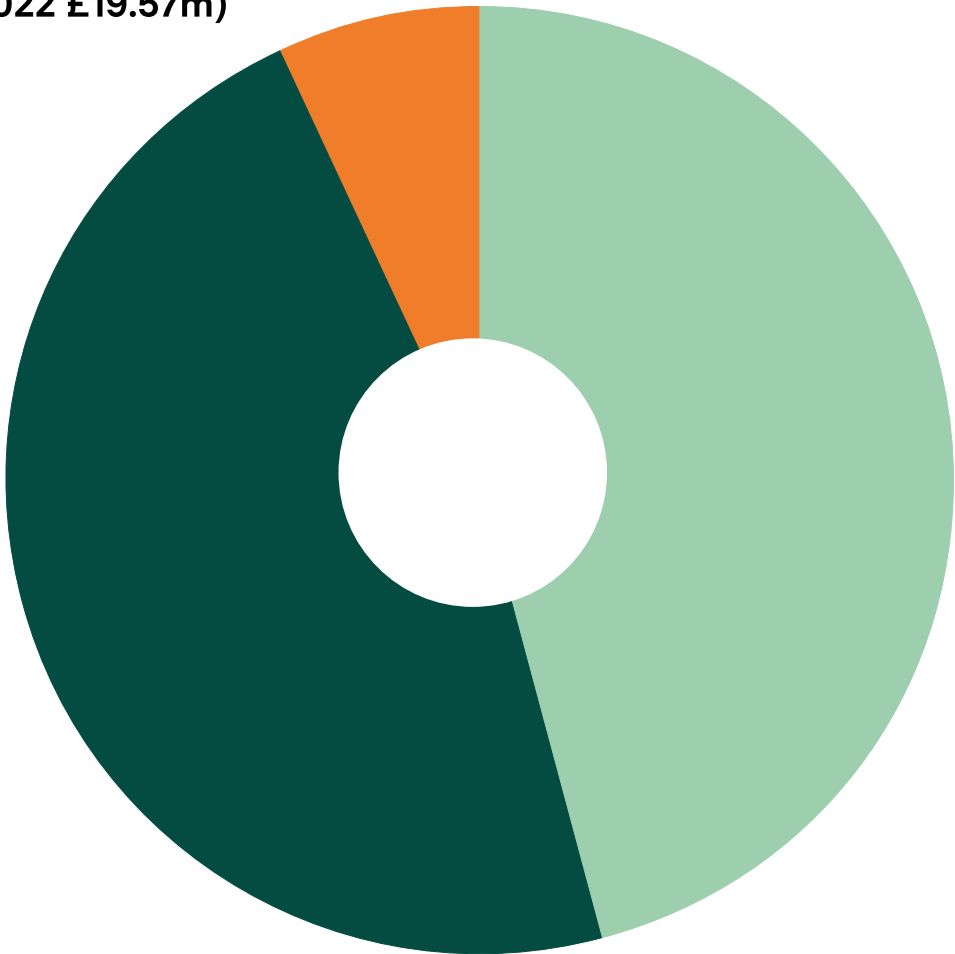
During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, income of £10.14m was received in the form of registration fees from social workers. Further details can be found in note 2 of the financial statements.

We also received £15.49m from the Department for Education in the form of grant in aid; to be used in furtherance of our objectives.

Revenue expenditure for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 was £23.94m, an increase of £4.37m compared to 2021 to 2022 revenue expenditure. The Department for Education provided an additional grant of £5.5m to spend on the increased activity in fitness to practise to resolve the legacy cases from the previous regulator; as agreed with the department £1.20m has been reallocated to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Expenditure incurred is inclusive of staff and other staff related costs, IT infrastructure costs, legal and professional fees, and depreciation. Further details can be found below and in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements.



Total expenditure
£23.94m
(2021 to 2022 £19.57m)



Staff and related costs: £10.97m (£9.56m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of wages and salaries £10.54m and other staff related costs including board fees and travel and subsistence of £0.43m.

Other operating expenditure: £11.28m (£8.33m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of professional fees of £10.09m, depreciation of £0.86m and other operating costs of £0.33m.

Infrastructure costs: £1.69m (£1.67m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of IT infrastructure costs of £1.23m and building related costs of £0.46m.

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Statement of financial position

Non-current assets obtained in the year cost a total of £2.66m.

£2.22m was incurred on the development of our registration and case management system and £0.44m on IT equipment.

As at 31 March 2023, the cash and cash equivalent balance was £6.25m.

Going concern

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2024. A 2-year financial forecast for the period ending 31 March 2025 has been submitted to the Department for Education for inclusion within departmental budgets. Funding for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 has been confirmed in writing by the Department for Education.

As envisaged in these forecasts Social Work England will continue to receive registrant fee income, which will offset a significant proportion of our 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.

Next steps

Our new corporate strategy was published in March 2023 and in May we published our annual business plan 2023 to 2024 detailing what we will do in year 1 of the strategy.

We will build on what we’ve established in our first 3 years. This means we will further develop trust and confidence in the social work profession, and in regulation, by strengthening our relationship with the sector. The role we play in supporting the implementation of ‘Stable Homes, Built on Love’ will be key, as will our approach towards working with the sector on children and adult services reform.

With a strong focus on regulation, education and training, we will work on continuous improvement of the approaches and systems which underpin everything we do. We will ensure that all of our regulatory activity continues to strike the right balance between protection and proportionality. We will ensure that our work is fair, transparent, as efficient as possible and in the public interest.

Colum Conway
Chief Executive, Registrar and Accounting Officer
11 July 2023

Accountability report



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Corporate governance report

This part of the report explains our governance structure and how it supports us to achieve our objectives.

It includes information about our non-executive directors. It confirms the chief executive's responsibilities as Accounting Officer and how they are assured. It outlines our governance framework, including the work of the board and its committees. And it assesses the risks to the organisation.

The corporate governance report has 3 sections.

1. Directors' report
2. Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities
3. Governance statement

The report on personal information breaches is on page 69.

Directors' report

How Social Work England is organised

Our chair, board and chief executive have decision-making authority at board level as per the governance framework. Our executive leadership team and staff support them in discharging their duties.

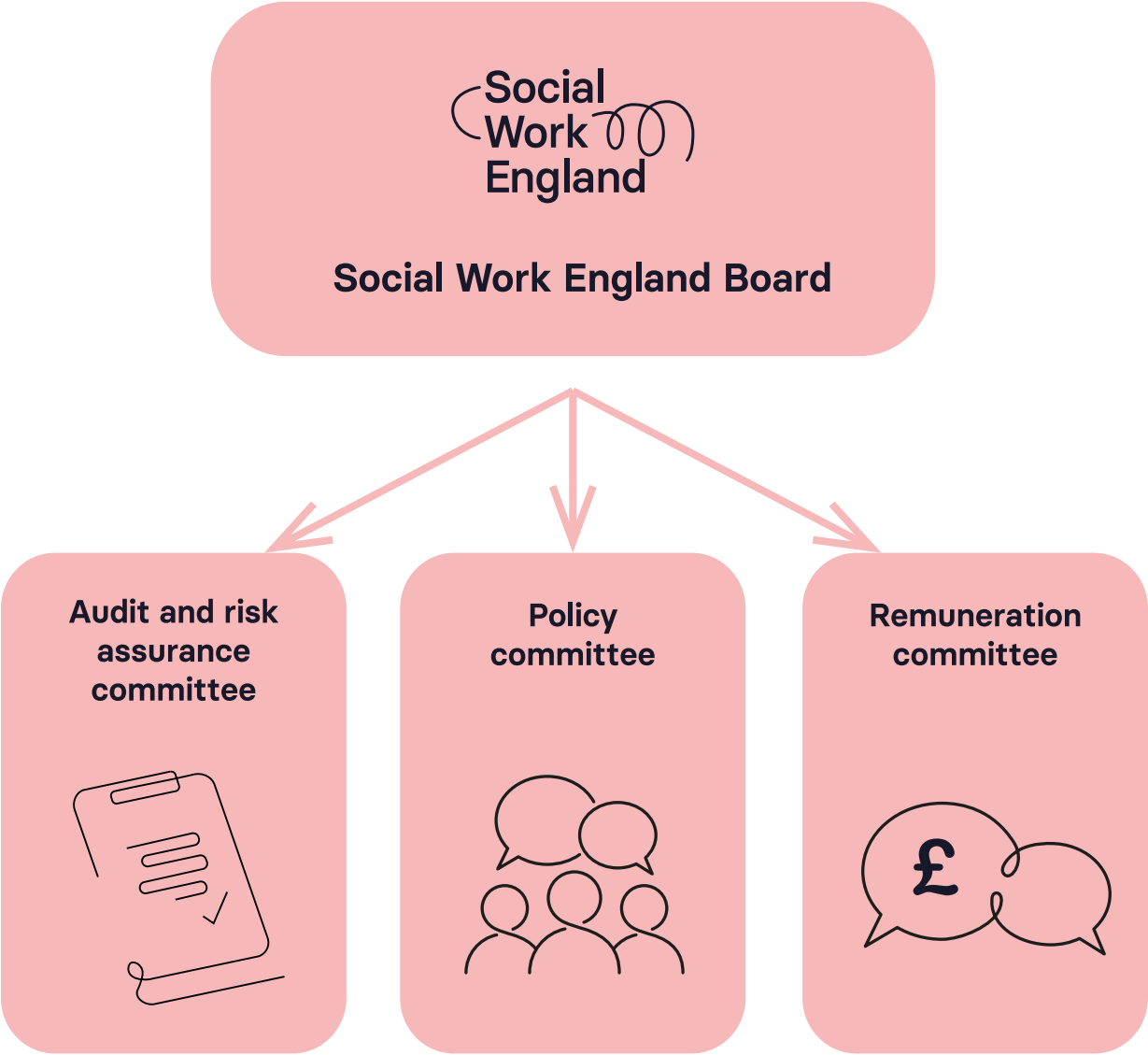
Board and committee structure as at 31 March 2023

Our board ensures effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control. It has sub committees on (each of the following):

- Audit and risk assurance
- policy
- remuneration

The committees support the board with its leadership, direction and a steer on our overall strategy. The board works to a governance framework agreed with the Department for Education, our sponsor department, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care and, in accordance with Managing Public Money published by HM Treasury.

This diagram shows our corporate governance structure for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



Board composition

On 31 March 2023, the membership of the board comprised:

- the chair, Dr Andrew McCulloch
- 5 non-executive directors
- the chief executive, Colum Conway



Dr Andrew
McCulloch



Colum Conway



Dr Adi Cooper



Jonathan Gorvin



Ann Harris OBE
CPFA



Mark Lam



Dr Sue Ross

Dr Andrew McCulloch took up the role of interim chair of the board on 1 March 2023. This appointment followed the resignation of the former chair, The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE. The Secretary of State for Education appointed the interim chair by exception to cover the period of recruitment that is now underway. He will serve for up to one year, standing down when a substantive chair is in place.

Register of interests

We maintain a [register of interests](#) that details our board members' company directorships and other significant interests.

All executive directors have also declared their outside interests for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. They did so for the purposes of ensuring full disclosure regarding related party transactions. See page 117 in the financial statements.

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Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Secretary of State for Education has directed Social Work England 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 government financial reporting manual and in particular to (do all of the following):

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Secretary of State for Education, 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 government financial reporting manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis
- 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 designated the chief executive as Accounting Officer of Social Work England. The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding Social Work England's 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 Social Work England's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

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Governance statement

The purpose of the governance statement

This governance statement describes the corporate governance, risk management and assurance frameworks we used in the 2022 to 2023 financial year. It identifies our compliance with our responsibilities for risk management and internal control systems. These responsibilities are set out in Corporate Governance for Central Departments Code of Good of Good Practice and the Treasury’s handbook Managing Public Money. They also follow the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee handbook and UK government’s The Orange Book: management of risk – principles and concepts.

Our board

Our board oversees the full range of our regulatory responsibilities, including (all of the following):

- setting professional standards and standards for education and training for social workers
- establishing and running a fitness to practise system and
- holding a register of social workers in England

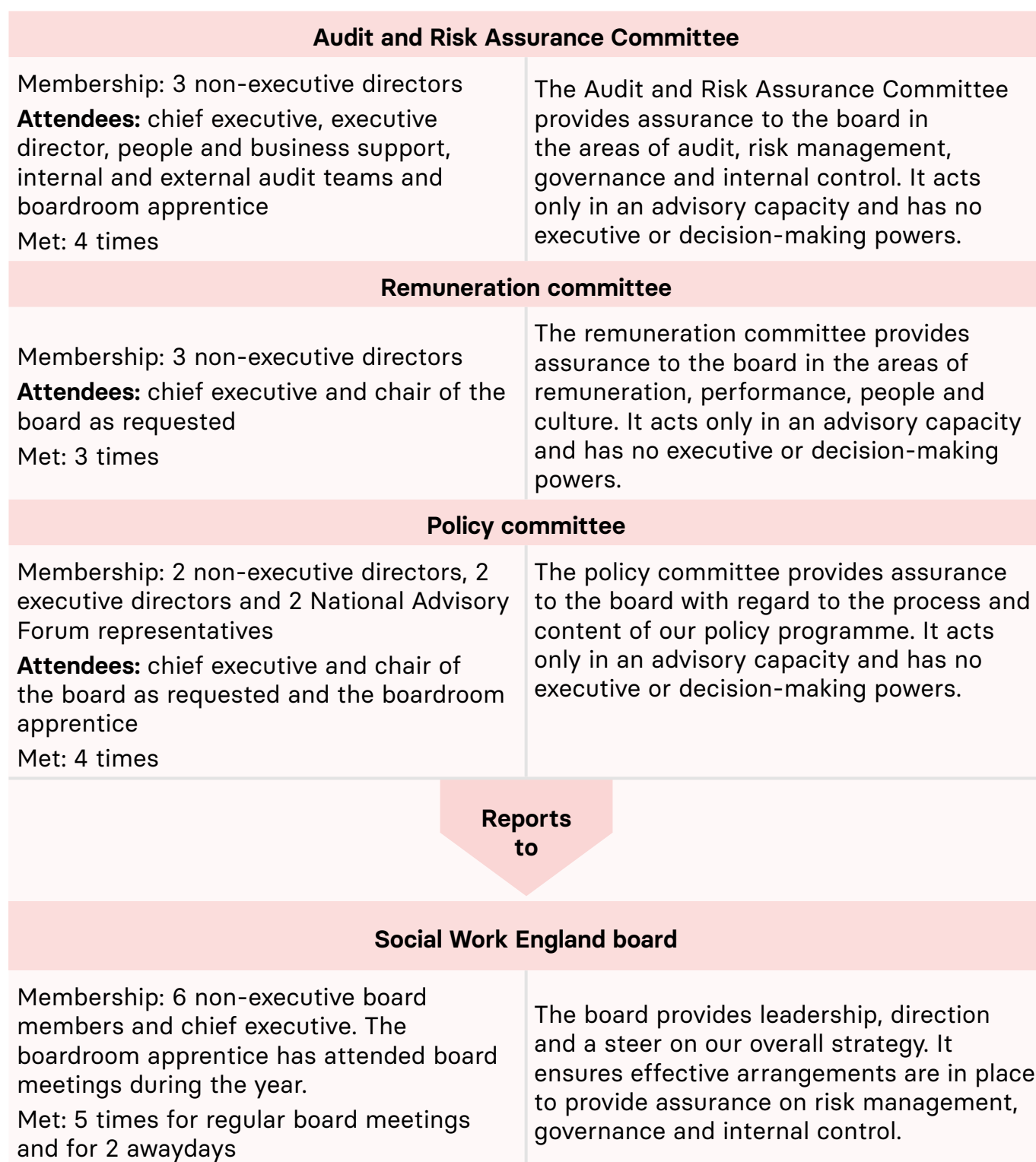
The board holds the chief executive and executive leadership team to account and provides our strategic steer. They oversee our performance and use of resources and ensure a sound system of internal control and risk management.

The board is provided with quarterly performance reports and data that tracks our performance against business objectives. Publishing quarterly means the board sees trends and performance within the year and against previous years. This year the board has been satisfied that it has been able to compare this year’s performance with last year.

