Minutes of the last Board meeting 22 July 2022

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 October 2022

Reviewed by
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for
Decision

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

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite
Operational delivery - Open

Social Work England

Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting for approval
Friday 22 July 2022, 10.30am
at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

Board Members:	Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair
	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Deputy Chair, Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Mark Lam	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Social Work England staff in attendance	Berry Rose	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Emily Star	Insight and Analysis Manager
	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
	Sophie Rees Rumney	Executive Assistant
	Tracy Watterson	Executive Director, People and Business Support
Sponsor Team:	Louise Woodward	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sue Howson	Department for Education (DfE)
	Siobhan Carson	Professional Standards Authority
Staff Observers:	Hayley Kitchen	Triage and Investigations Officer
	Ioana Roberts	Regional Engagement Lead
Minute taker:	Alison Edbury	Executive Office Lead
Apologies:	None	

1. Welcome

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

1.2 New interests were declared. Dr Sue Ross had resigned from the Board of Bon Accord Care in Aberdeen; she also resigned this month from being the Independent Chair Scottish Borders Public Protection Committee; she would start work as safeguarding Consultant with Stoke on Trent Council on the 26 July and from 1 September would be stepping down from the Board of Affinity Trust.

Dr Andrew McCulloch reported his interest as a Director of the Hawk and Owl Trust.

Lord Patel reported his interests as a Director with both KJS Opportunities and UK Inertia Business & Consulting Limited. The Executive Office Lead agreed to update the online register of interests.

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

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting — Paper 01

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on Friday 20 May 2022 **were approved as a correct record.**

3. Matters Arising and Action Log — Paper 02

3.1 The Chair reported on the action log. All actions closed since the last meeting were approved as follows:

- Action 46: Plan to have all updated Board and Committee terms of reference brought into a single document. *The single document had been drafted to align with new Framework Document and was reviewed by the Board at the private strategy meeting 11 March 2022. The Board agreed to submit final comments by correspondence to Executive Lead in time for formal approval for the 20 May 2022 meeting. Completed.* **Action closed.**
- Action 51: Policy Committee to prepare a short paper for the Board on the engagement approach with the National Advisory Forum. *Paper was discussed at Policy Committee meeting 12 May 2022 for recommendation to the Board. Engagement brief was approved at the 20 May Board meeting.* **Action closed.**
- Action 52: Policy Committee workplan to include deep dive topics for discussion at future Board meetings. *Discussed at private strategy meeting 20 May 2022 and adopted into Policy Committee forward workplan.* **Action closed.**

The progress on the open actions was noted:

- Action 54: Chair to have one to one meetings with non-executive Directors. *Chair and Deputy Chair have renewed the appraisal form and meetings were being scheduled. Chair agreed to email the new form to Executive Office Lead.* **Open.**
- Action 56: Corporate strategy day to involve a discussion on Social Work England's capital strategy and budget. *Discussed at 21 July corporate strategy planning session.* **Action now closed.**
- Action 57: Policy Committee Chair to ensure appropriate induction for NAF members to the Committee. *Confirmation of NAF members in process. Policy Committee Chair is in the process of setting up an induction meeting.* **Open.**
- Action 58: Executive Director, Fitness to Practise to prepare a detailed paper on quality assurance for the July Board meeting. *Interim paper was discussed at private strategy meeting 22 July 2022; a fuller paper was being prepared for 28 October meeting.* **Action now closed.**

It was also noted by the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) that following Mark Lam's feedback, the digital services business case was agreed in principle at the last ARAC meeting. Formal approval on updated business case had been delayed due to the unexpected extra work taken up on the external annual audit. The updated business case would be circulated by email to Board members prior to the next ARAC and Board meetings.

Action: Executive Director, People and Business Support to ensure email circulation of updated digital services business case prior to October ARAC and Board meetings.

4. Chair's Report - verbal

4.1 The Chair noted the recent political changes in UK government included the appointment of Steve Barclay MP as The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and James Cleverly MP had been appointed as The Secretary of State for Education.

