Social Work England

Performance Report Q3 2022-23

Agenda Item 9 Paper Ref 06

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

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Date

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Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

This paper is for

Discussion and Advising

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

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Executive summary

This report presents our performance for Q3 of 2022-23. 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

- We achieved 3 out of 4 targets for registration, enquiries and advice, and are meeting all 4 targets for the year to date. The current median time to answer phone calls is 9 minutes, against a quarterly target of 8 minutes.
- We met 2 out of 5 fitness to practise targets in Q3, the median age of the triage caseload is 17 weeks against a target of 14 and the median age of the investigation caseload is 64 weeks against a target of 49.
- We have concluded 87% of legacy cases, behind our expected trajectory of 91% by Q3. The remaining legacy cases will continue to take priority.
- By the end of Q3, we had made reapproval decisions for 22% of courses, behind our expected trajectory of 31% by Q3, but we remain on track to complete all reapproval inspections by the end of the 3-year cycle.
- We met 5 out 6 targets for 'our organisation' pillar. The currently forecasted year-end variance in budget is an underspend of 2.8%, which is over the target forecasted variance of 1.5%.

Key discussion points

- We continue to receive a high number of registration applications, 411 of which came from social workers who qualified overseas, a 30% increase from Q3 last year.
- During the annual registration renewal process, 96,886 (96%) social workers successfully renewed their registration and remained on the register. Following the end of the renewal period, 1,181 social workers applied for restoration and 897 were accepted back onto the register in December.
- Many social workers recorded their CPD towards the end of the annual renewal process, with 27,094 social workers recording their first piece of CPD in the final week of November.

- As part of the renewal process, we asked social workers to voluntarily share their equality, diversity and inclusion data with us, this resulted in 97% of social workers on our register sharing data with us.
- Most outstanding legacy cases are now awaiting a hearing. Capacity to hold hearings remains sufficient and a further 50 final legacy hearings are scheduled across Q4.
- In Q3, we made 23 reapproval decisions and 3 new approval decisions. Additionally, we conducted an inspection for the reapproval of 2 courses and approval of one new course. Decisions for these courses are due in Q4 22-23 and Q1 23-24.

3. Performance 1 October to 31 December 2022

3.1 Our regulatory approach

Registration, enquiries and advice

Table 1: registration, enquiries and advice key performance indicators

KPI ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	DoT*	YTD	2021-22			
								Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
REG1	Time taken to approve registration applications[1]	≤ 10 working days (median)	2	4	8	↑	5	*1*	*1*	*2*	*1*
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications[2]	≤ 20 working days (median)	2	11	5	↓	5	*8*	*9*	*4*	*9*
REG3	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days (median)	1	4	3	↓	2	*0*	*0*	*1*	*1*
REG4	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 mins waiting time (median)	2	8	9	↑	8	*0*	*2*	*10*	*1*

RAG rating of actuals:
- Green – achieving target
- Amber – within 5% of achieving target
- Red – over 5% from achieving target

*Direction of travel:
- Direction of arrow indicates numerical change compared to previous quarter
- Colour of arrow indicates performance against target (green = trending towards target; red = trending away from target)

Registration, enquiries and advice

The time taken to approve registration applications has increased from 4 working days in Q2 to 8 working days in Q3, which remains within the target of 10 working days. This increase is due to the ongoing high number of received registration applications as well as the impact of the annual registration renewal process on our workload. Changes to the online identity verification service meant that we temporarily needed to verify most identities manually, which has increased registration application assessment times. The online identity verification service is due to be replaced in January 2023.

During Q3, we received 411 applications from people who qualified overseas, in comparison to 314 applications received during Q3 21-22, a 30% increase. Most overseas applications originate from South Africa, Zimbabwe and India. Due to this increase, the median number of working days to process overseas applications rose to 34 days in December. We are addressing this challenge by recruiting additional resource to the team.

[1] Excludes applications where an investigation is required.
[2] Excludes applications where an investigation is required.

The time taken to approve restoration applications has decreased from 11 working days in Q2 to 5 working days in Q3. This is due to additional resource being focussed on restorations following the conclusion of the annual registration renewal process. There were 1,479 restoration applications in Q3 (1,232 in December alone) compared to 288 last quarter, and 888 for Q3 last year.

We received an increased number of phone calls and emails during the quarter, which was anticipated due to social workers requesting advice and guidance on the annual renewal process. To assist callers and minimise wait times, we provided an in-queue voice messaging service that directed callers to the frequently asked questions section of our website about the annual renewal process.

Despite the increased call volumes during Q3 (17,435 calls), the median time of 9 minutes taken to answer phone calls was lower than the median time of 10 minutes in Q3 last year. Whilst this is an improvement on the previous year, it is higher than our target of 8 minutes. This is because we received significantly more calls in December 2022 (6,058) compared to December 2021 (3,435) and we were focused on completing the restoration applications from social workers who had been removed from the register following the annual renewal deadline of 30 November 2022.