The Secretary of State appoints the chair and non-executive members under paragraph 2, schedule 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These appointments are subject to the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019. As such they must comply with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Each board member brings a distinct set of skills and expertise. Their areas of expertise include health and social care, social work, regulation, policy, finance, digital technology and business planning.

Our governance arrangements

The board met regularly and kept the effectiveness of our system of risk management and internal control under review. The board and its committees received regular reports on performance, risk management and assurance. This diagram shows the governance arrangements in place for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



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Performance of the board and its committees

We hold our board meetings in public using video conferencing. 10 members of the public and 31 of our employees observed a board meeting during 2022 to 2023.

In accordance with high standards of corporate governance good practice, the board conducted an annual self-appraisal of its performance. The findings from this exercise are informing the board's strategy and training plan for 2023 to 2024. Overall, the quality of relationships between board members, and with the executive team, remain strong. The board and its committees are working well and receive good quality, timely information. Areas identified for further development during 2023 to 2024 include a review of the board induction process and increasing visibility of the board with staff and key stakeholders.

The board also reviewed its terms of reference and board related policies, and approved (all of the following):

- code of conduct policy
- board declarations of interest and conflict resolution policy
- gifts and hospitality policy

The board received bespoke training on information governance, fulfilling its training requirements in relation to data protection for the year.

In January 2023 our board welcomed an apprentice into its boardroom for 12 months as part of the national boardroom apprenticeship scheme sponsored by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. The scheme aims to enable more people to play a part on public boards.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

In 2022 the committee adopted the National Audit Office effectiveness tool to assess itself against its core responsibilities and good practice. Overall, the review found that the committee performed effectively and demonstrated many aspects of good practice. It identified particular strengths in good use of time, risk management and external audit. The findings informed our development of an action plan for 2023 to 2024.

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As good practice this year, the committee chair produced a year-end report. The key areas of focus for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee during 2022 to 2023 were (all of the following):

- oversight and assurance of digital development
- finance and commercial activity including 3 major business cases for digital re-procurements
- internal and external audits
- internal quality assurance and feedback and complaints
- development of the assurance framework
- corporate risk review
- data protection and information governance
- evaluating and improving our governance

Remuneration committee

The remit of our remuneration committee expanded this year, with updated terms of reference. The committee has taken a key role in advising on (all of the following):

- our people strategy
- assurance regarding our people and culture
- pay remit
- broader workforce issues

The committee helped to achieve our pay remit and deliver a robust people strategy aligned to our 3-year strategy.

Policy committee

Over the course of 2022 to 2023, the committee has reviewed and advised on (all of the following):

- research
- data and insight
- education
- regulatory reform
- implications of recruiting social workers from overseas with regard to our regulatory functions
- horizon scanning

The work of the committee has helped to inform our approach to research and consultation, education and training and developing our data and insight strategy.

Board member attendance in 2022 to 2023

Attendance at board and committee meetings over the year is recorded as the following.

Name and role	2022 to 2023 meetings attended according to board and committee membership			
	Social Work England board	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Policy committee	Remuneration committee
Dr Andrew McCulloch Interim chair from 1 March 2023 Deputy chair to 28 February 2023	5/5	4/4	4/4	
The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE Chair up to 28 February 2023	3/5			
Colum Conway Chief executive, executive director	5/5	4/4		3/3
Dr Adi Cooper Non-executive director	5/5		4/4	3/3
Jonathan Gorvin Non-executive director	4/5	4/4		
Ann Harris Non-executive director	5/5	4/4		
Mark Lam Non-executive director	5/5			3/3
Dr Sue Ross Non-executive director	5/5			3/3

Board members also attended 5 private strategy meetings. They participated in 2 strategic planning sessions and a meet and greet event hosted by London South Bank University. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members attended an additional briefing meeting in January 2023.

Following his appointment as interim chair from 1 March 2023, Dr Andrew McCulloch stood down from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. He also stood down as chair of the policy committee.

On 10 March 2023 the board appointed Jonathan Gorvin as chair of the policy committee.

Ann Harris chaired the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee this year and Mark Lam chaired the remuneration committee.

Representatives from our National Advisory Forum, Isaac Samuels and Professor Rachael Clawson, joined the policy committee on 10 October 2022.

Management control activities

Our framework agreement sets out our delegated authorities, which the Department for Education reviews annually. The chief executive has delegated responsibility from the board for leading the organisation on a day-to-day basis. He is the executive decision maker at board level. The chief executive determines which duties are discharged by members of the executive leadership team, through line management arrangements. They also work with the board to discharge duties as a collective.

The executive leadership team meet weekly to provide strategic and operational oversight of progress and performance. They also hold monthly and quarterly business performance review meetings with heads of functions and assistant directors. The executive leadership team reviews risks on a monthly basis, agreeing to escalate to the board when appropriate.

This year we developed an assurance framework with 3 levels of assurance to complement our management of risk.

Whistleblowing policy

We reviewed our internal whistleblowing policy in October 2022. Our policy encourages our people to speak up if they have a concern that they reasonably believe is of public interest. It may be about the conduct of others or the way in which we run ourselves. Our partners also have a raising concerns and whistleblowing policy included in the partner handbook. No whistleblowing concerns were raised this year.

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We also have an anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy and a gifts and hospitality policy. We review and update these policies annually, with approval by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Everyone working with and for us has mandatory anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption training. No instances of bribery or corruption were suspected or reported this year. We are currently investigating one potential issue relating to the appropriate application of travel and subsistence policy. We do not expect the amounts involved to be significant.

Report on personal information breaches

As a non-departmental public body, we’re required to report personal data related incidents in our annual report. This reporting is in accordance with the standard disclosure format issued by the Cabinet Office. We also regularly report to the board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

We had 90 personal data related incidents this financial year. 3 of these incidents met the threshold of risk that required us to report them to the Information Commissioner’s Office.

Risk management

Context

Our risk management aligns with our purpose of protecting the public and raising standards across social work in England. It also aligns with the principles set out in the UK government’s Orange Book.

Our approach involves (all of the following):

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

As part of our strategic decision-making process, executive directors individually own and manage each risk. The executive leadership team highlight risks for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to discuss and challenge. Shared learning is also applied from Department for Education arm’s-length body risk lead meetings.

Risk appetite statement

Our board members and executive leadership team decide the level of risk we're willing to accept as we pursue our objectives. They review this risk appetite annually or in the event of strategy change. We balance the cost of mitigating the risk with the impact of the risk being realised.

Our risk appetite is reflective of (all of the following):

- our role as a regulator
- our 2020 to 2023 corporate strategy
- the controls and assurances we have in place
- our resources
- external factors

Our risk appetite for 2023 to 2024 will reflect the parameters above as well as this being the first year of our second strategy. The new risk appetite statement will come into effect in July 2023.

Corporate risk register

Our risk register outlines our risk environment. It helps us to keep in place the mitigations and controls to manage risks effectively. Our risk appetite enables sound, consistent judgement and decision-making.

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

Our risk categories

Finance	Legal
Strategy	Innovation and change
Operational delivery	Reputation
People and culture	Cyber security
Regulatory functions	Data protection
Business continuity	Equality, diversity and inclusion

Corporate risks

Outlined below are the most pertinent risks to our regulatory role for the period ending 31 March 2023. We have taken action to mitigate these risks and expect to see the impact of our actions in the future.

Title	Trend	What we've done to mitigate this risk in the 2022 to 2023 business year
Fitness to practise caseload There is a risk that we are unable to process fitness to practise cases within reasonable timescales with existing resources		Created a single point of contact network within employers Prioritised legacy cases
Registration demand There is a risk that we are unable to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications to join the Register within reasonable timescales with existing resources		Made improvements to registration and renewal processes
Education provision There is a risk that the education quality assurance process is not robust enough to identify poor education provision		Consulted on readiness for professional practice guidance Consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals Set up an Education Expert Advisory Forum to consult on key developments
Governance and assurance frameworks There is a risk that our governance and assurance frameworks do not lead to transparent and consistent decision-making		Developed our assurance framework approach Amended our governance meetings to reflect changing requirements
External environment There is a risk that we fail to anticipate, understand the impact of, or have a clear organisational position in relation to strategic, political or workforce changes		Established the policy committee to discuss strategic, political and workforce changes Led the national workforce roundtable, looking at workforce issues within social work

Effectiveness of the internal control framework

As Accounting Officer, I review the effectiveness of our system of internal control. My review is informed by the work of the internal auditors, by feedback from the directors, assistant directors and heads of functions 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 subject to review by the National Audit Office, including statutory audit and value for money reports. We are also reviewed by the Department for Education.

Internal audit

Out of the 7 audits conducted this financial year, 3 received substantial assurance and 4 adequate assurance. Internal audit reports to the board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were as follows.

Internal audit	Level of assurance
1. Business planning 2. Financial controls – month end 3. Follow up	Substantial
4. Corporate governance 5. Consultation management 6. Business continuity 7. Internal quality and improvement	Adequate

Haines Watts conducted our internal audit in 2022 to 2023. Based on their reviews during the year, their end of year report stated that we have:

- adequate and effective risk management
- adequate and effective governance
- adequate and effective control processes

Our new internal auditors, RSM UK, were procured through a competitive tender process and appointed at the end of this financial year. They will deliver our internal audit plan for 2023 to 2024.

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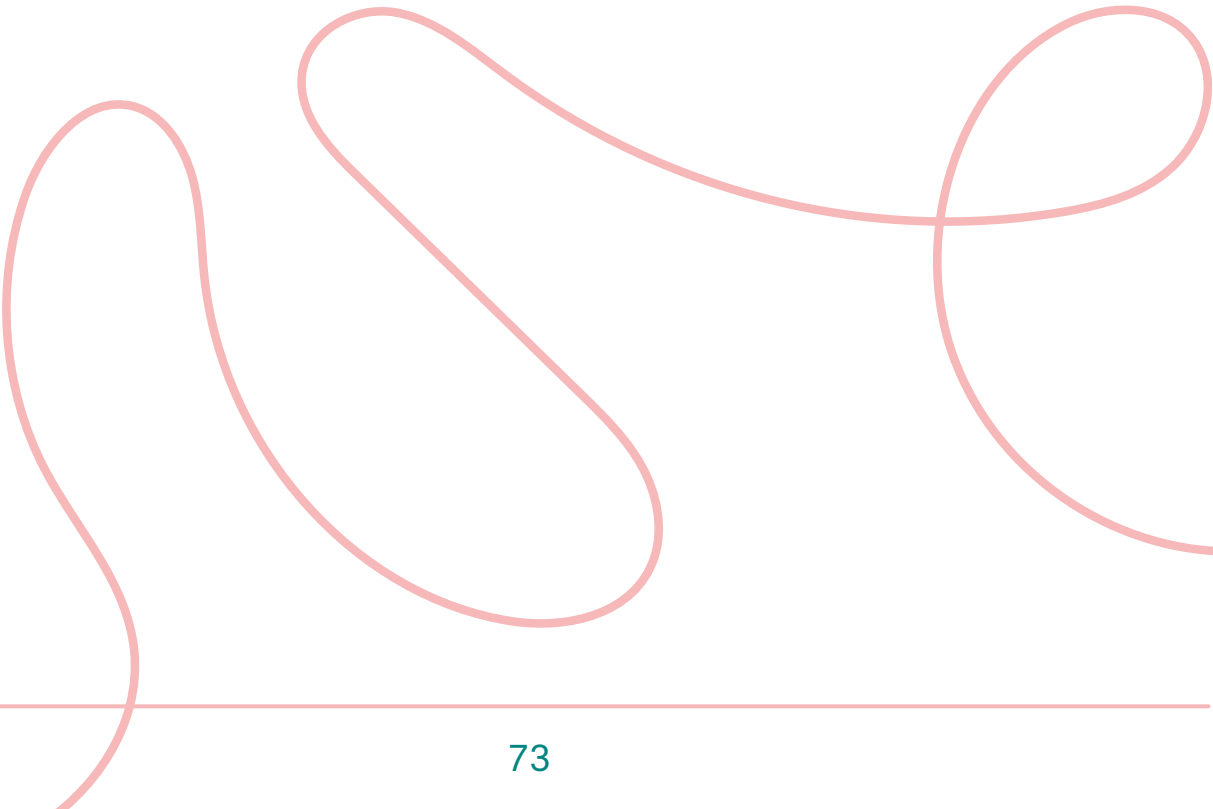
Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I am responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of Social Work England’s system of internal controls as set out in the governance statement. Social Work England has not suffered from any significant internal control failures during 2022 to 2023. The systems for risk management and internal control have been place during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls was informed by (all of the following):

- assurance from executive directors that they have acted in accordance with their delegations and the operation of our governance framework
- independent assurance from our internal auditors in their annual audit report
- scrutiny and advice provided by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- discussion of the annual report and accounts with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and board in May 2023 and June 2023.

Based on my review of the evidence I am assured that we have a sound system of governance, risk management and internal controls to support the delivery of our strategy.



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 details actual costs.

Remuneration policy

Our employees are public servants. HM 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. We have a secondee from another regulator and they are paid in accordance with that regulator.

As a non-departmental public body, we must adhere to the pay guidance the Cabinet Office sets each year and submit a pay remit business case for approval by the Secretary of State for Education. Our business case for 2022 to 2023 was designed to help with retention of staff and ensure we remain competitive. Our approved pay award included an overall salary increase of 3% on average. We tiered this by pay band so that people on lower salaries, likely to be impacted most by the rising costs of living, received a proportionately higher increase (ranging from 2.5% to 3.6%). We also awarded a one off £650 non-consolidated pay award in recognition of people's contributions to our achievements overall.

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Executive leadership team remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

Executive leadership team	Salary £000	Non-consolidated performance award £000	Benefits in kind £000	Pension benefit £000	2022 to 2023 Total £000	2021 to 2022 Total £000
Colum Conway	150 - 155	5 - 10	0	9	165 - 170	160 - 165
Sarah Blackmore	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	6	100 - 105	95 - 100
Linda Dale (from 1 September 2022)	55 - 60	0	0	3	55 - 60	0
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					
Jonathan Dillon (to 21 July 2022)	30 - 35	0 - 5	0	2	30 - 35	95 - 100
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					
Philip Hallam	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	6	100 - 105	95 - 100
Tracy Watterson (to 31 October 2022)	50 - 55	0 - 5	0	3	55 - 60	95 - 100
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					

Separate disclosures relating to pension entitlements are not applicable. Social Work England operates an unfunded multi-employer defined contribution pension scheme provided by the National Employment Savings Trust. There are therefore no value or lump sum increases.

Executive leadership team performance awards are approved by the remuneration committee based upon the recommendation of the chief executive. Performance awards for the chief executive are based upon the recommendation of the chair of the board and are subject to remuneration committee approval to the board.

Board member's remuneration

Name	Position	Appointment term	2022 to 2023 fees £000	2021 to 2022 fees £000
Dr Andrew McCulloch*	Interim chair	10 August 2018 to 29 February 2024	20 - 25	10 - 15
Full year equivalent (FYE)			30 - 35	
The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE	Chair	19 March 2021 to 28 February 2023	55 - 60	65 - 70
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	5 - 10	0 - 5
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive director	10 August 2021 to 9 August 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Ann Harris	Non-executive director	19 July 2019 to 18 July 2025	10 - 15	10 - 15
Mark Lam	Non-executive director	11 January 2019 to 10 January 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	5 - 10	0 - 5

* Note: Dr Andrew McCulloch fulfilled the role of deputy chair up to 28 February 2023. He took up the role of interim chair on 1 March 2023. His enhanced remuneration reflects the increased responsibility and time allocated to fulfil this leadership role. The decreased number of days for The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE accommodates the changes to the board leadership.

Members of the board are not entitled to any pension or other financial benefits. The remuneration disclosed consists of board fees only.

Total non-executive board expenses for the year were £1,323 (2021 to 2022: £500).

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Fair pay disclosure

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the organisation’s highest paid director and the median remuneration of its workforce as well as the relationship with the pay at the 25th and 75th percentile.

In 2022 to 2023, nil employees (2021 to 2022: nil) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director. Total remuneration ranged from £23,512 to £160,000 (2021 to 2022, £19,695 to £155,000). 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 year ending 31 March 2023 was £155,000 - £160,000. This was an increase of 3.28% from last year, (2021 to 2022: £150,000 - £155,000). This was 4.81 times the median employee remuneration (2021 to 2022: 4.87). The median pay ratio is consistent with our pay, reward and progression policies.