4.2 The Chair had undergone a recent appraisal with the Department for Education (DfE) and the regular meetings with the sponsor team (DfE) had continued as planned. He reported that the appraisal of Social Work England Board members was underway; Board members would complete an appraisal form and the Chair would follow up with individual meetings.

4.3 Social Work England's Chair and Chief Executive had met with the new Chair and Chief Executive of the Professional Standards Authority ('the Authority'). They planned to attend the Authority's upcoming launch of their state of regulation report 'Safe care for all'. The Chair recently had a meeting with the President of Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) and the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, which resulted in an agreement to look at partnership working together; initially this would focus on adult care services and support towards collection of equality, inclusion and diversity data. The Chair had continued to follow the progress of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) students in Middlesborough. He reported on a useful event attended with Social Work England's Chief Executive at the University Bradford.

4.4 The Chair reported that Social Work England had hosted a successful corporate strategy planning day on 21 July with the Board and involving National Advisory Forum members and staff members. The new corporate strategy would set the tone and forward direction for the next 3 years from March 2023. He thanked everyone for their contributions.

5. Chief Executive's Report — Paper 03

5.1 The Chief Executive reported that the annual external audit had been completed and the annual report and accounts were laid before parliament on 19 July and can be accessed on the gov.uk website. He noted there had been challenges working with the new audit team this year.

5.2 The new organisational structure was implemented 1 July. The new executive team comprised Philip Hallam, Executive Director, Regulation; Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement; Tracy Watterson, Executive Director, People and Business Support. The Chief Executive welcomed Berry Rose and Rachel McAssey to their new Assistant Director, Regulation roles and reported that Jonathan Monk would be joining Social Work England at the end of September as Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy. Incoming Executive Director, People and Business Support, Linda Dale had been able to participate in the recent corporate strategy session. The Chief Executive noted that this was the last Board meeting for Tracy Watterson since she would be stepping down from her role in October. The Chief Executive thanked Tracy for her contribution to Social Work England. The Chair said he was grateful for the support and assurance she had provided to the Board. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee also gave his thanks to Tracy for her support.

5.3 The success of the upstreaming project work was noted and it would now be part of Social Work England's business as usual plans and integrated into our Data and Insight Strategy. Following discussion with other regulators and key stakeholders it was planned to include the EDI diversity questions in our renewal journey for social workers. This approach will be supported by a sector wide campaign. The DfE has released the names of the people who have now been appointed to the implementation board for the recommendations arising from Independent Review of Childrens Social Care. As there are recommendations relating to social work and Social Work England in the review, we will stay close to developments on plans for implementation. We are pleased with the results of the Professional Standards Authority Performance Review 2020/21. The Authority concluded that we did not meet standards 3 and 17; the Chief Executive said plans were in place to support Social Work England to meet these standards next year. He noted the performance report for Quarter 1 2022/23 would follow later on the agenda.

5.4 The Board noted their involvement the previous day in corporate strategy planning with Social Work England leadership. The Board went on to discuss the broader challenges of the social work landscape and what Social Work England needed to consider in its next 3-year corporate strategy. The challenges concerned:

- Public protection in the context of the independent review of children's social care and the national safeguarding review report on the social work profession and service delivery.
- Regulation of individuals within the social work profession in the context of caseload pressures, high turnover, high use of agency staff, and the impact of remote working.
- The pressures within the social work sector.

5.5 The Chair asked what practical steps Social Work England needed to take in the next 3 months. Chief Executive said that Social Work England would facilitate a process with sector partners for a roundtable session, to discuss the systemic issues and market-driven issues for the sector. Board members Dr Adi Cooper and Dr Sue Ross expressed an interest to be involved in the session; ARAC Chair, Ann Harris was interested to be involved from a risk perspective. **The Chief Executive agreed to follow up with Board members on what potential there might be for Board members to be involved.**

Action: Chief Executive agreed to follow up on the sector roundtable with Board members.