Annual registration renewal period (01 September – 30 November 2022)

On 01 September 2022, there were 100,626 people on the register who were eligible to renew their registration, of these 96,886 (96%) renewed their registration and remained on the register. Following the end of the renewal period, 3,740 people were removed from the register. Of these, 1,181 applied for restoration and 897 were accepted back onto the register in December. Following the completion of the renewal process, we published information about the outcome on our website:
https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/news/annual-renewals-figures/

To support social workers through the annual renewal process, we sent several emails and a postal letter to remind them to apply to renew their registration. We also sent targeted emails throughout the renewals period to social workers who had not completed all steps of the process. This was supported by an extensive communications campaign that included proactive contact with employers and directors of children’s services in local authorities, sessions with our regional engagement leads, and information in the trade press. On the final day of the renewal period, we sent emails to all social workers who had not completed all 3 steps.

As part of the renewal process, we also asked social workers to voluntarily share their equality, diversity and inclusion data with us, which resulted in 97% of social workers on our register sharing data with us. This additional information about the composition of our register will enable us to analyse, understand and, if necessary, revise our rules, systems, policies and processes to ensure they are fair and equitable. We will be sharing more detail about the make-up of the register in our third social work in England report, to be published in Spring 2023.

Continuous professional development (CPD)

As part of our new CPD requirements social workers were required to submit a minimum of 2 pieces of CPD, including at least one piece with a peer reflection, to renew their registration. The CPD requirements were generally well understood, based on feedback from our regional engagement leads and the relatively low number of enquiries received.

Many social workers recorded their CPD towards the end of the annual renewal process, with 47,558 items of CPD being recorded during November and 27,094 social workers recording their first piece of CPD in the final week of November. We are keen to work with the sector to support social workers to record CPD throughout the year.

During the quarter, we continued our bespoke communication and engagement activities with registrants and we published guidance on our updated CPD review process.
As a result of our campaign work and previous system improvements, the level of engagement in the CPD process exceeded previous years, with 428 social workers being removed following the annual renewal deadline for not meeting the CPD requirement alone, compared to 826 social workers who had not completed their CPD by 30 November 2021.

In addition to our review of 2.5% of social workers' CPD records in Q4, we will carry out a lessons learned review of the CPD process. Learning from these activities will be used to inform future system, process, communication, and engagement activity.

Fitness to practise

Table 2: Fitness to practise key performance indicators

KPI ID	KPI Description	Target		Q1	Q2	Q3	DoT*	YTD	2021-22 Q1	2021-22 Q2	2021-22 Q3	2021-22 Q4
FTP1	Age of triage caseload	12 weeks (median) by March 2023	Actual	17	15	17	↑	N/A	*New KPI for 22/23*			*18*
			Forecast	17.5	16	14						
FTP2	Age of investigation caseload	39 weeks (median) by March 2023	Actual	60	64	64	→	N/A	*New KPI for 22/23*			*68*
			Forecast	64	58	49						
FTP3	Legacy cases concluded	98% by March 2023	Actual	78%	83%	87%	↑	N/A	*New KPI for 22/23*			*69*
			Forecast	77%	84%	91%						
FTP4	Time taken to conclude cases we investigate	Monitor (median weeks)		83	77	82	↑		*54*	*58*	*70*	*71*
FTP5	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤20 working days (median)		19	18	18	→	18	*17*	*20*	*23*	*27*
FTP6	FTP internal quality score	≥ 90% of cases meet internal standards		96%	97%	92%	↓	94%	*91*	*95*	*93*	*99*

RAG rating of actuals:
- Green - achieving target
- FTP1, FTP2: Amber- within 10% of achieving target. Red- over 10%
- FTP3: Amber - within 3% points of achieving target. Red - over 3%
- FTP4 – no target, not rated
- FTP5: Amber- within 10% of achieving target. Red- over 10%
- FTP6: Amber - within 5% points of achieving target. Red - over 5%

*Direction of travel:
- Direction of arrow indicates numerical change compared to previous quarter
- Colour of arrow indicates performance against target (green = trending towards target; red = trending away from target; black = no target; blue = no change)

FTP1 Age of triage caseload

As expected, there were a high number of new referrals in Q3, receiving 516 during the quarter, compared with 442 in Q2 and 403 in Q1. This increase aligns with previous years in which we have seen an increase in self-referrals associated with the annual registration renewal process.

We also had 2 vacancies within the triage service for the majority of Q3, which have now been filled and as expected, capacity was reduced in December due to staff absence over the Christmas break.

Case numbers in our triage service have remained relatively stable during Q3 (514 cases) and are lower when compared to Q3 last year (580 cases). We will continue to focus on reducing the median age of the caseload, whilst embedding new members of staff and reducing case numbers within our triage service.