The decrease in the pay ratio for the 25th percentile of 5.47 times the remuneration of the highest paid director (2021 to 2022: 5.89) was consistent with our policy of awarding higher percentage annual pay awards to lower paid employees.

The total average remuneration per employee in the year ended 31 March 2023 was £40,364, an increase of 3.06% from last year (2021 to 2022: £39,164). The movement in the total average remuneration is as a result of an annual pay increase effective from September 2022. The increase in the median pay ratio compared to 2021 to 2022 is also reflective of an increase in the remuneration of the highest paid director.

The tables below show the pay and benefits for each percentile along with the accompanying pay ratios.

2022 to 2023	25 th percentile	Median (50 th percentile)	75 th percentile
Pay ratio	5.47:1	4.81:1	3.40:1
Annual salary	£28,167	£32,064	£45,629
Non-consolidated performance award	£650	£650	£650
Total pay	£28,817	£32,714	£46,279

2021 to 2022	25 th percentile	Median (50 th percentile)	75 th percentile
Pay ratio	5.89:1	4.87:1	3.45:1
Annual salary	£25,695	£31,206	£44,300
Non-consolidated performance award	£600	£600	£600
Total pay	£26,295	£31,806	£44,900

Pension scheme

The National Employment Savings Trust provides our pension scheme. It 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 19 in 2022 to 2023. In 2022 we changed the way we deal with pension contributions to a salary sacrifice scheme. Our minimum contributions increased to 4% employee and 6% employer contributions (2021 to 2022: minimum 3% employee contribution and 5% employer contribution).

Employers' pension contributions for the period ending 31 March 2023 were £514,353 based on 6% of pensionable pay (2021 to 2022: £378,964 employers' pension contributions based on 5% of pensionable pay).

No one retired early on grounds of ill health.

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Salary

Salary includes gross salary, overtime and allowances. 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

Our budgeted non-consolidated performance award is 2% of the total salary bill. These figures include awards paid or agreed in the 12 months up to 31 March 2023. For 2022 to 2023 our non-consolidated performance award budget was 2% of the total salary bill.

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

There were no exit compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages in the year ending 31 March 2023. This was the same for the year ended 31 March 2022.

GDPR article 21 staff disclosure

No staff members asked for their entitlements not to be disclosed in the year ended 31 March 2023. This was also the case for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Staff report

Part A: subject to audit

Analysis of staff costs

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	2022 to 2023 total £000's	2021 to 2022 Total £000's
Wages and salaries	8,901	180	9,081	7,972
Social security costs	946	0	946	855
Pension costs	514	0	514	379
Total	10,361	180	10,541	9,206

Others refers to 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. Others also includes the salary and on-costs of inward secondments.

Staff composition

On 31 March 2023 Social Work England's average full-time equivalent number of employees was 243.4 (compared with 213.4 on 31 March 2022).

Staff composition analysis	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Social Work England permanent contract	209.7 (86%)	194.3 (91%)
Social Work England fixed term contract	28.7 (12%)	17.3 (8%)
Other	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
Secondment	2 (1%)	1.8 (1%)
Total	243.4 (100%)	213.4 (100%)

With additional funding from the Department for Education, we increased the number of fixed term contracts during 2022. This increase was to support the closure of fitness to practise legacy cases

Part B: unaudited

The following sections are not subject to audit.

Staff by level and gender

Levels	Permanent contract - males	Other contract - males	Permanent contract - females	Other contract - females	Permanent contract - non-binary	Other contract - non-binary	Total
Chief executive	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Executive leadership team	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Assistant directors	1.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Heads of functions	7.0	1.0	6.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	15.6
Other levels	61.4	11.0	126.7	20.7	0.0	0.0	219.8
Total	71.4	12.0	138.3	21.7	0.0	0.0	243.4

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

Average full-time equivalent 2022 to 2023

Permanent employees	Others	Total
208	26.6	234.6

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

There was a 15% turnover of staff during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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Our people

Our staff policies and practices

We changed our structure this year and appointed 4 assistant directors to build corporate leadership and organisational resilience. We now have 2 assistant directors in the regulation directorate and 2 in professional practice and external engagement.

Alongside developing our new 3 year corporate strategy, we co-produced a 3 year people strategy. We did so with input from the board, National Advisory Forum, our staff networks and our people. We'll implement our people strategy from 1 April 2023.

We successfully implemented our improved pension offer and life assurance in 2022. We have also introduced an employee benefits portal, offering discounts and a cycle to work scheme. Through Applause, our employee reward recognition scheme, we awarded 357 vouchers during 2022 to 2023, valued at £15,900 (2021 to 2022: 221 vouchers, valued at £12,300).

We continued to invest in our learning and development offer. This year it included a positive action mentoring pilot, coaching for leaders, wellbeing and resilience and a mandatory learning programme.

We encourage our people to play their part in ensuring we operate fairly and equitably as both employer and regulator. Our employee networks are formed of people across the organisation with a shared interest in a particular subject and include (all of the following):

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group
- People Forum
- Queer Collective
- Race Equality Network
- Think Well
- Women's Network

In 2022 we also established a network which brings together and supports the chairs.

Our people have a high level of engagement at 76%, compared with the public sector benchmark of 64.6%.

70% of our staff would recommend Social Work England as a great place to work.

We support our people with our wellbeing offer and employee assistance programme. We've focused on increasing our number of trained mental health first aiders from 2 to 6 and we introduced

our workplace passport. This has helped to create a positive and supportive environment for employees to discuss physical or mental health, and any other issues that may affect their performance.

During the year we have consulted with our people regarding a number of topics including hybrid working, our sustainability plan, people strategy and the recording of equality, diversity and inclusion data for all employees.

Sickness absence

We lost 915 days to sickness absence during the 2022 to 2023 period, compared with 910 days in 2021 to 2022. This equates to approximately 3.8 days per employee per year, which is lower than the UK public sector average. Our employee assistance programme and occupational health service support those in ill health to remain in work or return following absence.

Diversity statistics

Gender data

Gender identity for whole workforce	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	69%	68%
Male	31%	32%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Gender split for executive leadership team	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	67%	40%
Male	33%	60%
Non-binary	0%	0%

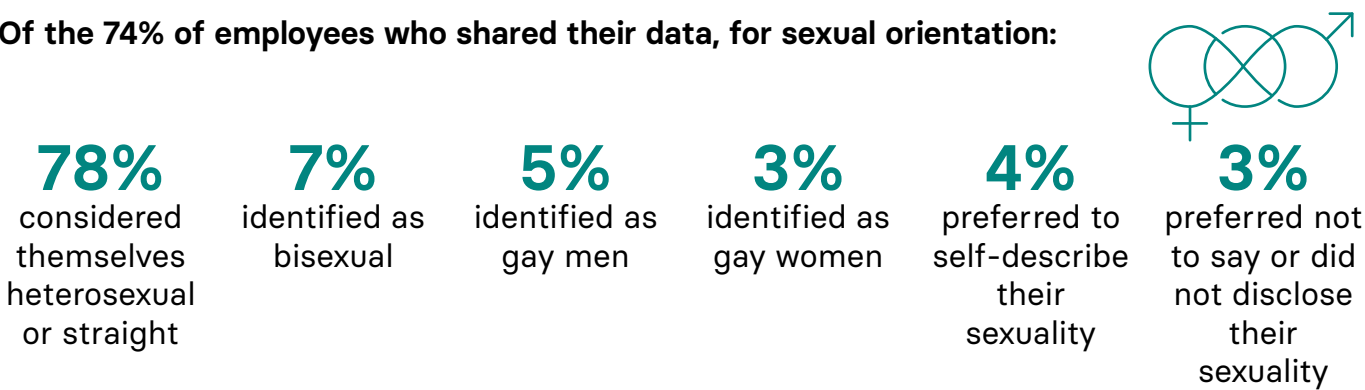
Gender split for heads of functions	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	55%	65%
Male	45%	35%
Non-binary	0%	0%

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Diversity data

We encourage staff to upload their diversity data into our human resources system Enable, though it is not mandatory. Our people positively received our campaign to increase the diversity data we hold, with 74% sharing at least some data. This figure was up from 59.5% in 2021 to 2022. Diversity remains high in our priorities and we aim to increase this percentage further.

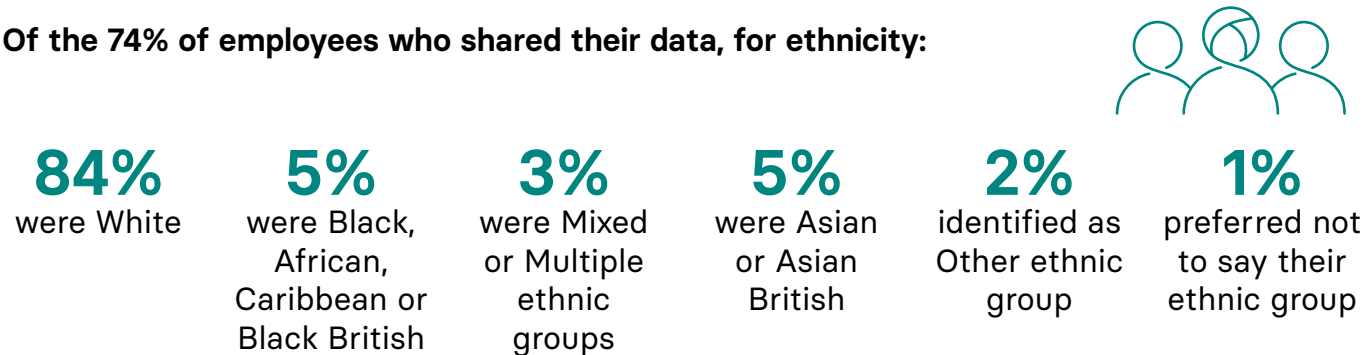
Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for sexual orientation:



Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for disability:



Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for ethnicity:



Consultancy spend

No expenditure on consultancy was incurred during the year ending March 2023.

Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

Off-payroll engagements of board members and senior officials with significant financial responsibility:

Engagements by category	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Number of off-payroll engagements of board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility	0	0
Number of individuals deemed board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, including both off-payroll and on-payroll engagements	13	15

We consider that all board members and executive directors have significant financial responsibility and reimburse them through payroll.

Parliamentary Accountability Report

Parliamentary accountability disclosures: audited

A1 Losses statement

Losses statement	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Number of fruitless payment cases	323	106
Value		
Fruitless payments	£121,962	£41,000

A fruitless payment is one the recipient is legally entitled to even though we receive nothing of use in return. During 2022 to 2023 they included payments we made to partners in relation to cancelled fitness to practise hearings. The value of fruitless payments increased this year due to an increase in the number of fitness to practise hearings and a corresponding increase in postponements. Fruitless payments also included staff travel tickets purchased but unable to be used.

A2 Special payments

There were no special payments during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023. (Period ending 31 March 2022: nil).

A3 Fees and charges

Income of £10.14m was received in the form of registration fees (£9.62m 2021 to 2022). More analysis can be found in note 2 of the financial statements on page 107.

Total expenditure for 2022 to 2023 was £23.94m (£19.57m 2021 to 2022); net expenditure for the year was £13.81m (£9.96m 2021 to 2022). More analysis can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements on page 108 and page 109.

A4 Remote contingent liabilities

There were no remote contingent liabilities during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive, Registrar and Accounting Officer
11 July 2023

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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 2023 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The financial statements comprise Social Work England's:

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted International Accounting Standards.

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 2023 and its net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- 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.

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Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022). 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 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 Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

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

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements nor my auditor's certificate and report. 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.

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 the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

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

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit 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 Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

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 Report 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 by Social Work England or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

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

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within Social Work England from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view and are prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- ensuring that the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act; and
- 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 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.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of Social Work England's accounting policies, key performance indicators and performance incentives.
- inquired of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Social Work England's policies and procedures on:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of 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 Social Work England's compliance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Managing Public Money.

- inquired of management and those charged with governance whether:
 - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
 - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- discussed with the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within Social Work England for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions, and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of Social Work England's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which Social Work England operates. I focused on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in 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 the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Managing Public Money as well as relevant employment laws of the United Kingdom.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, I tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business;
- testing postings to the general ledger that fell outside the standard transaction process flow; and

- in addressing the risk of fraud in revenue recognition, considered deferred income calculations, testing the appropriateness of revenue journal entries meeting our risk criteria, and using analytical procedures to identify any unusual transactions or movements. We also considered income cut-off to ensure that transactions had been recorded in the correct financial year.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members 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.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income 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.

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 I identify during my audit.

Report

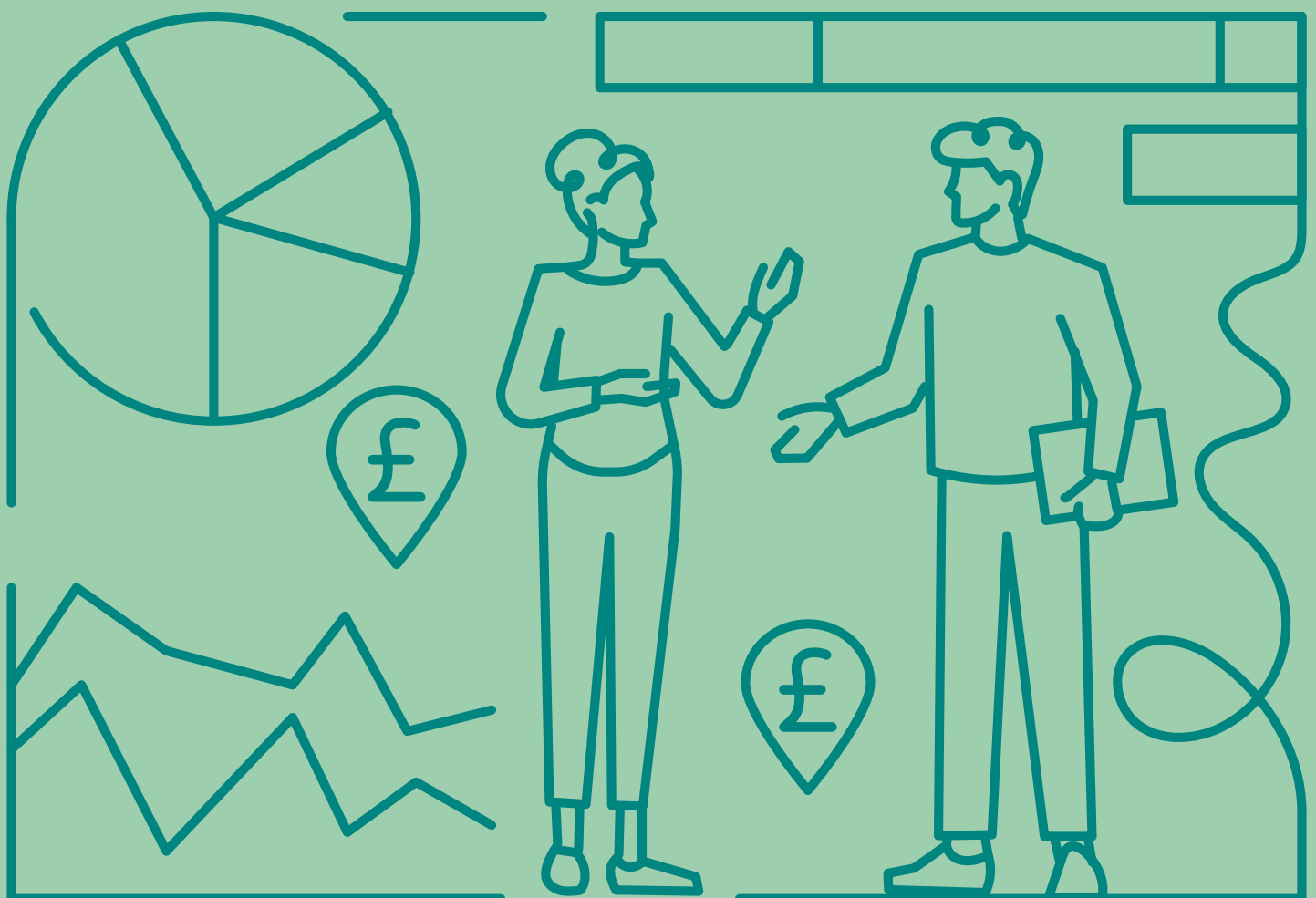
I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

Date 11 July 2023

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

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Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Income	2	(10,135)	(9,617)
Staff costs	3	10,541	9,206
Other expenditure	4	13,402	10,366
Net operating expenditure		13,808	9,955
Net expenditure for the year		13,808	9,955

There are no discontinued operations.