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

6.1 ARAC Chair reported that the annual report and accounts 2021/22 had been published. She noted that the audit completion report provided by EY was not entirely accurate but had been accepted in order to lay the accounts on time. A formal response would be prepared to reflect Social Work England's position. In the interim a meeting had taken place with the National Audit Office (NAO) and the ARAC Chair had lodged Social Work England's concerns regarding EY and the disproportionate cost and amount of time our team had to input into preparing the annual report and accounts; the delays in finalising the accounts; the conduct of the EY audit team. She intended to notify the Department's new Chair of the ARAC, for arms-length bodies, of these risks to Social Work England. The ARAC Chair recorded her thanks to Executive Director, People and Business Support and Head of Finance and Commercial and colleagues for their work on the annual report and accounts and their professionalism in handling the relationship with EY.

6.2 The internal business planning audit had been completed by Haines Watts. This had achieved substantial assurance. ARAC Chair thanked Head of Business Planning and Improvement and his colleagues for this achievement.

6.3 Work on risk management had matured in line with the organisation's growth and development. The annual feedback and complaints report had been approved. The plans to develop the Insight and Quality Improvement team and to embed feedback and complaints within the overall quality assurance process was welcomed by ARAC.

7. Finance and Commercial Report — Paper 05

7.1 Head of Finance and Commercial reported on the quarter 1 management accounts up to 30 June 2022. There was a slight year-to-date underspend of £10k compared to budget. The capital underspend of £97k compared to budget was consistent with previous year's performance; it was expected that the purchase of IT equipment in the second half of the year would bring the capital expenditure in line with budget by quarter 3. Based on a forecast for the remainder of the financial year, Head of Finance and Commercial was confident that the outcome for the year would be within budget. He noted that the format for reporting the management accounts would be adjusted to reflect the new organisational arrangements.

7.2 The Board discussed the rate of depreciation, the treatment of assets under construction and investment plans for capital expenditure. The Chief Executive confirmed that assets under construction would start to be depreciated during 2022/23 as straight-line depreciation over the next 3 to 5 years.

8. External Annual Audit Completion Report 2021/22 — Paper 06

8.1 The ARAC Chair reported that, in general, the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee advised the Board that it disagreed with most of the recommendations in the audit completion report 2021/22 which was received too late to respond to without missing our laying date. Social Work England's position would be formally recorded as a management response to the audit completion report findings. This would also provide a formal record for National Audit Office.

9. Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 — Paper 07

9.1 The Chair noted the annual report and accounts had been laid on 19 July. There had been a disproportionate amount of time spent on finalising the accounts for laying and he expressed concerns that this was not a good use of public money. The Chief Executive said that despite the challenges getting the ARA completed it should be noted that the annual report and accounts reflected a good year for Social Work England. The Board agreed that the annual report and accounts provided a good account of the year. The Board recommended producing a short summary, infographic type report so that its content can be more accessible.

Action: ***Business Planning and Improvement team to produce a short summary of the annual report***

10. Quarter 1 Performance Report 2022/23 Paper 08

10.1 The Chair asked the Insight and Analysis Manager to introduce the performance report for quarter 1 2022/23. She said the performance report had been updated to reflect adjustments to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the new financial year. Following the significant reduction in the number of cases in the triage service in 2021/22, the target for Fitness to Practise FTP 1 in 2022/23 would now focus on reducing the median age of the caseload to a target of 12 weeks. Since the target last year for reducing the caseload in the investigations service had been exceeded, FTP2 in 2022/23 would now focus on reducing the median age of the investigations caseload to a target age of 39 weeks. FTP3 would monitor progress towards concluding 98% of legacy cases by March 2023. The target percentage for course reapproval decisions made for Education Quality Assurance, EQA1, had been amended from 40% to 33% due to the increased number of course changes. The organisation KPIs remained relatively unchanged, except for how sick days would be reported. The number of sick days would continue to be reported each quarter, but there was no longer a target set for the average number of sick days recorded.

10.2 The Insight and Analysis Manager summarised the report, and noted that some of the links had been broken in the pdf format. Quarter 1 performance was broadly in line with expectations, except for narrowly missing the response time target for corporate feedback and complaints. This was due to an internal administrative error. Our internal guidance had since been updated to prevent recurrence of such an error. FTP KPIs 1,2 and 3 had been exceeded. In line with our expectations, registration applications from people who qualified overseas had continued to increase. To date, submissions for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) were lower than the equivalent period last year. Insight and Analysis Manager welcomed any comments and feedback from the Board on the key discussion points noted in the report, the annual comparator data, risk and learning impacts.