FTP2 Age of investigation caseload

Our performance against this target continues to be impacted by the risk profile of the caseload. High-risk cases must be prioritised for investigation over older, lower risk cases. Other factors affecting our performance against this target include our focus on older cases at the triage stage and the impact of staff turnover within the investigations team.

An increased number of cases have been referred for an investigation from triage, with 159 referrals being made in Q3, compared to 144 in Q2. This increase has resulted in some resources being diverted away from progressing older cases. High levels of interim order activity have continued, with 86 interim order cases in Q3, which has also affected our capacity to reduce the age of the investigation caseload.

By the end of Q3, there were 36 outstanding legacy case investigations, which have all been reviewed and the majority are awaiting the conclusion of external processes before they can progress.

Despite reduced capacity in December due to staff absence over the Christmas break, we progressed 114 cases from investigations to case examiners in Q3, compared to 102 cases in Q2. This is due, in part, to staff recruited earlier in the year becoming fully embedded in their roles. Overall, case numbers have stabilised and are at their lowest point since December 2019. Our focus remains on progressing older investigation cases, whilst ensuring risk is managed appropriately.

FTP3 Legacy cases concluded

Of the 1,459 legacy cases transferred to us, only 184 remain. By the end of Q3 we had concluded 87% of the legacy caseload against our forecast of 91%. This remains below the anticipated trajectory but continues to show good progress in resolving the remaining caseload.

Most outstanding cases are now awaiting a hearing (122). We received confirmation of additional funding to support this activity in March 2022, which enabled us to upscale the hearings service from Q2. Capacity to hold hearings remains sufficient and a further 50 final legacy hearings are scheduled across Q4. However, our success against this target continues to be challenged by the hearing adjournment rate, which was 30% in Q3 compared to 14% in Q2. During Q4 we will further analyse the cause of hearing adjournments to better understand any potential areas where processes can be improved. Where legacy cases have not been ready for a hearing, any additional capacity has been used to schedule the disposal of non-legacy cases.

At the case examiner stage, cases progressed through the function on average within 25 days. Legacy cases continue to be prioritised for allocation to the case examiners. We continue to closely monitor case progression at all stages of the fitness to practise process.

Whilst we anticipate not being able to meet this target by the end of Q4, we have a detailed understanding of the factors affecting progression of each case. Delays in progressing most the outstanding legacy cases are due to external factors such as police investigations, delays obtaining family court documents or difficulties in gathering evidence from employers or witnesses on the oldest cases. The remaining legacy cases will continue to take priority and will be resolved as soon as any outstanding legal or procedural issues have been resolved.

FTP5 Time taken to approve interim orders

This has remained a challenging target in Q3 due to the complexity of the interim order process that was required by our legislation. Despite this, the time taken has been consistent, 18 days in Q3 and Q2 and 19 days in Q1. We have now implemented a more streamlined interim order process following amendments to our legislation from 16 December 2022 and we continue to closely monitor our performance against this target now that the revised process is in place.

FTP6 FTP internal quality score

We continue to meet this target, with 92% of cases reviewed meeting our internal standards. The decision review group will be meeting in January 2023 to review how the group has worked so far and what improvements can be made to our internal review process. Work is currently underway to identify themes and training areas for partners and staff in 2023.

3.2 The social work profession

Publications

We drafted the social work in England report, informed by our data, intelligence and feedback from public engagement events. We worked with our regional engagement team and the National Advisory Forum to ensure the experiences and the voices of people with lived and learned experience of social work featured throughout the report. The draft report has received feedback from the steering group, regional engagement leads, National Advisory Forum and our executive leadership team. The final draft will be published in March, to coincide with social work week.

We have also published our education and training standards for approved mental health and mental capacity professionals and in Q4 we will begin to draft accompanying guidance. In Q4 we will also publish our response to the readiness for professional practice consultation, after the consultation period was extended to accommodate the mourning period for the queen.

Research

We launched an invitation to tender for independent research in 2023 regarding public perceptions of social work and of Social Work England as a regulator. We received 4 applications for this research. After a rigorous evaluation process that included colleagues from communications, policy, commercial and members of the National Advisory Forum, the tender has been awarded to YouGov.

In Q4, we will launch an invitation to tender for research that will explore the models of practice education and the role of the practice educator. We will also work with the Department for Education (DfE) to commission research that will explore workforce issues around vacancies, recruitment and retention and the factors contributing to these issues.

Policy

We continue to work closely with our sponsor team to consider the recommendations from the independent children's care review that directly affect our work or where we are explicitly mentioned as being responsible. We anticipate the publication of the DfE's plan in Q4.

In Q4, we will begin work on the next phase of the fitness to practise upstreaming work, develop a final version of the knowledge, skills and behaviours with supporting guidance as part of the readiness for professional practice framework and begin to develop a potential model for future specialist regulation.