There are no other recognised gains or losses.

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Statement of financial position

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Non-current assets			
PPE	9	1,880	784
Intangibles	10	7,986	6,159
Trade and other receivables	5	0	0
Total non-current assets		9,866	6,943
Current assets			
Receivables	5	630	609
Cash and cash equivalents	6	6,251	6,042
Total current assets		6,881	6,651
Total assets		16,747	13,594
Current liabilities			
Payables	7	(6,733)	(6,048)
Total current liabilities		(6,733)	(6,048)
Total assets less current liabilities		10,014	7,546
Non-current liabilities			
Payables	7	(833)	(186)
Provision	8	(136)	0
Total non-current liabilities		(969)	(186)
Assets less liabilities		9,045	7,360
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund		9,045	7,360
Total taxpayers' equity		9,045	7,360

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive, Social Work England

11 July 2023

Statement of cash flows

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,808)	(9,955)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	834	563
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	5	(21)	180
Increase/(decrease) in non-lease payables	7	595	476
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(12,400)	(8,736)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of PPE	9	(440)	(87)
Purchase of Intangibles	10	(2,217)	(1,559)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(2,657)	(1,646)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Exchequer supply from sponsor department	Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity	15,493	11,210
Payments of lease liabilities	11	(227)	-
Net cash inflow from financing activities		15,266	11,210
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts)		209	828
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at beginning of the year		6,042	5,214
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at end of the year		6,251	6,042

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	General Fund £000's
Balance at 31 March 2021		6,105
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		11,210
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(9,955)
Balance at 31 March 2022		7,360
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		15,493
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,808)
Balance at 31 March 2023		9,045

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

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Notes to the financial statements

1. Accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the government financial reporting manual (FReM) 2022 to 2023 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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

1.2 Accounting convention

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

1.3 Going concern

Each year Social Work England receives registrant fee income which offsets a significant proportion of our operating expenditure. The remaining forecasted balance, programme and capital, is financed by the Department for Education (DfE) by way of grant-in-aid.

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, in accordance with the definition set out in paragraph 8.2.1 of the FReM as “the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, as evidenced by the inclusion of financial provision for that service in published documents”.

The going concern assessment period is 12 months from the date the financial statements are authorised for issue. Funding for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 has been confirmed by the DfE.

We offer no other discretionary services and have no ring-fenced areas of expenditure. We have robust budgetary control processes and are currently unaware of any information or legislation that would have a material impact on our going concern assessment.

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1.4 Income and funding

Grant-in-aid

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 grant-in-aid as financing in the Statement of Cash Flows and draw down of grant-in-aid to the General Reserve.

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

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

Fee Income

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.

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

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. All fees are non-refundable.

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 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. 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.

1.5 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

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. These judgements, estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. The main items included in these financial statements are:

- 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.
- Intangible asset recognition 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.

- Intangible asset amortisation requires management to consider whether the intangible asset is in its final condition capable of operating as management intended. Once management is satisfied as to the condition of the asset it will be amortised over its useful economic life. In the opinion of management, version 1 of our internally generated software is complete and we have begun amortising during the 2022 to 2023 financial year.
- An estimated amount is provided for accrued but untaken staff holiday.
- Dilapidations recognition involves 2 key judgements by management. The first is the likelihood that a requirement to pay dilapidation costs would arise. The second judgement is the identification of the potential cost of dilapidations.

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 Pensions

Social Work England has adopted IAS 19 Employee Benefits (IAS 19) to account for its pension scheme. All eligible employees are auto enrolled into Social Work England's defined contribution pension scheme (NEST). Social Work England contributes 6% of gross salary, an increase of 1% compared to 2021 to 2022 and this contribution is recorded as expenditure in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.8 Provisions

Social Work England recognises provisions in accordance with IAS 37 'Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets'.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimation of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the statement of financial position date.

1.9 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 those of a similar type which fall below the capitalisation threshold, 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. Where assets have short useful lives or low values the asset value is held at cost as a proxy for fair current value.

The carrying value of property, plant and equipment is assessed annually and any impairment is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.10 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the value of 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:

- Computer equipment 3 years
- Fixtures and fittings 10 years
- Leasehold improvements 10 years

1.11 Intangible assets

Intangible assets are 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 and receive economic benefit. Intangible assets include those classified as assets under construction prior to them becoming fully developed and operational as management intended.

Recognised Intangible assets have finite useful lives and are measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. The cost for internally generated intangible assets has been assessed as the direct labour attributable to the development of the intangible asset as well as the cost of work undertaken by external suppliers.

The assets' net book values are reviewed annually for impairment, and adjusted if appropriate, at the date of each statement of financial position. The assets are valued at depreciated historical cost. Intangible assets are carried at fair value that is determined by reference to an active market where possible. As there is no active market, we use depreciated historical cost as a proxy fair value. Assets under construction are not amortised but are assessed for impairment annually.

Amortisation is recognised in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure on a straight-line basis over the useful life of intangible assets from the date that they are available for use. This most closely reflects the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset. The expected useful life is 5 years.

1.12 Leases

IFRS 16 Leases were implemented from 1 April 2022 introducing a single lessee accounting model, removing the previous IAS 17 distinction between operating and finance leases. IFRS requires a lessee to recognise right-of-use assets (RoU asset) and financing liabilities for all leases, apart from a number of exemptions including low value assets.

1.13 Implementation and assumptions

Social Work England has applied IFRS 16 using the modified retrospective approach for 2 property leases relating to the property occupied at 1 North Bank, Sheffield, S3 8JY. The cumulative effect of adopting the standard is included as an adjustment to taxpayers equity at the beginning of the reporting period at implementation (1 April 2022).

The leases were modified in March 2023 and these changes have been reflected in the value of the right-of-use asset and financial liability.

Social Work England has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for low value assets or leases with a term of 12 month or less.

1.14 Policy applicable from 1 April 2022

At inception of a contract, Social Work England assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains a lease, if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time.

The policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 April 2022.

At inception, or on reassessment, of a contract that contains a lease component, Social Work England allocates the consideration in the contract to each lease component on the basis of the relative standalone prices. Social Work England assesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise break options or extension options at the lease commencement date. Social Work England reassesses this if there are significant events or changes in circumstances that were not anticipated.

Social Work England recognises a right-of-use asset and lease liability at the commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the amount of the lease liability adjusted for direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of a lease.

Right-of-use assets are subsequently measured at either fair value or current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets. The cost measurement model in IFRS 16 is used as an appropriate proxy for current value.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property, plant and equipment assets. Social Work England applies IAS 36 Impairment of Assets to determine whether the right-of-use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HM Treasury. HM Treasury discount rates were 0.95% for leases entered into prior to 31 December 2022 and 3.51% in calendar year 2023.

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is re-measured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the rate, or a modification to the lease terms, or a reassessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option.

1.15 Financial instruments, assets and liabilities

In accordance with IFRS 9 (Financial Instruments), Social Work England recognises financial assets and liabilities when it becomes party to the contracts that give rise to them. Social Work England does not hold any complex financial instruments i.e. long-term loans or equity investments.

1.16 Receivables

Trade and other receivables are recognised at carrying value and under IFRS9 these are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less provision for impairment.

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1.17 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is the current balance at the bank and Social Work England does not have any cash equivalents.

1.18 Payables

Trade and other payables are recognised at carrying value. At 31 March 2023, the value of payables predominately consisted of prepayments for fee income.

1.19 Financial risks

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.

1.20 IFRSs in issue but not yet effective

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.

1.21 IFRS 17 insurance contracts

Effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. It has not yet been decided when the government financial reporting manual (FReM) will adopt the standard for government financial reporting and what amendments or interpretations may be necessary.

The standard makes changes to how insurance contracts are accounted for and may in certain circumstances widen the scope of which financial positions are judged to be in-scope for the standard than those caught by IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts (IFRS 4). However,

prior to adoption by the government financial reporting manual the final version for the standard applicable to Social Work England has still to be decided.

Social Work England currently has a single commercial insurance contract relating to damage to our leased property, so we do not expect a material impact once IFRS 17 is introduced.

2. Fee income

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Income	10,135	9,617
Donations in kind (other income)	0	0
Total	10,135	9,617

Fee income 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 covering a period of 12 months from 1 December to 30 November.

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 2022 to 2023 fee year was £90.

Restoration fees

Restoration fees are applicable where a social worker has been previously registered with Social Work England (or prior to December 2019, with the HCPC) but has since left the register for a period of time and wishes to restore their registration. 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

For the financial year ending 31 March 2023

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	Total £000's
Wages and salaries	8,901	180	9,081
Social security costs	946	0	946
Pension costs	514	0	514
Total	10,361	180	10,541

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	Total £000's
Wages and salaries	7,832	140	7,972
Social security costs	855	0	855
Pension costs	379	0	379
Total	9,066	140	9,206

4. Operating expenditure

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Staff related costs	197	203
Legal and other professional fees	10,089	7,353
Premises costs	291	273
IT and Telecommunications costs	1,232	1,191
Travel and subsistence	96	25
Research and development	36	76
Advertising and marketing	0	20
Cash items relating to leases	55	0
Lease interest	13	0
Building rent	0	182
Board fees	134	131
Utilities	101	33
External audit fees	56	53
Internal audit fees	9	17
Bank charges	86	91
Other expenditure	173	155
Total	12,568	9,803

The increase in legal and other professional fees relates to increased activity in fitness to practise. 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 OBE and the non-executive directors as disclosed in the remuneration and staff report.

Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Amortisation	390	0
Depreciation	467	563
Non-cash items relating to leases	(23)	0
Total	834	563

Depreciation is charged on all property, plant and equipment expenditure as shown in note 9 property plant and equipment. All intangible asset expenditure is shown in note 10.

5. Receivables

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade receivables	0	0
Other receivables	0	0
Prepayments	630	609
Total	630	609
Amounts falling due after one year	0	0

6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Balance at 1 April	6,042	5,214
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balances	209	828
Balance at 31 March	6,251	6,042

The balances were held at Government Banking Service.

7. Payables

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade and other payables	304	518
Accruals and deferred income	6,052	5,130
Lease liabilities as a result of IFRS 16	90	0
Capital accruals	287	400
Total	6,733	6,048
Amounts falling due after one year		
Lease liabilities as a result of IFRS 16	833	0
Other liabilities	0	186
Total	833	186

Deferred registration fee income of £3.12m relating to the registration year December 2022 to November 2023 is included within accruals and deferred income.

8. Provisions

	Dilapidations £000's
At 1 April 2022	0
Arising in the year	136
Amounts utilised	0
At 31 March 2023	136
Amounts falling due within one year	0
Amounts falling due after more than one year	136

The provision for dilapidations represents the estimated settlement cost to Social Work England in relation to the dilapidation clauses included in a property lease. These costs are expected to be incurred on the termination of the property lease. The provision has been calculated based on our best estimate considering independent professional assessments of the wider market.

9. Property, plant and equipment

	Land & Buildings £000's	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000's	IT Equipment £000's	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000's	Total £000's
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2022	1,265	319	951	1,329	3,864
Additions	0	0	440	0	440
Disposals	0	0	(198)	0	(198)
Adjustments	0	0	0	(206)	(206)
At 31 March 2023	1,265	319	1,193	1,123	3,900
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	(774)	(319)	(658)	0	(1,751)
Depreciation charge	(73)	0	(197)	(197)	(467)
Disposals	0	0	198	0	198
At 31 March 2023	(847)	(319)	(657)	(197)	(2,020)
Carrying value:					
31 March 2023	418	0	536	926	1,880
31 March 2022	491	0	293	0	784

The inclusion of a right-of-use asset reflects the recognition of the fair value of leases as required by IFRS 16. Social Work England leases two floors at North Bank, Sheffield. Irrecoverable VAT has been excluded in the recognition of right-of-use asset value and has been recognised as an expense.

On transition, hindsight was applied in the preparation of the financial statements when recognising the initial right-of-use value. The lease was modified at 10 March 2023, removing a break clause, resulting in a decrease to the right-of-use asset value. This adjustment was the result of lease payments made during the year 2022 to 2023 and of incentives provided by the landlord for future periods.

The modification to the property lease extended the lease by a period of 60 months. The land and buildings assets are made up of leasehold improvements and have useful economic lives that reflect the lease period. The extension in lease period therefore caused the depreciation charge for the year to 10 March 2023 to decrease to £73k compared to £253k in the prior year.

Social Work England has amended the estimation for the useful economic life for fixtures and fittings from 3 years to 10 years. As this change has been applied prospectively and the opening balance was nil, there is no impact on the assets already owned.

	Land & Buildings £000's	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000's	IT Equipment £000's	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000's	Total £000's
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2021	1,265	319	799	0	2,383
Additions	0	0	152	0	152
Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2022	1,265	319	951	0	2,535
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2021	(521)	(240)	(427)	0	(1,188)
Depreciation charge	(253)	(79)	(231)	0	(563)
At 31 March 2022	(774)	(319)	(658)	0	(1,751)
Carrying value:					
31 March 2022	491	0	293	0	784
31 March 2021	744	79	372	0	1,195

10. Intangible assets

	Assets under construction £000's	Internally generated software £000's	Total intangibles £000's
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2022	6,159	0	6,159
Additions	2,217	0	2,217
Transfers	(7,808)	7,808	0
At 31 March 2023	568	7808	8,376
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2022	0	0	0
Amortisation charge			
At 31 March 2023	0	(390)	(390)
Carrying value:			
31 March 2023	568	7418	7,986
31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159

Intangible assets at 31 March 2023 relate to a suite of digital services that have been developed to enable Social Work England to carry out its regulatory role. As at the year end, the software has a restricted public use to support Social Work England's overarching business needs.

During the year 2022 to 2023, management deemed the development of version 1 of our suite of digital services to be fully operational from 1 January 2023. The related development cost was transferred from assets under construction to internally generated software and amortised from that date.

Further development of the suite of digital services is ongoing and continues to be categorised as assets under construction.

	Assets under construction £000's	Internally generated software £000's	Total intangibles £000's
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2021	4,418	0	4,418
Additions	1,741	0	1,741
At 31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2021	0	0	0
Amortisation charge			
At 31 March 2022	0	0	0
Carrying value:			
31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159
31 March 2021	4,418	0	4,418

11. IFRS 16 – Leases

	31 March 2023 Property Lease £000's	1 April 2022 Property Lease £000's
Leases for which IFRS 16 applies in full		
Not later than one year (cash flows)	92	240
Later than one year and not later than five years (cash flows)	761	734
Later than five years (cash flows)	180	420
Total	1033	1,394
Less future interest charges	110	46
Present value of obligations	923	1,348
Analysed as:		
Payables: amounts falling due within 1 year	90	239
Payables: amounts falling due after more than 1 year	833	1,109
Total	923	1,348

Social Work England adopted IFRS 16, as interpreted and adapted in the the government financial reporting manual, with effect from 1 April 2022. The lease was recognised as a right-of-use asset, adjusted by the accrued rent payments, and had a corresponding lease liability.

The building lease obligation at 31 March 2022 was disclosed under IAS 17 with a carrying value of £325K.

On transition, at 1 April 2022, hindsight was applied in the preparation of the financial statements. The lease liability was calculated by discounting the future cashflows using an interest rate at 0.95%, which was the then applicable HM Treasury rate.

The lease was modified at 10 March 2023, removing a break clause, with future cash flows discounted at 3.51%, the applicable HM Treasury interest rate at that date. The decrease in the present value of obligation at 31 March 2023, compared to the value at 1 April 2022, was due to payments made during the year 2022 to 2023 and incentives provided by the landlord for future periods. The interest liability for the remaining lease period has increased due to the change in discount rate.