10.3 The report format was welcomed by the Board; the report was transparent and performance overall was sound for quarter 1. There was one area of reporting (EQA1) concerning the lag in decision-making on course reapprovals where greater clarity was recommended, by using an explicit scorecard for example.

Action: Business Planning and Improvement team to review EQA reporting against KPI to ensure greater clarity.

Engagement

10.4 Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement reported that engagement had focused on development of the second corporate strategy for Social Work England and the consultation on education and training. The consultation was live for 12 weeks and colleagues were engaged in constructive conversations with people. The figures for CPD had been slightly lower than this point last year, as she had expected due to the 2 pieces of CPD required this year. Work had started on Social Work Week 2023 and the State of the Nation report.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

10.5 Work was progressing on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan and social workers would be asked to answer questions on equality and diversity when they renew their registration between September and December. A campaign involving Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the British Association of Social Workers, the unions and other sector partners had been devised to support this. The anti-racism event held in Birmingham in June was successful and there would be a lot of continued work on anti-racism with our partner, What Works Centre.

Our organisation

10.6 Executive Director, People and Business Support reported that there had been significant changes to Social Work England's organisational structure during quarter 1. The new layer of senior leaders, our Assistant Directors, were being appointed and this would support our organisational resilience. Although challenging, recruitment had been successful in the main and we have been able to backfill with 9 internal appointments. We continue to closely monitor sickness absence and the impact of COVID-19. The people engagement survey results had recently been disseminated to the whole organisation. We had worked with an external provider on this year's people engagement survey, the results and action plan would be reported in detail to the Remuneration Committee in September.

IT and infrastructure

10.7 Forge development was on track and the roadmap had been updated. It had been agreed to update ARAC with any significant changes or risks.

Governance and assurance

10.8 The extra work needed to complete and lay the annual report and accounts had impacted on other work across the organisation. This included the preparation of the pay remit for September. The work of the Internal Quality Improvement team regarding assurance had been reported to the last ARAC meeting and this work would continue to evolve further into an overall assurance report under the incoming Executive Director, People and Business Support, Linda Dale. The Board's input into the development of the assurance report was welcomed.

10.9 The Board asked what main risks it should be made aware of. Executive Director, Regulation said that risks were being managed and work was underway in balancing resource requirements, yet he was aware that the team turnover in registration and the time taken to progress overseas applications presented risk that could be further impacted in quarter 2 when renewals would start. The smooth running of the FtP service regarding quarter 3 and 4 targets for adjudications was dependent on the timetable for rules and regulations amendments running to time. Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations) noted FtP recruitment and absence concerns that could negatively impact on adjournment rates for hearings, this was linked to COVID-19. The impact of COVID-19 on EQA inspections was a risk noted by the Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement. . The Chief Executive noted that the FtP legacy case targets set for this year are ambitious and depend on everything going to plan; external events beyond Social Work England's control could put us off target. Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations) noted that the Executive Leadership Team closely monitors risk through monthly performance reports discussed at the monthly business meetings.

11. Any other business

11.1 The Chair noted that Board members were invited to participate in a consultation event, planned for 29 September by the Regional Engagement.

11.2 The Chair said that the next Board meeting would take place in London on Friday 28 October. The afternoon of Thursday 27 October would be used as 'meet and greet' opportunity for the Board, hosted by London South Bank University. Further details would be circulated by the Executive Office Lead.

Action: Executive Office Lead to circulate calendar invitation and event details to Board members.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday 28 October 2022 10.30 am.

The meeting ended at 11.59 am.

Summary of Actions

- Executive Director, People and Business Support to ensure email circulation of updated digital services business case prior to October ARAC and Board meetings.
- Chief Executive to follow up on the sector roundtable with Board members.
- Business Planning and Improvement team to produce a short summary of the annual report
- Business Planning and Improvement team to review EQA reporting against KPI to ensure greater clarity.
- Executive Office Lead to circulate calendar invitation and event details to Board members.