Strategy

The consultation on our draft strategy ran from September to December and having analysed responses, we are refining the strategy. We will publish a ‘first look’ response to the consultation in Q4. The draft strategy was discussed with the National Advisory Forum on 11 January and will go to the Board at the end of January, ready for publication in March.

Communications

Media activity

We had 47 positive mentions in the media this quarter, many of which we generated by proactively communicating key moments to the trade press through releases, interviews and relationship management.

There were two key moments that provided challenge during the quarter. We managed the media preparation for our first high profile fitness to practise hearing, by proactively publishing a statement that supported us in efficiently responding to 3 national enquiries and 2 trade enquiries. Following the end of the annual registration renewal period, media enquiries alleged that a technical glitch had resulted in social workers failing to renew on time. We issued a robust statement and news story on our website in response to this incorrect claim and the statement was used in all news stories.

External engagement

During Q3, we continued to engage with the profession about registration renewal, CPD, and the importance of the collecting diversity data.

In early October, we communicated with 6,214 social workers about temporary registration ending on 14 October 2022, alongside information on how to restore their registration should they wish to continue practising.

Digital

Compared to Q3 last year, the website saw a 48% increase in site sessions with a 14% increase in visitors. The average number of sessions per user had increased from 2 sessions to 3.

There were 2,213 new followers of our social media accounts; Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, taking our total social media following to 46,652. In December, we issued an edition of our e-newsletter; Social Work Now, which reached 86,832 people.

Internal

Internally, we continued to encourage inclusion by celebrating Black History Month, Transgender Awareness Week and Disability History Month. Key activity during Q3 included promoting our purposes and values survey and promoting the opportunity for employees to train as mental health first aiders, as part of our commitment to wellbeing.

In this quarter we filled vacancies for both our digital engagement manager and social media officer roles, taking our digital team back to full resource.

3.3 The people we work with and for

In Q3, our extensive engagement activity focused on the annual renewal process and CPD. We hosted 61 events, attended 248 external meetings and engaged with over 5,000 social workers. We also hosted 16 reflective sessions that supported social workers to fulfil the new peer reflection CPD requirement.

"Affirming, educational and valuable – thank you" - Participant in reflective session.

Regional engagement leads were available during the renewal process for those that had queries or were experiencing barriers to completing their registration renewal. Overall, our engagement activities contributed to a successful annual renewal process.

Through our engagement activities we have received feedback about recruitment and retention issues within the workforce and the impact of staff turnover on people's experience of social work. We have also received feedback about the increase in use of agency social workers and the drive to recruit social workers internationally.

In December we launched our first look at the Social Work Week 2023 programme, having received many expressions of interest to deliver sessions during this programme of events. The programme includes a range of topical issues, whilst ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion remain central themes, and an opportunity to share key publications such as our next strategy.

We have updated our equality impact assessment forms to improve accessibility and align with our other policies and procedures. We will be running workshops to help our people to embed this new process in Q4.

3.4 Education and training

Table 4: Education and training key performance indicator

KPI ID	KPI Description	Target		Q1	Q2	Q3	DoT*	*2021-22*			
								Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
EQA1	Percentage of reapproval decisions made	33% by March 2023	Actual	5.9%	13.0%	21.6%	↑	*n/a[3]*			*3.3*
			Forecast	5.5%	16.6%	31.2%					

RAG rating of actuals:
- Green - achieving target
- Amber - within 3% points of target
- Red - over 3% points from target

Direction of travel:
- Direction of arrow indicates numerical change compared to previous quarter
- Colour of arrow indicates performance against target (green = trending towards target; red = trending away from target)

In Q3, we made 23 reapproval decisions (6 courses were approved having met our education and training standards and 17 were approved with conditions) and 3 new approval decisions (3 courses were approved with conditions). Additionally, we conducted an inspection for the reapproval of 2 courses and new approval of one course. Links to the inspection reports for reapprovals and new approvals in Q3 are included in Annex B. We have also received 6 course change requests in Q3, which are currently in progress.

We commenced the annual monitoring process, which mandates all course providers to declare that they continue to meet our standards and includes voluntary questions on practice placements and practice educators. We will analyse the returns and report the findings in Q4.

Whilst, we have not achieved the Q3 target for reapproval decisions, we remain on track to achieve our target by the end of the financial year and to complete all outstanding inspections within the 3-year reapproval cycle. We have agreed a plan to conclude the outstanding inspections for this year and to provide decisions to those providers.

We have experienced challenges with available resource in Q3, due to staff vacancies and absence levels in the education quality assurance team. This has slightly delayed the completion of inspection reports and regulatory decision making has been slightly delayed for several inspections. Recruitment to vacant roles has been completed and officers are due to start in early January 2023.

We continue to engage regularly with course providers on the development of social work courses. This includes enquiries about the Best Interests Assessor course, the Approved

[3] No reapproval decisions expected during Q1 to Q3

Mental Capacity Professional course, changes to the end-point assessment for apprenticeship courses and the development of a level 7 post-graduate apprenticeship route.