12. Capital commitments

Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these accounts	31 March 2023 £000s	2021 to 2022 £000s
Property, plant and equipment		
Leasehold improvements	0	0
Furniture and fittings	0	0
Intangible assets		
Assets under construction	1,600	1,403
Total	1,600	1,403

Assets under construction relate to the remaining work undertaken by an external supplier required to continue development on Social Work England's suite of digital services.

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13. Related party transactions

Related party transactions	2022 to 2023 £000s	2021 to 2022 £000s
GMC Services International	0	25
Mental Health First Aid England	0	4

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, and the secondment of staff. In addition, Social Work England is co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care, with which there were no financial transactions.

There were no other related financial transactions during the year 2022 to 2023.

14. 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 2023 and the date of certification.

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Finance & Commercial Update

Agenda Item 10 Paper Ref 07

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

Author

Richard Simpson, Head of Finance & Commercial

Date

28 July 2023

Reviewed by

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Finance - Cautious

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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1. Summary

This paper provides an update on the management accounts for the period ending 30 June 2023, and an update on commercial activity during the last quarter.

2. Action required

N/A

3. Commentary

Management accounts

A summary set of the Management Accounts for the year to 30 June 2023 can be found in Annex A.

Key highlights are as follows:

Full year revenue expenditure, net of fee income, is £3,159k compared to the budgeted amount of £3,189k. This represents an underspend of c£30k, consistent with the trend established in the first 2 months of the financial year.

Of this underspend, c£13k relates to an underspend of payroll related costs mainly due a higher-than-expected level of vacancies. Other areas of revenue expenditure are c£28k lower than budget, particularly fitness to practice related costs such as legal fees. Year to date fee income is c£11k lower than budget and although it is too early in the year to identify trends, it is probable that fee income will return to budget later in the year.

Year to date capital expenditure is £523k, which is £25k lower than budget, reflecting a lower-than-expected level of purchases of IT equipment. We expect the level of expenditure to return to budget during the second half the year.

Forecast

We have undertaken an initial forecast for the remainder of the financial year and expect to remain close to budget with an anticipated full year revenue underspend of £61k, 0.6% of budget.

We will undertake a further forecast in August once we understand the impact of the cost-of-living payment which is due to be paid in July. We estimate this to cost c£360k, which is a significant unbudgeted amount in proportion to our overall budget. As the Cabinet Office expect this payment to be funded from our existing budget, we will have to monitor costs very closely over the course of the year and may have to reduce the number of hearings planned for the final quarter of the financial year to ensure we do not overspend.

Commercial update

In late 2022 the Board approved our business case for the provision of telephony services. This procurement for this service was concluded in April when we awarded the contract to the successful bidder, Britannic. Britannic offered the opportunity of an improved service at a lower cost than the incumbent. We began the process of migrating this service in May

and went live in July. To date the migration has met our business needs at a lower cost; this has enabled us to target more of our 2023/24 budget towards key regulatory functions.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

For assurance and noting.

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5. Annex A – Management Accounts as at 30 June 2023

Income and Expenditure Statement

Directorates	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	% Variance	Full Year Original Budget	Full Year Forecast	Variance
Fee Income	(2,456,100)	(2,467,877)	(11,777)	0	(10,605,000)	(10,605,000)	(0)
Executive Leadership Team							
Wages & Salaries	129,457	124,344	(5,113)		504,814	509,928	(5,113)
Support	5,566	2,500	(3,066)		10,000	13,066	(3,066)
Total	135,024	126,844	(8,180)	(6.4%)	514,814	522,994	(8,180)
People & Business Support							
Wages & Salaries	543,492	509,406	(34,086)		2,435,835	2,450,171	(14,336)
Support	555,666	566,257	10,591		2,351,029	2,340,438	10,591
Total	1,099,158	1,075,663	(23,495)	(2.2%)	4,786,864	4,790,609	(3,745)
Regulation							
Wages & Salaries	1,430,433	1,467,514	37,081		5,808,773	5,771,692	37,081
Seconded & Agency Staff	22,319	21,000	(1,319)		42,000	43,319	(1,319)
Support	2,308,487	2,342,279	33,791		7,464,440	7,430,649	33,791
Total	3,761,239	3,830,792	69,553	0.0%	13,315,213	13,245,660	69,553
Professional practice and external engagement							
Wages & Salaries	464,980	481,085	16,105		2,063,578	2,047,473	16,105
Support	155,527	143,419	(12,108)		925,529	937,637	(12,108)
Total	620,507	624,504	3,997	0.6%	2,989,107	2,985,110	3,997
Total Expenditure	5,615,929	5,657,803	41,875	0.7%	21,605,999	21,544,374	61,625

							1. Welcome and Apologies for
Directorates	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	% Variance	Full Year Original Budget	Full Year Forecast	2. Minutes of the meeting held on
Net Expenditure	3,159,829	3,189,926	30,097	0.9%	11,000,999	10,939,375	3. Matters Arising and Action Log
Depreciation/Amortisation	516,611	540,500	23,889	4.4%	2,162,000	2,138,111	4. Chief Executive's Report
Net Expenditure inc Depreciation	3,676,439	3,730,426	53,987	1.4%	13,162,999	13,077,485	
Capital Expenditure	523,589	549,500	25,911	4.7%	2,199,000	2,173,089	
Total	4,200,028	4,279,926	79,898	1.9%	15,361,999	15,250,574	5. Annual Report and Accounts
							6. Finance and Commercial
							7. Quarter 1 Performance
							8. Early stages of Fitness to

Balance Sheet

	Cost £	Depreciation £	N.B.V £
Fixed Assets			
Buildings	1,264,299	(864,817)	399,482
Lease - Right of Use	1,122,252	(242,499)	879,753
IT Equipment	1,194,087	(720,374)	473,713
Fixtures & Fittings	318,851	(318,851)	0
Intangible Asset	7,807,986	(780,799)	7,027,188
Intangible Asset (WIP)	1,110,438	0	1,110,438
	12,817,914	(2,927,340)	9,890,574
Current Assets			
Prepayments			633,023
Bank			4,791,268
			5,424,291
Current Liabilities			
Accruals			(1,931,001)
Deferred Income			(3,668,748)
Payroll Control			(327,359)
			(5,927,108)
Working Capital (Current Assets less Current Liabilities)			(502,817)
Non-Current Liabilities			
Lease liabilities			(1,018,831)
Total assets and liabilities			8,368,926
Reserves			
Taxpayers' equity			(8,368,926)



Performance Report Q1 2023-24

Agenda Item 11

Paper Ref 08

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

Author

Andy Leverton, Head of Business Planning and Improvement

Date

28 July 2023

Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

This paper is for

Discussion and Advising

Associated Strategic Objective

SO10: Continually develop and improve how we work, ensuring we are a well-run organisation that delivers the right outcomes and provides value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Operational delivery - Open

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Welcome and

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1. Executive summary

This report presents our performance for Q1 of 2023-24. We publish our performance and data on a quarterly basis. Publishing quarterly means we show trends and performance within the year and against previous years.

2. Overall assessment

Table 1: Overview of business plan objectives for 2023-24

Business plan objective for 2023 to 2024		RAG
Prevention and Impact	1.1 Develop an inclusive communications and engagement approach to improve understanding about social work and the value of our professional standards	
	2.1 Implement our data and insight strategy	
	3.1 Influence and advise development of national policy and statutory guidance	
	4.1 Implement the readiness for professional practice guidance	
	4.2 Review approach to course inspections, reapprovals and quality assurance	
Regulation and protection	5.1 Identify opportunities to improve the timeliness, fairness and quality of our registration and advice processes	
	5.2 Identify ways we can improve the timeliness of overseas applications	
	5.3 Review approach to concerns about misuse of title of 'social worker'	
	6.1 Identify opportunities to bring more investigative activity into earlier stage of the FtP process	
	6.2 Optimise our approach to accepted disposals	
	6.3 Ensure our hearings process is efficient and delivers value for money	
	6.4 Demonstrate impact following changes to revised legislative framework	
	7.1 Develop our SPOC network and explore local resolution pathways	
Delivery and improvement	8.1 Conduct user research to identify how to improve digital user experience	
	9.1 Implement our people strategy	
	10.1 Further develop and communicate quality and assurance frameworks	
	10.2 Evaluate our economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and demonstrate value for money improvements	
	10.3 Implement our corporate sustainability plan	
Green: On track		Amber: Some issues, being managed and closely monitored
		Red: Significant issues, action plan required

Table 2: Overview of key performance indicators for 2023-24

ID	KPI Description	Target		Q1	Last Q
EQA1	Percentage of course reapproval decisions made	70% by March 2024	Q1: 35%	37%	30%
REG1	Time taken to approve UK registration applications	≤ 10 working days (median)		4	3
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications	≤ 20 working days (median)		9	8
REG3	Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases	Monitor (working days)		55	34
REG4	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days (median)		4	3
REG5	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 minutes (median)		5	8
FTP1	Age of triage caseload	≤ 14 weeks (median) by March 2024	Q1: 17 weeks	17	16
FTP2	Age of investigation caseload	≤ 54 weeks (median) by March 2024	Q1: 61 weeks	61	60
FTP3	Time taken to complete case examination process	≤ 12 weeks (median)		7	6
FTP4	Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome	Monitor (weeks)		118	99
FTP5	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤ 20 working days (median)		19	19
FTP6	FtP cases internal quality score	≥ 90% meet our internal standards		93%	94%
IG1	Time taken to complete FOI requests	≥ 90% within deadline		100%	99%
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	≥ 90% within deadline		100%	99%
C1	Corporate complaints response time	≥ 70% within 20 working days		82%	81%
P1	Retention rate	≥ 80%		84%	85%
P2	Sickness absence over last 12 months	≤ 5.4 days per person		4.3	3.8
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.5%		0.6%	0.7%
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≥ 99%		99.9%	99.9%

3. Performance 01 April to 30 June 2023

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

Our objectives

Objective 1.1: Develop an inclusive communications and engagement approach to improve understanding of social work and professional standards

In Q1 we began delivery against a new three-year comms and engagement plan. This supports the objectives set out in our 2023-2026 strategy, and our intent for better prevention and impact. Communications and engagement are 2 levers that we have at our disposal to enable positive, long-term change in our role as a specialist regulator. This is specifically true for our third statutory objective, to build trust and confidence in the social work profession. By being proactive in this space we seek to create opportunities to educate and inform people on what social work is and why is it deemed important enough by society to be regulated. Under this objective we spotlight just some of the activity that has taken place to incrementally grow confidence in the way we regulate and the proportion of social workers who value our professional standards. This has included:

- Engaging with over 2,300 people locally, over 50% of which were through online events. We are seeing an increase for face-to-face events and attended 26 in this period (10% of our all engagements). We have started to see more consistent engagement from children and families’ social workers and have gathered feedback relating to our fitness to practise (FtP) and registration processes, plus the impact of hybrid working on the learning experiences of students on placement.
- We are continuing to engage with people with lived experience, including children and young people, to listen to their experience of social work and their understanding of professional regulation.
- Achieving over 1.2million unique page views across our digital content. On social media we were pleased to pilot our Instagram channel, sharing content to stimulate discussion on professional practice. Across the quarter, our 4 social media platforms gained close to 2,000 new followers.
- Creating a new equality, diversity, and inclusion section of our website. In June we were proud to publish our equality, diversity and inclusion action plan for 2023 to 2024. This action plan brings a renewed focus and drive to progress our equality, diversity and inclusion efforts across everything we do, but also highlights the importance of accessible, inclusive communication and engagement approaches to build confidence in how we regulate.

- Progressing the delivery of commissioned market research. We have received the final findings for the public perceptions research which will allow us to benchmark the impact of our communication and engagement approaches longer term. We are working with the team at YouGov to finalise the report.

Objective 2.1: Implement our data and insight strategy

We have published our data and insight strategy internally and are engaging with our people to ensure they know what it means for them and how they can contribute. We have agreed the scope, milestones and governance for the strategy, including establishing our Insight Hub to coordinate and align data and insight activity across the organisation. We have identified priorities for year 1 of the strategy and are developing our long-term implementation plans.

We have completed an initial analysis of FtP referrals as part of the upstreaming project evaluation and we are planning our approach to the publication of our data for this year, including FtP data, equality, diversity and inclusion data and regular infographics.

Objective 3.1: Influence and advise on the development of national policy and statutory guidance

Alongside other sector leaders, we've continued to build on discussions and planning to address social work workforce challenges in England. We commissioned YouGov to carry out research into the issues affecting recruitment and retention. We promoted this research through our social media channels and in our newsletter reaching over 1,000 participants. This research will continue into Q2 with the findings expected in September 2023 to inform our policy, communication and engagement approaches.

In June 2023, we hosted the first national roundtable looking at the issues and challenges for practice education, in response to a call to action from teaching partnerships. The roundtable was attended by over 20 organisations and leaders from across the sector to consider the ambition for practice education and to agree a collective approach to addressing the challenge.

We followed up that activity by meeting with workstream groups that were established to take forward this work. These 3 groups are exploring recruitment and entry into the profession, retention of social workers and international social work. We acquired a lot of rich data around defining each of these issues, which we will now use to build a 'causal loop'. This methodology will help identify where policy interventions are most likely to have an impact. We will feed this back to the next Workforce Roundtable meeting in July.

The diversity data we have collected from social workers will also support the national workforce roundtable and workstreams. It presents a much clearer picture of the make-up

of the profession, which will enable us to build on our existing understanding of issues and research.

We have started work with the Department for Education (DfE) on the development of the Early Career Framework (ECF). The first of the expert writing group meetings was held during Q1 and work will continue to develop during this financial year, and beyond. The implications of the development of the ECF are significant and we have implemented a project structure so we can respond effectively to the scale and pace of development. This includes considerations for categories of registration, systems development and identifying potential changes for our rules and legislation.

We have provided an organisational response to the Department of Health and Social Care's call for evidence on the Care workforce pathway for adult social care.

In addition, we have begun work to explore our wider stakeholder engagement approach so to more accurately track changes in levels of stakeholder trust in our work. The first step in this approach is to improve the efficiency of the systems we use to record stakeholder intelligence. The second is to more accurately map the relationships we hold as an organisation. The third is to ensure that stakeholder engagement is identified and considered in every communications plan.

Objective 4.1 Implement the readiness for professional practice guidance

The Education and Training Advisory Forum has continued to meet on a monthly basis during Q1 to progress the development of the readiness for professional practice guidance. Through this engagement, we are refining and strengthening our approach to the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements included in the guidance. We are also ensuring that the guidance is aligned with the development of the Early Career Framework with DfE.

The practice education research commenced in May 2023, and we expect findings to be received in September 2023

We promoted and held a session for students to engage them with the development of the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements. This was well attended and identified the need for us to have more regular conversations with social work students in relation to this work. We will continue this in Q2 and Q3.

Objective 4.2 Review approach to course inspections, reapprovals and quality assurance

We have completed end to end process mapping of the education quality assurance process and have developed an improvement plan for our third year of approval and reapproval inspections, starting in September 2023. We are planning a training day for inspector

partners in September to further develop their understanding of our education and training standards.

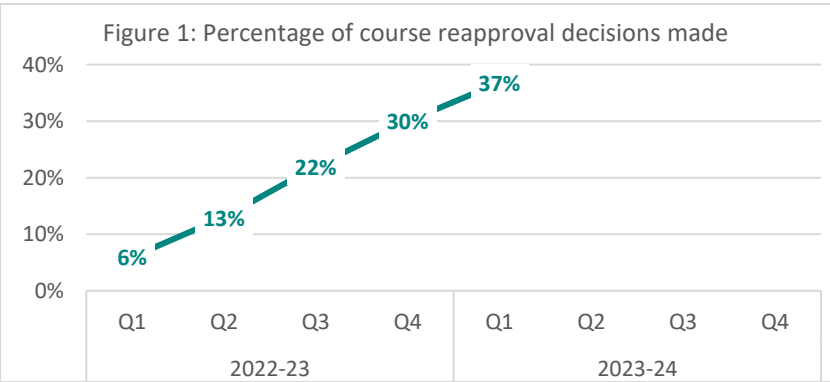
We supported the delivery of communications in response to the marking boycott at universities, which is affecting some social work students due to register with us. This included issuing a letter direct to universities which asked them to advise any impacted final year social work students that they will not be eligible to register until they receive their final award that matches their award title. We have liaised with universities and understand that the majority of final year students are not impacted by the boycott.