A strategy day to develop our overall approach to education and training was held in December 2022. This covered our ambitious plans across our education programme, including education quality assurance, and has left us well placed to move forward towards implementation and delivery.

3.5 Our organisation

Table 5: our organisation key performance indicators

KPI ID	KPI Description	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	DoT*	YTD	*2021-22*			
								Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*
P1	Retention rate	≤ 85%	90%	87%	86%	↓	N/A	*94*	*93*	*89*	*89*
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.50%	0.10%	1.97%	2.8%	↑	N/A	*0.02*	*0.01*	*0.05*	*1.00*[4]
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≤ 99.0%	99.9%	99.9%	100%	↑	99.8%	*99.8*	*99.7*	*99.8*	*99.9*
IG1	Time taken to complete freedom of information requests[5]	100% within statutory deadline	94%	97%	100%	↑	98%	*100*	*100*	*97.2*	*100*
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	100% within statutory deadline	100%	100%	100%	→	100%	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*
C1	Corporate complaints response time	100% within specified timeframe	96%	100%	100%	→	99%	*100*	*100*	*100*	*100*

RAG rating of actuals:
- Green - achieving target
- FIN1: Amber - within 0. 5% of achieving target. Red - over 5%
- P1: Amber - within 2% of achieving target. Red - over 2%
- IT1, IG1, IG2, C1: Amber - within 5% of achieving target. Red - over 5%

*Direction of travel:
- Direction of arrow indicates numerical change compared to previous quarter
- Colour of arrow indicates performance against target (green = trending towards target; red = trending away from target; blue = no change)

People and Development

Recruitment and retention

We successfully recruited to 17 roles in Q3, with 6 still in open recruitment. Due to a low number of applicants, we were not able to appoint to the roles of commercial and partner lead and legal manager during the first round of recruitment. We have re-assessed our recruitment activity and re-advertised with a more targeted approach. Four people secured new roles internally and 13 people joined the organisation during the quarter.

The candidate market continues to be challenging and information from a recent event by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development indicates that 50% of employers are having recruitment difficulties. In response, we are reviewing our own recruitment data to identify our specific challenges in the market and how we can focus our recruitment activity.

[4] Actual year-end variance
[5] Q1 and Q2 figures amended since Q2 22-23 performance report.

Our retention rate remains above the target of 85%, despite an anticipated reduction as many of our people move into their fourth and fifth years of service and due to changes in the recruitment market. Over the previous 12 months, 55% of leavers completed a leavers questionnaire, and of these, most cited career change and pay and benefits as reasons for leaving. We will look at how we can develop our process for gathering leaver information and feedback to support more meaningful analysis.

Sickness absence

Our average 12-month rolling absence rate is 4.6 days per employee in Q3, a slight increase from Q2 (4 days), but remains lower than the latest public sector average figure of 5.4 days absence per employee. The increase relates primarily to a small number of people experiencing long-term sickness (over 20 days absence). Short-term sickness rates remain relatively stable. Several employees on long-term sickness have now returned to work and are being supported through a phased return and occupational health advice.

People strategy

During Q3, we carried out further engagement across our internal networks, forums and directorates, and with the national advisory forum to inform the development of our people strategy. We are on track to share our draft people strategy during Q4.

We are continuing to work towards the Mindful Business Charter, Race at Work Charter and to build on our Disability Confident Scheme accreditation. We are using these in conjunction with the Employer's Network for Equality and Inclusion benchmarking tool, which better enables us to evidence our progress and identify areas for development.

Learning and development

During Q3, we delivered 23 courses: 9 internally and 14 through external providers. To support ongoing engagement and use of our internal learning platform "Grow", we have been working with our teams to build and share their own content.

We've relaunched and invested in the development of our staff networks as part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Co-chairs from our People Forum, Think Well, Queer Collective, Women's Network, and the Race Equality Network attended training and development events on how to run a network successfully.

Our positive action mentoring pilot received 35 applications and 17 mentoring partnerships are now in place. Mentoring sessions began in November. Three additional training sessions, and three reflective sessions and evaluation and lessons learnt sessions are scheduled for Q4, with the pilot due to finish at the end of April 2023.

As part of the ongoing provision of leadership and management development opportunities, in Q3, senior members of the organisation attended an introductory meeting with our coaching provider. In Q4, 11 leaders will begin their coaching relationships. Remaining coaching spaces will be offered out to managers shortly.

Following feedback, we have looked at how we work with reasonable adjustments throughout the recruitment and onboarding process. We are updating our processes to have a better linked in journey for our people. We have held workshops to launch our new workplace passports, which outline the support needed by people with any physical or mental health condition, disability, or other special circumstances to manage their wellbeing at work and in general.

Finance, commercial and partners

Finance

At the end of Q3, expenditure, net of fee income, was £1,269k lower than budget. This variance is a result of higher-than-expected fee income (£331k) as well as a timing difference for expenditure relating to the legacy cases project (£938k), which is now expected to conclude in the 2023/24 financial year. We have made a request to the DfE to allow us to carry forward the remaining budget relating to the legacy cases into the next financial year.

Due to our intention to carry forward this expenditure into the 2023/24 financial year we have recalculated the finance KPI based on our business as usual activity for the remainder of the current financial year.

On this basis we expect our full year net expenditure to be 2.8% lower than budget, with the majority of this variance due to the unexpected level of fee income. A key driver for the high level of fee income is the continued growth in the number of overseas applicants to join the register.

Commercial

We concluded the tender to appoint our new internal auditors, as discussed below, and we launched our tender for the procurement of digital development services, which we expect to conclude by the end of Q4. Our commercial lead was promoted internally to head of registration, and we are currently recruiting for this vacancy.

Partners

During the quarter, we launched a new self-appraisal scheme for partners, which has been well-received. We expect to complete the roll-out to all partners during Q4. We will review and refine the process in 23-24.

IT and infrastructure

In Q3, the annual registration renewal process placed additional demand upon the infrastructure that supports Forge, our case management system, and our website. The work that we carried out in in Q2 to migrate our infrastructure to our own tenant enabled us to automatically monitor and deliver additional infrastructure capacity during periods of increased demand. We were also ready to implement a digital waiting room should it be required. However, the services required for the registration renewal process were always available and performed efficiently.

Alongside technical support for the renewals process, we have continued to develop our digital services in line with our digital roadmap and business priorities. There has been some delay in rolling out new functionality to manage documents within Forge due to unforeseen technical issues; this is now expected to launch by the end of Q4. A full report on digital developments will be provided to ARAC in February.

Governance and assurance

Board and Committees

The Board held its first ‘meet and greet’ session since the pandemic at London South Bank University’s (LSBU) Croydon Campus on 27 October. This was a public event to mark the launch of LSBU’s social work degree apprenticeship. The Board will be welcoming in January a boardroom apprentice who has been appointed for 12 months through the UK Boardroom Apprentice programme. The Board’s work programme has required some adjustment and now the Board evaluation and ARAC Effectiveness Review will report in Q4.

Internal audit

The completion of the internal audit plan is on track, and Haines Watts will report on the remaining internal audits to the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee in Q4. This will include internal audits on financial controls, internal quality improvement, consultation management, and business continuity.

Following a competitive tender process, we were successful in appointing RSM UK who will be the new internal audit service supplier from 2023. The handover between Haines Watts and RSM is planned for Q4, alongside consultation with internal stakeholders on the 23-24 internal audit plan.

External annual audit

We have started planning for the 22-23 annual external audit with the National Audit Office. The provisional audit planning report will be presented to the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee in Q4.

Corporate complaints

We received 61 corporate complaints in Q3, an increase of 74% compared to Q3 in 21-22, but an overall reduction of 10% year to date. The increase resulted primarily from an increase in complaints relating to applications to join the register (16) and to restore registration (10).

We received 6 corporate complaints about the annual renewal process, however complaints about decisions to remove individuals from the register for failing to renew their registration fall outside our corporate feedback and complaints policy. Therefore, these were referred to the registration team with an explanation as to why these would not be considered as a corporate complaint being provided to the complainant.

The customer experience and insights manager will be undertaking a review of all corporate complaints relating to the annual renewal process as well as complaints about the decision to remove people for failure to renew, to identify any learning for our registration team.

Professional Standards Authority

Under the new performance review approach, introduced in April 2022, we continue to meet monthly with the Authority to discuss areas of our work on which they are focusing in our first monitoring year[6]. The Authority's internal panel is due to make its final decision regarding our performance against the standards of good regulation on 10 February 2023, with the report expected in March 2023.

Legal and information governance

We met our targets in Q3 in relation to subject access requests, other individual rights requests, and freedom of information requests.

The changes to the Social Workers Regulations 2018 and the associated changes to our rules came into force on 16 December 2022, including new powers of voluntary removal and to review of case examiner decisions. The revised regulations and rules are published on our website: https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/our-role-and-legislation/. A lessons learned review of the rules and regulations project will take place internally and with DfE in Q4.

The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) (Amendment) Order 2022 came into force on 15 December 2022. This enables whistle-blowers to make certain types of disclosures of wrongdoing to Social Work England about matters within our regulatory remit and to be protected from adverse actions by their employers. We will use our existing powers to take forward any such concerns.

One data breach has been reported to the Information Commissioner's Office. Additional training and reminders around our responsibilities have been provided to the relevant employees and our processes relating to the data breach have been reviewed and updated as required.

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[6] Under the new performance review process, the Authority will carry out periodic reviews every 3 years in which all the standards are assessed in detail. In the intervening 'monitoring' years, the Authority will focus on standards not met in the last periodic review and those standards where they identify declining performance, emerging risk, or significant change that requires monitoring.