We have successfully appointed a Head of Education Programmes, who will take up post in September 2023. They will oversee the implementation of our approach to education and training and will operationally manage the Education Quality Assurance Team.

KPI: Percentage of course reapproval decisions made

Table 3: Education and training key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1 target	Q1
EQA1	Percentage of course reapproval decisions made	70% by March 2024	35%	37%



We met our Q1 target for reapproval decisions, with 86 reapproval decisions completed to date. We have continued to work with higher education institutions to review evidence from courses with conditions and ensure that appropriate improvement action is taken against areas of concern.

Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

Registration and Advice

Objective 5.1: Identify opportunities to improve the timeliness, fairness and quality of our registration and advice processes

In Q1, we improved our search the register functionality, making it easier for members of the public to search for a social worker by name and to identify whether someone holds registration.

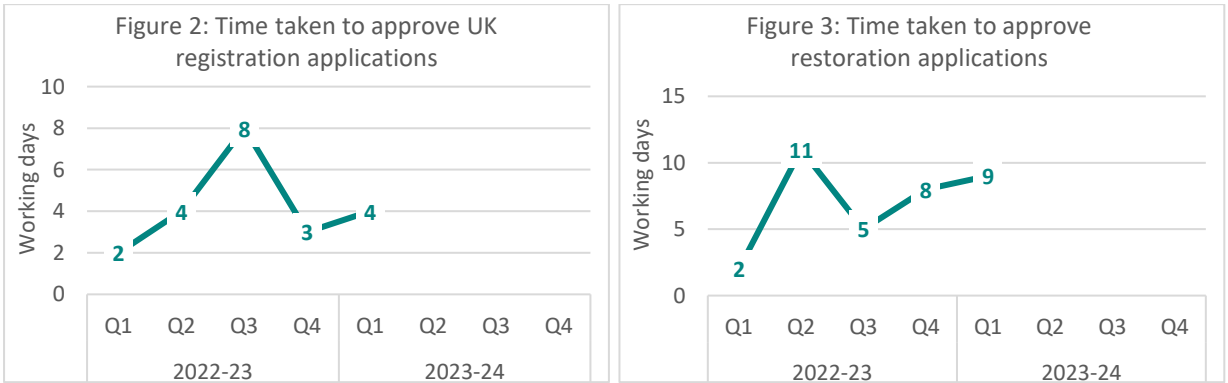
We have also started to prepare for the annual renewals cycle, which will begin on 01 September. We have not made significant changes to the renewals processes or systems following the review of last year’s renewal cycle. We have revised some of our communications to further improve clarity for social workers on the status of their renewal application.

The number of social workers completing CPD requirements before the start of the renewals process remains low compared to previous years; 7% have provided one piece of CPD, compared to 8% last year and 14% in 2021. In June, we emailed 94,631 social workers with no CPD and 3,689 with CPD in progress. We also emailed stakeholders outlining an update on the CPD review, revised CPD requirements wording and encouraging them to share and promote our content as registration renewal gets closer. During Q2, we will continue to promote the importance of completing the renewal requirements early, as well as the consequences of not completing by the end of the cycle on 01 December.

Time taken to approve registration and restoration applications

Table 4: Registration and restoration applications

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
REG1	Time taken to approve UK registration applications	≤ 10 working days	4	4
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications	≤ 20 working days	9	9



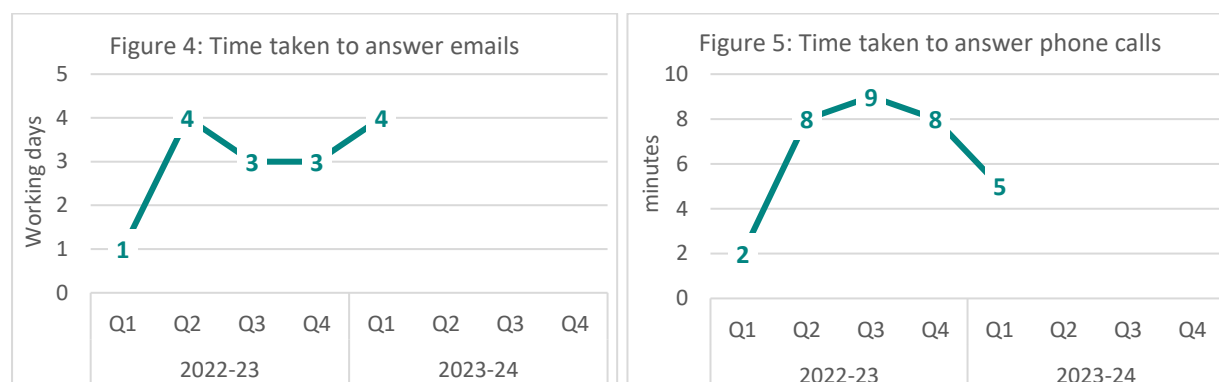
We met the targets for assessing applications to join and restore to the register, even though there has been a slight increase in applications and restorations received; 259 cases

in Q1 compared to 240 cases in Q1 22-23. We are continuing to co-produce our refreshed public guidance with representative bodies, which is on track to be published in Q2.

Time taken to answer emails and phone calls

Table 5: Phone call and email key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
REG4	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days	4	4
REG5	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 minutes	5	5



We met our targets for time taken to answer phone calls and emails despite volumes continuing to increase; 5,785 calls in Q1 compared to 4,425 in Q1 22-23 and 1,977 emails in Q1 compared to 1,480 in Q1 22-23. We have procured new software to support the contact centre in handling enquiries, which should further support our responsiveness and reporting of calls and email activity this year.

Objective 5.2: Identify ways we can improve the timeliness of overseas applications

The number of overseas applications (505 in Q1) remain significantly higher than initial expectations, which has impacted our timeliness for the processing of these applications, with a median of 55 days this quarter. We continue to deepen our understanding of the reasons for this increase, the source of these applications, and any barriers in the timely provision of the evidence required for safely accepting applicants onto the register.

As part of our ongoing work to ensure an efficient and effective overseas application service, we have met with the British Association of Social Workers, and individual employers, to ensure that people are aware of our requirements and the different ways an applicant might evidence their eligibility to join the register if they hold an overseas qualification.

We have co-produced refreshed guidance for overseas applicants with social work representative bodies, which is scheduled to be published in Q2. A paper on international recruitment will go to policy committee in autumn 2023.

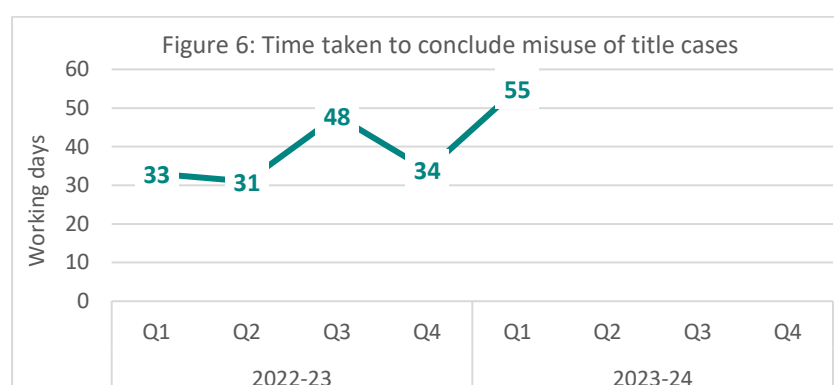
Objective 5.3: Review our approach to concerns about misuse of the protected title ‘social worker’

This work is on track to be completed in Q4 of this year. We aim to publish supportive guidance on misuse of title cases, which will include an explanation of our approach to investigating these cases.

Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases

Table 6: Misuse of title key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
REG3	Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases	Monitor	55	55



Misuse of title cases continue to increase, with 44 cases opened in Q1 compared to 26 cases in Q1 last year. This increase relates to concerns raised by members of the public querying why someone is not appearing on our public register, and cases where people have practised whilst not holding registration, which primarily related to social workers continuing to practise after failing to renew. The increase in volume has contributed to slightly elevated closure times during the quarter.

Fitness to practise

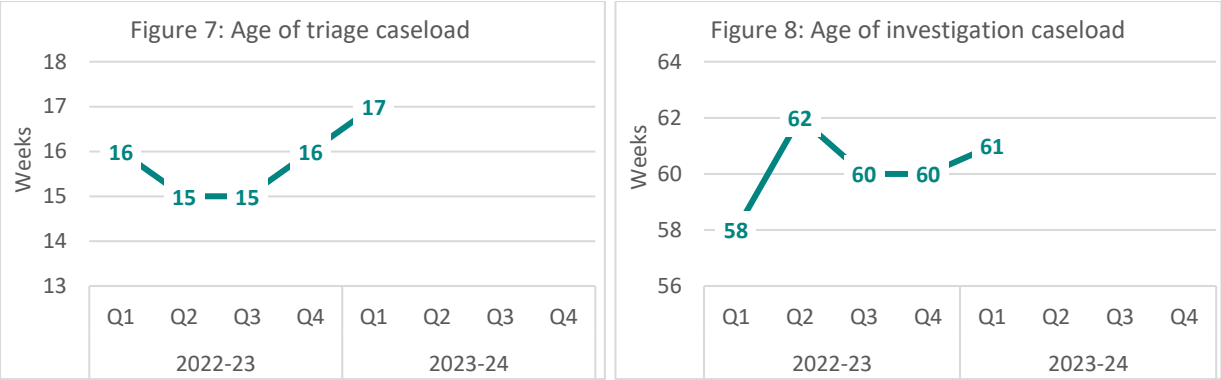
Objective 6.1: Identify opportunities to bring more investigative activity into the earlier stage of the fitness to practise process

We have developed a detailed plan for the year and will produce a 2-year strategy for optimising the investigations stage by the end of Q4 23-24, for implementation from Q1 24-25. We continue to identify activity that we can introduce in 23-24 that will contribute to the optimisation of the triage and investigations stages. Further information on this work is included in a separate paper entitled ‘Early Stages of FtP: Interventions for timeliness and quality’ that will be presented at this Board meeting.

Age of triage and investigation caseloads

Table 7: Triage and investigations key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1 target	Q1
FTP1	Age of triage caseload	≤ 14 weeks by March 2024	≤ 17 weeks	17
FTP2	Age of investigation caseload	≤ 54 weeks by March 2024	≤ 61 weeks	61



We continue to focus on timeliness at the triage and investigation stages of the process and are meeting our quarterly targets. Case progression is dependent on a number of variables, and so we expect the median age of the caseload to fluctuate over the year.

High caseloads are impacting on timeliness at the triage stage, and we are exploring options for bringing the caseload down over 23-24. We are enhancing our approach to case supervision and increasing management capacity to support this. Vacancies and absence levels continue to create challenges for us, and we will continue to monitor and mitigate this where possible.

Objective 6.2: Optimise our approach to accepted disposals by reviewing the case examination stage

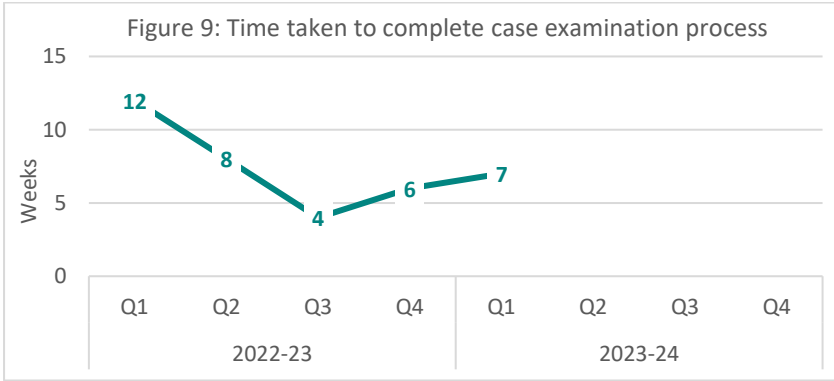
During Q1, we have met with representative bodies to co-produce easy read guidance for social workers who are considering accepted disposal. This will be published in Q2. We have run a series of workshops with the case examiners to further optimise accepted disposals.

Using the new powers provided to us through the revision to our regulations and rules, case examiners have removed two social workers through the accepted disposal process.

Time taken to complete case examination process

Table 8: Case examination key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
FTP3	Time taken to complete case examination process	≤ 12 weeks	7	7



We remain within our target of 12 weeks for cases completing the case examiner stage, despite a slight increase since Q3 22-23. As we work to ensure that the accepted disposal decisions process is optimised, we will closely monitor timeliness in this area, as it can take longer for a case which has been offered an accepted disposal to be concluded.

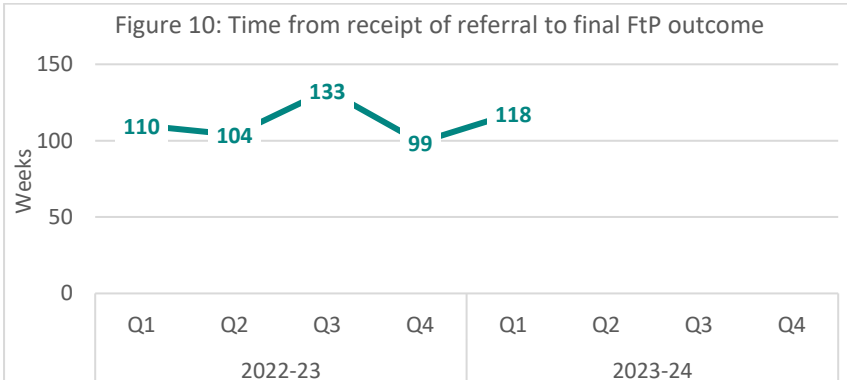
Objective 6.3 Ensure our hearings process is efficient and delivers value for money

We have concluded the legacy case project and successfully held higher volumes of final hearings in Q1. We are planning a pilot of 2-person panels for final hearings later this year, alongside a project to identify digital support for the scheduling of hearings. We continue to prioritise cases for a hearing based on risk and age.

Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome

Table 9: Final FtP outcome key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
FTP4	Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome	Monitor	118	118



As has been previously discussed with the Board, the level of budget available this year will not enable a reduction in the number of cases awaiting hearing. Consequently, the time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome is expected to increase over the course of this

year. We will continue to maximise opportunities for efficiencies at all stages of the FtP process. Improvements in timeliness against our targets for FTP1-FTP3 will assist with ensuring timely conclusions for the majority of our cases, and more timely referrals into the hearings service where case examiners deem it be necessary.

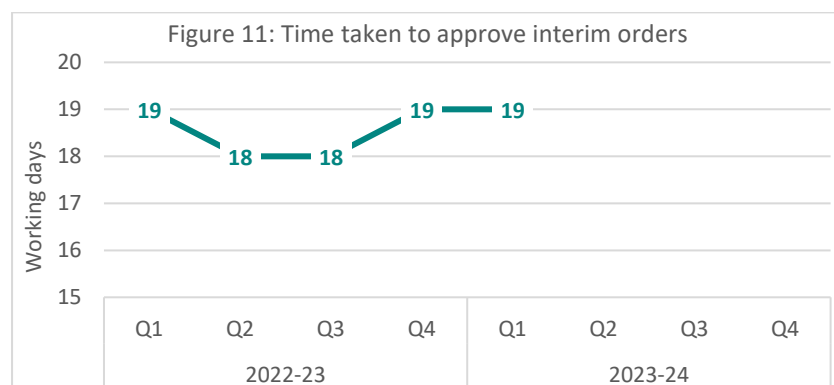
Objective 6.4: Demonstrate impact following the changes to our revised legislative framework, focusing on interim order timeliness, quality of voluntary removal decisions, and efficiency and outcomes of case examiner decision review process

In Q1, we instigated 53 applications for an interim order (a change from the previous process where only case examiners or adjudicators could make an application). The ability to make these applications in this way allows us to identify and manage potential risks more effectively. We have also reviewed our risk management approach at the triage and investigations stages of the process, and actions identified from that review are being taken forward.

Time taken to approve interim orders

Table 10: Interim orders key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
FTP5	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤ 20 working days	19	19



We continue to meet our timeliness target for approving interim orders.

We have considered 21 applications for voluntary removal from social workers who are in the various stages of the FtP process and 5 applications for voluntary removal have been granted.