Annex A:
Statistical Data 2022-23

Registration				Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of registered social workers			2022/23	98,512	98,640	98,725	99,326	99,909	100,856	101,523	100,654	98,236			
			2021/22	96,573	96,901	97,090	97,877	98,444	99,279	99,775	99,191	97,458	97,912	98,148	98,447
Number of temporarily registered social workers			2022/23	6306	6291	6280	6270	6250	6225	0	0	0			
			2021/22	13,517	13,441	13,380	13,299	13,269	13,219	13,187	6,518	6,450	6,393	6,354	6,322
Number of social workers joining the register			2022/23	246	169	300	798	534	1,032	963	588	1,341			
			2021/22	420	375	380	830	620	950	820	353	1034	470	273	362
Number of social workers leaving the register			2022/23	181	41	215	59	43	146	306	1,461	3,768			
			2021/22	162	47	191	43	53	115	324	937	2,767	16	37	63
New registration applications	Number received	All graduates	2022/23	275	358	594	1,236	1,129	1,475	948	632	310			
			2021/22	392	533	431	1,167	829	1,452	928	724	388	413	305	427
		UK graduates		152	188	463	1,075	955	1,338	777	501	201			
		Overseas graduates		123	170	131	161	174	137	171	131	109			
	Median time taken to progress (working days)[7]	All graduates		4	5	3	3	4	6	8	9	7			
		UK graduates		2	3	1	3	4	6	8	8	5			
		Overseas graduates		7	15	12	13	20	25	33	33	34			
Restoration applications received	Number received		2022/23	83	82	75	66	94	127	142	105	1,232			
			2021/22	86	64	75	82	63	52	108	153	627	158	128	105
	Time taken to process (median working days)[8]			11	13	17	22	29	29	31	32	7			

[7] Includes applications where an investigation is required therefore figures may differ from the KPI, REG1. Excludes time awaiting further information from applicants.

[8] Includes applications where an investigation is required therefore figures may differ from the KPI, REG2

Registration			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Registration appeals	Number received	2022/23	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0			
		2021/22	3	1	1	4	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	0
	Number concluded		0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0			
	Upheld		0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0			
	Rejected		0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0			
	Withdrawn[i]		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	Time taken to complete (median weeks)		n/a[9]	11	n/a	24	60	12	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Misuse of title cases	Number received	2022/23	6	7	13	3	7	6	9	13	37			
		2021/22	2	2	2	1	4	2	2	16	25	18	20	19
	Time taken to complete (median working days)	2022/23	23	35	45	31	35	22	59	38	31			
		2021/22	97	147	25	n/a[10]	93	40Error! Bookmark not defined.	37	33	13	18	15	25
Number of phone calls received		2022/23	1,304	1,578	1,543	1,976	2,404	3,808	4,347	7,030	6,058			
		2021/22	1,527	1,286	1,443	1,605	1,577	3,588	4,219	8,088	3,435	1,825	1,448	1,800
Median call queue time (minutes)			1	3	3	4	8	12	8	8	25			
Percentage of calls answered (of all calls received)		2022/23	65%	57%	59%	58%	51%	47%	57%	62%	34%			
		2021/22	66%	75%	74%	71%	70%	63%	58%	47%	51%	66%	69%	64%
Number of emails received[ii]		2022/23	931	1,344	1,480	1,648	1,802	2,863	3,058	4,281	2,993			
		2021/22	1,183	829	800	959	960	1,884	1,611	2,435	1,398	968	848	1,178
Median response time to emails (working days)			1	1	1	3	5	4	4	2	2			

[9] No registration appeals were completed in April and June 2022

[10] No misuse of title cases were completed in July 2021.

CPD		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of social workers completed at least one piece of CPD (cumulative)	2022/23	5,357	6,459	8,383	10,048	12,348	19,637	34,007	95,540	573			
	2021/22	9,599	11,319	13,118	16,887	19,960	28,925	43,685	94,352	n/a[11]	1,220	2,856	4,286
Social workers who have completed valid CPD (%)	2022/23	5%	7%	8%	10%	12%	20%	34%	95%	0.6%			
	2021/22	10%	12%	14%	17%	20%	29%	44%	95%	n/a	0.3%	0.7%	1.0%
Number of social workers met all requirements[12] (cumulative)	2022/23	1,816	2,076	3,012	3,952	5,465	12,106	25,937	95,193	44			
Social workers who have met all requirements (%)	2022/23	2%	2%	3%	4%	6%	12%	26%	95%	0.04%			
Total number of valid CPD items recorded (cumulative)	2022/23	7,710	9,968	13,720	17,379	24,788	41,788	75,663	220,937	759			
	2021/22	21,782	27,332	33,704	41,911	48,998	76,987	114,109	205,432	n/a	1,198	3,374	5,792