Our legal team reviewed 6 case examiner decisions this quarter, using the powers given to us in our revised legal framework. At the end of the quarter the final outcomes of these reviews have yet to be completed.

In Q3 this year we will review the impact of the changes to our legal framework that came into effect in Q3 2022-23.

Objective 7.1: Develop our single point of contact network and explore local resolution pathways

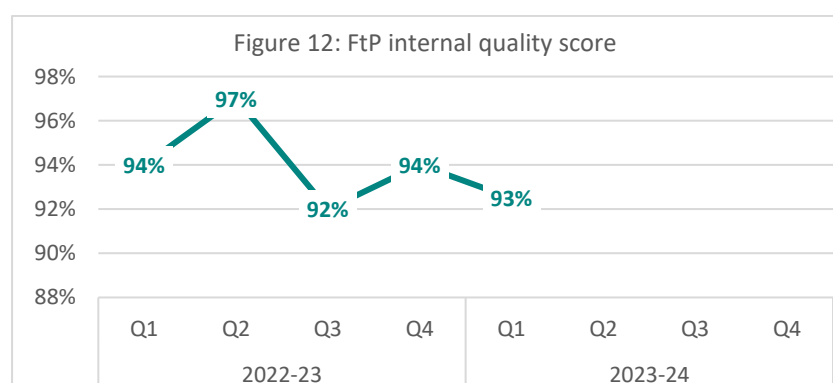
We held our second single point of contact (SPOC) network event in May 2023, with a third event planned in Q3. We also have had interest from NHS Trusts wanting to have a Single Point of Contact for FtP. We have contacted the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council to discuss their roles similar to the SPOCs. The role of the SPOCs has become embedded in both local authorities and our own triage and investigation teams.

We are in the early stages of developing a plan to scope options for local resolution pathways.

Fitness to practise cases internal quality score

Table 11: FtP cases internal quality key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
FTP6	FtP cases internal quality score	≥ 90%	93%	93%



We continue to meet our target for our FtP internal quality score. In Q1 the decision review group, alongside its work to review a sample of FtP decisions, considered thematic reviews relating to Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). We will use learning from these reviews to refresh and improve our processes.

In Q1 we conducted audits on triage decisions, risk assessment and interim orders and we are completing the associated reports to inform our learning and decision making.

Alongside this work, our legal team continue to respond to appeals and other legal processes. In this quarter, we managed 4 registrant appeals relating to the outcome of an FtP hearing, and 1 referral of hearing decision by the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care to the High Court. The team progressed responses to 4 judicial reviews relating to our FtP processes and has advised on our involvement in a number of

Family Court proceedings where documents may be disclosed to us. Any learning identified from this work continues to be shared and followed up with the relevant teams.

1. Welcome and	2. Minutes of the	3. Matters Arising	4. Chief	5. Annual Report	6. Finance and	7. Quarter 1	8. Early stages of
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Strategic theme: Delivery and improvement

Our objectives

Objective 8.1: Carry out user research to identify how to improve digital user experience

We have the foundations of a user research database process in place and ready to be promoted externally. This is a new streamlined approach to how we involve users of our services in our work. It allows us to identify and bring together diverse participants, to feedback on and shape our digital content. This will help us to provide more user-friendly, inclusive digital services. We are also identifying a set of principles to guide our engagement across user research for both digital content and digital development.

Following completion of an accessibility audit later this month we'll be categorising the reported issues against the web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) standards. This will inform our approach to these issues and in producing an up-to-date accessibility statement for our website.

Work to educate our people on the importance of inclusive communication is on track. We are currently asking teams to take part in an accessibility confidence survey so that we can proactively identify where teams need more support. This will help identify any training requirements, which will largely be met through a train the trainer approach via our equality, diversity and inclusion champions.

Objective 9.1: Implement our people strategy

Our people strategy will be shared with the Board at this meeting. During Q1 work has continued with the actions identified in the people plan.

By the end of Q1, 76% of our people have shared at least some of their diversity data with us. For the data to effectively inform our work, we are aiming for at least 80% of our people sharing their diversity data. We are working with teams to explain and promote the importance of sharing this data.

We celebrated the end of the positive action mentoring 6-month pilot, during which the mentors shared their experiences and learning. We are conducting an evaluation to understand the impact of the pilot and to inform future planning and implementation.

Objective 10.1: Further develop and communicate quality and assurance frameworks.

Our assurance framework self-assessment tool has been developed based on the principles of iteration and learning, purpose at the core, and proportionality. We held a familiarisation session with the assistant directors in advance of planned workshops to complete the self-assessment across the regulatory functions in Q2.

Objective 10.2: Evaluate our economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and demonstrate value for money improvements.

In Q1, we started planning our approach to demonstrating value for money improvements. We produced an outline structure of the report we are aiming to produce, and we set out timelines for the types of evidence we will collate to inform our evaluation. We have established a project group to oversee progress and we discussed our high-level approach with the DfE. Our work in this area will continue throughout Q2 and Q3 as we build our evidence base.

Objective 10.3: Implement our corporate sustainability plan

We established an implementation team for our corporate sustainability plan to coordinate and monitor the delivery of the plan.

People action: We have piloted carbon literacy training, ready for wider roll out. We have implemented our mandatory modern slavery and human trafficking training, which now forms part of our induction programme. We have widened our instant recognition e-voucher scheme to include sustainability initiatives. We have also joined the Sheffield Sustainability Network, enabling us to work with colleagues across the city on opportunities for collective action.

Greener workspaces: We have updated our travel and subsistence policy to support our commitment to actively encourage use of public transport and implemented our salary sacrifice cycle to work scheme.

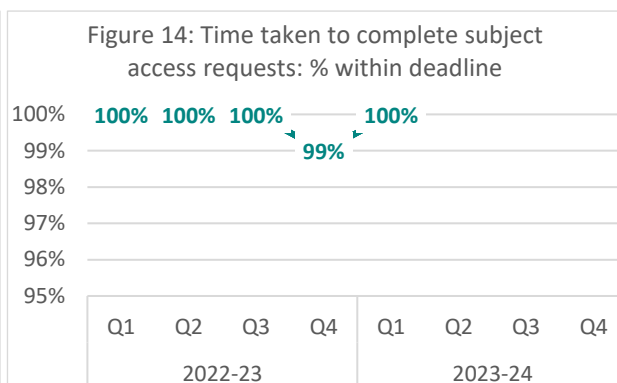
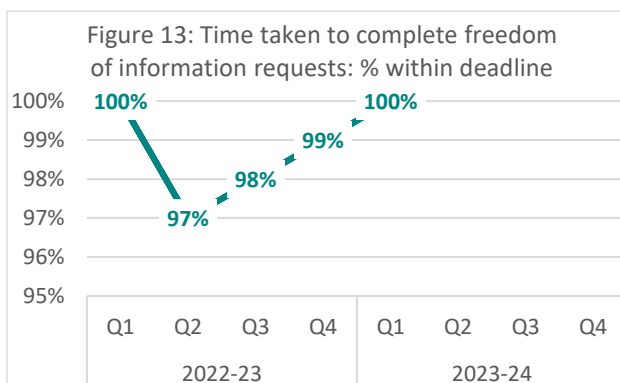
Responsible resourcing: We updated our approach to sustainable procurement by applying our social value assessment to our procurement process.

Our key performance indicators

Information governance

Table 12: Information governance key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1
IG1	Time taken to complete FOI requests	≥ 90% within deadline	100%
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	≥ 90% within deadline	100%

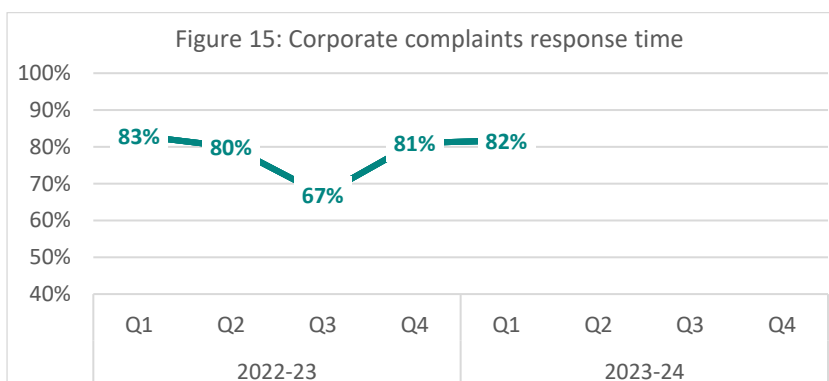


We responded to all freedom of information requests (FOIs) and subject access requests (SARs) within the statutory deadline. We have rolled out updated data protection training, which will continue to assist employees with recognising and providing responses to FOIs and SARs.

Corporate complaints response time

Table 13: Corporate complaints key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
C1	Corporate complaints response time	≥ 70% within 20 working days	82%	82%

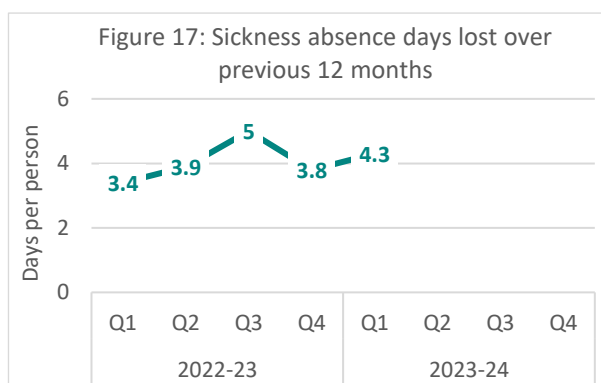
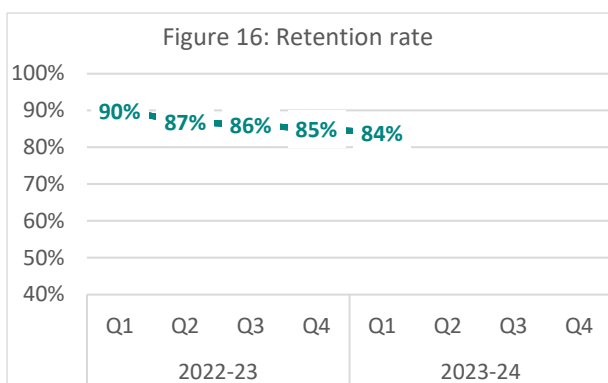


We exceeded our target for responding to corporate complaints, despite receiving a higher-than-average number of complaints whilst also having reduced team capacity due to a vacant post.

People

Table 14: People key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1
P1	Retention rate	≥ 80%	84%
P2	Sickness absence over last 12 months	≤ 5.4 working days per person	4.3



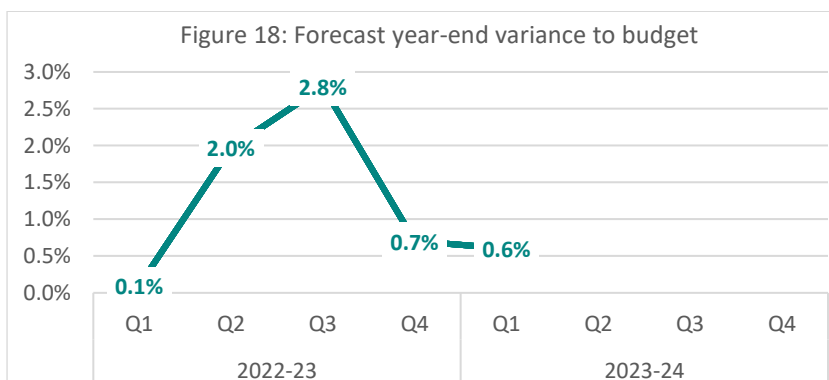
Our average absence rate of 4.3 days per employee over the past 12 months is well within our target of 5.4 days absence per employee. In Q1, 290 days were lost to sickness compared to 176 in Q4 of 22-23.

Our retention rate remains above our target of 80%, however it has reduced slightly each quarter from 90% in Q1 2022-23. Within our people plan we are looking at succession planning and talent management to help support the retention and development of our people.

Forecast year-end variance to budget

Table 15: Finance key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.5%	0.6%	0.6%



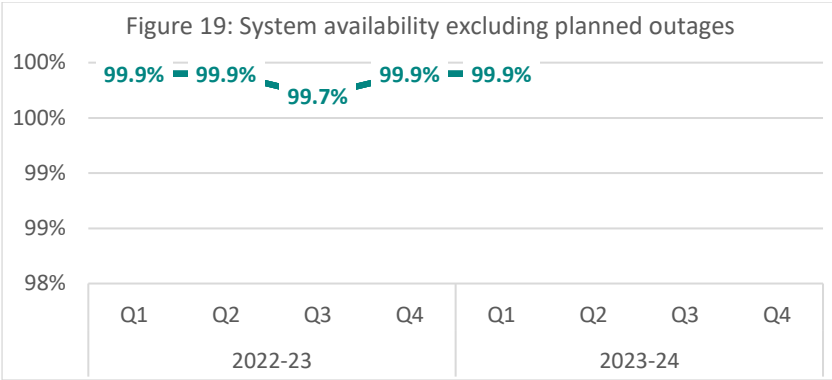
Full year revenue expenditure, net of fee income, is £3,159k compared to the budgeted amount of £3,189k. We have undertaken an initial forecast for the remainder of the financial year and expect to remain close to budget with an anticipated full year revenue underspend of £61k, 0.6% of budget.

Our annual report and accounts have been completed in accordance with the planned timescale and were laid before Parliament on 18 July.

System availability

Table 16: IT key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	YTD
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≥ 99%	99.9%	99.9%



Our systems were available with the agreed tolerances throughout Q1.

Annex A

Statistical data 2023-24

Education and Training		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of concerns received	2023-24	0	0	0									
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Number of re-approval inspections started	2023-24	11	16	13									
	2022-23	5	14	12	20	7	0	0	2	0	1	15	24
Re-approval decisions	Number completed	2023-24	3	2	10								
		2022-23	2	0	4	6	4	9	8	6	9	8	6
	Number re-approved	2023-24	1	0	0								
		2022-23	0	0	1	4	2	5	0	0	6	0	0
	Number re-approved with conditions	2023-24	2	2	10								
		2022-23	2	0	3	2	2	4	8	6	3	9	6
	Number not re-approved	2023-24	0	0	0								
		2022-23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Approval decisions	Number completed	2023-24	3	0	4								
		2022-23	0	0	0	3	3	2	0	2	1	2	0
	Number approved	2023-24	0	0	0								
		2022-23	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Number approved with conditions	2023-24	3	0	4								
		2022-23	0	0	0	3	1	2	0	2	1	2	0
	Number not approved	2023-24	0	0	0								
		2022-23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Registration			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of registered social workers	2023-24		99,893	99,893	100,677									
	2022-23		98,512	98,640	98,725	99,326	99,909	100,856	101,523	100,654	98,236	98,789	99,190	99,567
Number of social workers joining the register	2023-24		437	468	504									
	2022-23		243	161	295	798	534	1,032	963	588	1,341	559	408	426
Number of social workers leaving the register	2023-24		109	41	126									
	2022-23		181	41	215	59	43	146	306	1,461	3,768	11	14	54
Number of new registration applications received	All graduates	2023-24	535	726	694									
		2022-23	275	358	594	1,236	1,129	1,475	948	632	310	437	436	680
	UK graduates	2023-24	394	537	519									
		2022-23	152	188	463	1,075	955	1,338	777	501	201	308	254	496
	Overseas graduates	2023-24	141	189	175									
		2022-23	123	170	131	161	175	137	171	131	109	129	182	184
Median time taken to approve registration applications (working days)	All graduates	2023-24	5	6	4									
		2022-23	4	5	3	3	4	6	8	9	7	3	4	3
	UK graduates	2023-24	5	5	3									
		2022-23	2	3	1	3	4	6	8	8	5	2	1	3
	Overseas graduates	2023-24	52	56	56									
		2022-23	7	15	12	13	20	25	33	33	34	35	46	53
Number of restoration applications received	2023-24		79	85	95									
	2022-23		83	82	75	66	94	127	142	105	1,232	194	97	102
Median time taken to approve restoration applications (working days)	2023-24		15	8	3									
	2022-23		11	13	17	22	29	29	31	32	7	21	36	40
Number of misuse of title cases opened	2023-24		18	13	13									
	2022-23		6	7	13	3	7	6	9	13	37	30	26	7
Median time take to conclude misuse of title cases	2023-24		60	71	43									
	2022-23		20	35	45	31	35	22	59	38	31	22	34	38

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Registration		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of phone calls received	2023-24	1,770	1,843	2,171									
	2022-23	1,304	1,578	1,543	1,976	2,404	3,808	4,347	7,030	6,058	2,677	1,883	2,064
Median time taken to answer phone calls (minutes)	2023-24	6	5	6									
	2022-23	1	3	3	4	8	12	8	8	25	15	6	6
Number of emails received	2023-24	1,643	1,850	1,977									
	2022-23	931	1,344	1,480	1,648	1,802	2,863	3,058	4,281	2,993	1,803	1,592	1,896
Median time taken to answer emails (working days)	2023-24	3	4	3									
	2022-23	1	1	1	3	5	4	4	2	2	5	2	2

CPD		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Percentage of social workers that have submitted at least one piece of CPD	2023-24	4%	5%	7%									
	2022-23	5%	7%	8%	10%	12%	20%	34%	95%	0.6%	1%	2%	4%
Percentage of social workers meeting all CPD requirements	2023-24	1%	2%	3%									
	2022-23	2%	2%	3%	4%	6%	12%	26%	95%	0%	0.2%	0.6%	1%
Total number of valid CPD items recorded (cumulative)	2023-24	7,414	9,004	13,406									
	2022-23	7,710	9,968	13,720	17,379	24,788	41,788	75,663	220,937	759	1,793	3,478	5,731

Fitness to Practise			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of concerns received		2023-24	141	142	155									
		2022-23	153	121	129	126	163	153	181	176	159	149	127	152
Triage	Median age of pre-triage and triage caseload (weeks)	2023-24	17	17	17									
		2022-23	18	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	15	16	16	16
	Number of new pre-triage cases	2023-24	123	151	146									
		2022-23	125	146	144	95	150	155	152	176	131	203	126	160

Fitness to Practise			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	Number of open pre-triage cases	2023-24	307	294	305									
		2022-23	350	321	316	272	309	316	319	330	354	342	307	321
Triage	Percentage of cases closed at the pre-triage stage	2023-24	13%	21%	12%									
		2022-23	27%	40%	22%	15%	15%	11%	16%	30%	21%	16%	14%	9%
	Median time to complete pre-triage stage (weeks)	2023-24	6	7	8									
		2022-23	8	10	7	9	6	6	4	3	0	7	8	6
	Number of cases that progressed to triage	2023-24	120	130	120									
		2022-23	114	110	111	122	96	135	123	117	84	185	141	130
	Number open triage cases (excluding on hold cases)	2023-24	490	527	536									
		2022-23	484	483	485	405	365	409	380	376	366	439	448	460
	Percentage of cases closed at the triage stage	2023-24	71%	68%	74%									
		2022-23	48%	61%	63%	62%	63%	74%	57%	46%	61%	71%	79%	47%
Investigation	Median time taken to complete triage stage (weeks)	2023-24	12	19	22									
		2022-23	8	17	23	25	18	19	15	12	19	16	20	12
	Number of cases that progressed to investigation	2023-24	26	32	31									
		2022-23	25	48	44	39	48	27	59	66	34	30	24	62
	Number open investigation cases	2023-24	667	648	613									
		2022-23	824	784	735	731	733	731	718	720	708	702	640	665
	Median age of investigation caseload (weeks)	2023-24	63	64	61									
		2022-23	63	61	58	61	62	62	61	58	60	62	63	60
	Median time to complete investigation stage (weeks)	2023-24	29	51	70									
		2022-23	79	129	103	57	50	78	62	63	73	57	44	75
Case examiner	Number of open case examiner cases	2023-24	77	82	84									
		2022-23	222	177	166	140	74	58	43	68	75	59	70	82

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Fitness to Practise			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
	Percentage of cases closed at the case examiner stage	2023-24	73%	83%	72%									
		2022-23	55%	60%	64%	60%	63%	55%	52%	66%	55%	59%	68%	73%
Case examiner	Median time taken to complete case examiner stage (weeks)	2023-24	7	8	6									
		2022-23	12	11	12	11	7	8	4	4	4	7	5	4
	Number of accepted disposals offered	2023-24	2	14	12									
		2022-23	14	13	7	9	13	9	7	8	1	11	7	8
Hearings	Number of cases that progressed to hearings	2023-24	8	9	19									
		2022-23	32	46	26	32	33	25	24	15	13	27	18	7
	Number of open cases in hearings	2023-24	386	378	362									
		2022-23	321	351	364	375	385	392	395	392	394	406	412	394
	Number of concluded final hearings	2023-24	17	19	28									
		2022-23	6	7	11	18	20	21	16	18	12	12	11	25
Interim orders	Median time take to approve interim orders (working days)	2023-24	19	20	19									
		2022-23	12	25	19	19	18	12	17	21	11	19	18	19
	Number of interim orders imposed	2023-24	6	3	6									
		2022-23	1	6	6	11	15	9	6	10	5	5	7	8
Number of final order reviews held		2023-24	10	14	11									
		2022-23	8	9	11	8	11	9	9	7	6	12	7	7
Median time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome (weeks)		2023-24	102	127	118									
		2022-23	86	128	107	114	88	105	131	134	117	86	90	138
FtP internal quality score		2023-24	93%	93%	92%									
		2022-23	93%	94%	96%	n/a	96%	97%	92%	91%	92%	95%	89%	94%

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People		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Retention rate	2023-24	83%	85%	84%									
	2022-23	91%	89%	90%	89%	87%	87%	86%	85%	86%	85%	85%	85%
Headcount of staff	2023-24	249	247	245									
	2022-23	228	231	237	246	250	257	262	255	252	253	252	256
Days lost to sickness per employee over previous 12 months	2023-24	3.9	4.4	4.3									
	2022-23	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.9	4.3	4.7	5	4.4	4.2	3.8

Corporate complaints		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Percentage of corporate complaints responded to within timescales	2023-24	87%	89%	77%									
	2022-23	80%	83%	86%	82%	75%	80%	57%	82%	61%	71%	88%	89%
Number of corporate complaints received	2023-24	23	20	26									
	2022-23	8	8	11	11	10	12	14	18	30	26	16	18
Number of corporate complaints that responded to after 20 working days	2023-24	2	3	8									
	2022-23	2	1	1	3	2	3	3	2	7	10	3	2
Median response time over previous 12 months (working days)	2023-24	18	18	18									
	2022-23	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	18	18	18

Annex B

Course reapproval decisions Q1 2023-24

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
University of Lincoln	BSc (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship	East	24 Jan 2023	27 Jan 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4691/24042023_ulir2_swda_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Bath	BSc (Hons) Social Work & Applied Social Studies	South West	14 Feb 2023	16 Feb 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4711/20230221_ubar1_bsc_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
Middlesex University & Think Ahead	PG Dip Social Work Practice	London	14 Feb 2023	16 Feb 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4690/240423_thir1_final.pdf	Approved
University of Gloucestershire	BSc (Hons) Social Work	South West	21 Feb 2023	24 Feb 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4719/24052023_ugr1-bsc_bsc.pdf	Approved with conditions
	BSc (Hons) Social Work (Yeovil)	South West	21 Feb 2023	24 Feb 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4719/24052023_ugr1-bsc_bsc.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Winchester	BSc Social Work	South East	28 Feb 2023	03 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/ra1b5lwx/20230413_uwir1_report_final_v1-1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	MSc Social Work	South East	28 Feb 2023	03 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/ra1b5lwx/20230413_uwir1_report_final_v1-1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work FT Step Up	South East	28 Feb 2023	03 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/mezmhnzn/20230413_uwir2_report_final_v1-1.pdf	Approved with conditions
Canterbury Christchurch	BA (Hons) Social Work	South East	14 Mar 2023	17 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/vkynio5m/14-06-2023_ccur1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	MA Social Work FT	South East	14 Mar 2023	17 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/vkynio5m/14-06-2023_ccur1.pdf	Approved with conditions

	MA Social Work PT	South East	14 Mar 2023	17 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/vkynio5m/14-06-2023_ccur1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work FT (exit route)	South East	14 Mar 2023	17 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/vkynio5m/14-06-2023_ccur1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work PT (exit route)	South East	14 Mar 2023	17 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/vkynio5m/14-06-2023_ccur1.pdf	Approved with conditions
Middlesex University	MA Social Work	London	21 Mar 2023	24 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/n2eo1rpv/15062023_mur1_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work	London	21 Mar 2023	24 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/n2eo1rpv/15062023_mur1_final.pdf	Approved with conditions

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Course approval decisions Q1 2023-24

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
University of Lincoln	BSc Social Work (Full time)	East	24 Jan 2023	27 Jan 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4692/24042023_ulir2_bsc_sw_p_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
	BSc Social Work (Part time)	East	24 Jan 2023	27 Jan 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4692/24042023_ulir2_bsc_sw_p_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Bath	BSc (Hons) Social Work & Applied Social Studies	South West	14 Feb 2023	16 Feb 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4711/20230221_ubar1_bsc_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Winchester	BSc Social Work	South East	28 Feb 2023	03 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/ra1b5lwx/20230413_uwir1_report_final_v1-1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	MSc Social Work	South East	28 Feb 2023	03 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/ra1b5lwx/20230413_uwir1_report_final_v1-1.pdf	Approved with conditions
Middlesex University	MA Social Work	London	21 Mar 2023	24 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/n2eo1rpv/15062023_mur1_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip	London	21 Mar 2023	24 Mar 2023	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/n2eo1rpv/15062023_mur1_final.pdf	Approved with conditions



Early stages of FTP: Interventions for timeliness and quality

Agenda Item 14 Paper Ref 11

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Philip Hallam, Executive Director, Regulation

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Berry Rose, Assistant Director – Regulation (Investigations)

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Philip Bowden, Head of Adjudications

Date

13 July 2023

Reviewed by

Philip Hallam, Executive Director, Regulation

This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

Associated Strategic Objective

SO6: Review our fitness to practise case resolution approach, to improve service quality and fairness, and ensure value for money.

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Regulatory functions - Cautious

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Summary

We continue to focus on timeliness and quality in the early stages of our fitness to practise process. As we conclude the legacy caseload project, we are amending our approaches in a number of areas to ensure that we are able to effectively deal with caseloads.

We have set ambitious objectives for the fitness to practise service in our 2023/24 business plan.

This paper sets out the activities and we are undertaking to deliver on the following objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs):

Business objectives

- 6.1: Identify opportunities to bring more investigative activity into the earlier stage of the fitness to practise process, and streamline the preparation of cases for a hearing
- 6.2: Optimise our approach to accepted disposals. We will review the case examination stage of the fitness to practise process, focusing on engagement with accepted disposals, guidance and outcomes

KPIs

- FTP1: Age of triage caseload ($\leq$ 14 weeks (median) by March 2024)
- FTP 2: Age of investigation caseload $\leq$ 54 weeks (median) by March 2024
- FTP 3: Time taken to complete case examination process ($\leq$ 12 weeks (median)
- FTP 6: Fitness to practise internal quality score ($\geq$ 90% meet our internal standards)

The paper also identifies the impact that we anticipate these activities will have.

2. Action required

The Board is requested to review and note this paper.

3. Activity

We have identified the following key activity to support delivery of our business objectives and KPIs in the triage, investigations and case examiner services:

Triage and Investigation

1. We have increased our establishment in the investigation team to provide additional capacity across the team and in particular in management capacity to support activity in 2023/24.
2. We have reviewed the Triage and Investigation Officer (TIO) role to maximise the support they can provide to investigators and we will evaluate the effectiveness of this in September/October
3. During Q1 and Q2, we are undertaking a review of the triage decision making processes to identify opportunities for efficiencies and optimisation.
4. In Q2, we are reviewing case supervision formats and frequency of supervision to ensure our people receive consistent and effective supervision. Targeted case supervision will also support proactive and proportionate case progression.
5. In Q3, we will implement criteria to identify the likely pathway(s) of each case at an early stage. This will trigger targeted supervision and monitoring of the progress of cases to ensure effective case management. We will also establish and embed forums for complex case discussions at specific points in the journey of cases.
6. In Q3/Q4 we will undertake a review of the interim order process and decision making.
7. On an on-going basis we are undertaking monthly reviews of case examiner adjournment rates and further analysis if the rates are outside of expected ranges.
8. We continue to work with the case examiner team to understand themes, trends and learning points relating to case examiner decisions, including accepted disposal.
9. We also continue to review cases that are discontinued to identify themes and learning to improve practice. This learning will be embedded within triage and investigation teams.
10. We have introduced regular dip-sampling and quality assurance reviews of risk assessments.
11. By the end of 23-24 we aim to have introduced communications functionality into our case management system.

Case Examiners

1. Undertake a full review of accepted disposals offered, refused and accepted to identify key themes and trends by the end of Q4
2. By Q3, develop guidance for social workers highlighting the importance of engagement throughout investigations and case examination
3. Review acceptance and rejection rates of accepted disposals on a monthly basis
4. Establish a baseline for accepted disposals by the end of Q3
5. Also by the end of Q3, undertake a review of the process for case examiners agreeing to proposed minor amendments requested by social workers
6. Work with the Legal team to review and advise on the extent to which accepted disposals can be offered in circumstances where only partial admissions are made on facts during Q4

1. Welcome and	2. Minutes of the	3. Matters Arising	4. Chief	5. Annual Report	6. Finance and	7. Quarter 1	8. Early stages of
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7. In Q3, Implement periodic reviews to further understand no further action findings at final hearings

3. Commentary

We anticipate that the activity listed above will have the following impacts, both in this business year, and over the current strategic period:

Triage and Investigation

Actions 1 & 2:

- The increase in establishment in the investigations team will support us to meet our KPI in relation to timeliness. It is anticipated that we will see the benefit of this increase in establishment by quarter 3 (September 2023 onwards).
- Refocussing the role of the TIOs will release capacity for the investigators to focus on timely and high quality investigations

Action 3:

- Following the review of our triage decision making process, we anticipate that changes will be made which will improve our timeliness KPI as decisions will be made at the most appropriate point in the journey of a case, by the most appropriate decision maker. This will also support us to improve timeliness at the investigations stage as cases will be younger when they are referred for investigation.

Actions 4 & 5:

- We anticipate that changes to supervision will support us to take a more targeted approach to different cohorts of cases, whilst maintaining oversight of the quality of the work being undertaken.
- Providing support and oversight to make the right decisions at the earliest appropriate points will ensure that our we optimise the enquiries that we make. Beyond 2023/24, we anticipate this will reduce the level of work needed at post case examiner stage, and ensure that cases are concluded at the most appropriate point in the fitness to practise process, thus reducing unnecessary time and cost.

Actions 6 - 9:

- The ongoing reviews of adjournments, discontinuance decisions and accepted disposal decisions will enable us to consider learning and will assist with shaping our

discussions and enquiries in the future. This learning will also support our timeliness objectives.

Action 10:

- Undertaking regular dip-sampling and quality assurance reviews of risk assessments will help us to ensure that case supervision supports the identification and management of risk effectively and consistently across the triage and investigation teams.

Action 11:

- Introducing communications functionality into our case management system is anticipated to result in significant time savings across the fitness to practise function as well as delivering other benefits associated with record-keeping and information governance.

Case Examiners

Each of the actions identified above in relation to the case examination service will assist with optimising our approach to accepted disposals, in line with our business plan objective, in the following ways:

Actions 1 and 2 will help us to ensure that we are effectively communicating with social workers when we offer an accepted disposal, so that social workers are better informed and equipped to decide whether to accept or refuse an accepted disposal.

Actions 1, 3, 4 and 5 will increase our understanding of cases where accepted disposals are offered and accepted, to further support optimising accepted disposals.

The learning we gain from actions 1, 5, 6 and 7 will allow us to continue to provide learning about accepted disposals to other regulators who are gaining similar powers and the Professional Standards Authority.

Actions 1, 5, 6 and 7 will assist in ensuring that only cases where evidence is disputed and/or it is in the public interest are progressed to the hearings stage.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

We are undertaking a range of activity across the early stages of the fitness to practise process, which has been informed by our learning from our first 3 years of activity. The progress of this activity will be monitored closely throughout the year, along with the identification and mitigation of risks to delivery.