Education and Training		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Enquiries received	2022/23	11	16	13	15	21	17	29	37	24			
	2021/22	18	23	36	25	24	27	28	46	18	31	24	26
Concerns received	2022/23	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0			
	2021/22	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Course approvals conducted[iii]		8	17	15	21	8	1	0	3	0			
Outcome of approvals	Approved[iv]	0	0	1	4	4	5	0	0	6			
	Approved with conditions[v]	2	0	3	5	3	6	8	8	4			
	Not approved	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	Request for approval withdrawn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			

[11] Online CPD recording for 2022 launched on 11th of January 2022, therefore no CPD items were recorded in December 2021.
[12] For the 22-23 registration year, the requirements are two pieces of CPD, one of which must be peer reviewed.

Corporate complaints		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Corporate complaints received	2022/23	8	8	11[vi]	11	10	12	14	18	29			
	2021/22	12	21	23	13	11	18	11	7	17	10	8	9
Corporate complaints closed[vii]		10	6	7	17	8	16	7	11	18			
Mean working days to respond to corporate complaints		16	18	23	23	23	22	22	19	23			

People		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Headcount	2022/23	228	231	237	246	250	257	262	255	252			
	2021/22	214	215	217	219	223	223	224	229	227	225	228	225

Fitness to Practise		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Concerns received	2022/23	153	121	129	126	163	153	181	176	159			
	2021/22	138	150	159	137	136	129	133	163	154	134	138	135
Referrals received (SW identified)	2022/23	125	146	144	95	150	155	152	176	131			
	2021/22	158	206	209	142	157	228	142	216	142	138	147	164
Number of cases awaiting pre-triage at end of month[viii]	2022/23	353	324	341	272	302	315	304	338	353			
	2021/22	241	351	297	327	319	400	426	465	429	376	352	372
Time to complete pre-triage (mean calendar days)	2022/23	109	145	88	113	62	99	86	47	60			
	2021/22	35	46	75	64	71	53	56	65	74	104	121	92
FTP cases opened[ix]	2022/23	114	110	111	122	96	135	123	117	84			
	2021/22	53	69	243	81	136	92	34	133	151	168	112	112
Percentage of cases closed at triage[x]	2022/23	64%	51%	57%	57%	63%	71%	57%	45%	62%			

	2021/22	57%	53%	66%	68%	75%	57%	57%	56%	51%	74%	75%	73%
Number of cases entering investigation from triage	2022/23	25	48	44	39	48	27	59	66	34			
	2021/22	67	59	50	49	30	33	62	54	47	48	51	58
Number of cases closed in/progressed from investigation	2022/23	55	87	77	42	33	42	56	58	18			
	2021/22	83	99	90	96	75	85	103	118	76	95	111	105
Substantive hearings concluded/final decisions made[xi]	2022/23	6	17	10	18	20	21	16	18	12			
	2021/22	8	11	4	10	6	12	9	13	4	10	11	11
Interim Order application hearings held/decisions made	2022/23	2	10	6	12	17	10	6	11	5			
	2021/22	11	13	13	8	8	12	7	15	7	8	22	10
Interim order reviews held/decisions made	2022/23	58	62	40	72	72	50	77	43	10			
	2021/22	35	49	43	37	45	41	59	44	45	54	63	54
Substantive order reviews held/decisions made	2022/23	8	9	11	7	11	7	9	7	5			
	2021/22	3	5	6	4	8	6	3	6	4	8	6	3

[i & iii-xi] Figures under these measures have been updated since the previous performance report. These amendments are anticipated each quarter due to retrospective changes being captured on the system after the data has been compiled and reported.

[ii] Changes to these figures reflect a change in process for counting received emails

Annex B

Course reapproval decisions Q3 22-23

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
Teesside University	BA (Hons) Social Work	North East	22 Feb 2022	25 Feb 2022	20221117-tur2-report-_conditions_final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
University of Salford	PG Dip Social Work (Step Up)	North West	29 March 2022	01 April 2022	usr2-reapproval-inspection-final-_regulator-decision.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	BSc (Hons) Social Work	North West	14 June 2022	17 June 2022	20221121_usr1_bsc-hons-_report__final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	BSc (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	North West	14 June 2022	17 June 2022	20221031_usr1_bsc-hons-sw_degreeapprenticeship_report_final-v3.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	BSc Learning disabilities, nursing and social work	North West	14 June 2022	17 June 2022	20221207_usr4_bsc_learning_disabilties_nursing_and_social-work_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
Leeds Beckett University	BA (Hons) Social Work	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	2022_lbur1_ba-hons_-final_regulator-decision.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	2022_lbur1_ba-hons-sw-apprenticeship_final_regulator-decision.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
	MA Social Work full time	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	221205_lbur2_ma_pgdexit_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
	MA Social Work part time	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	221205_lbur2_ma_pgdexit_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
	PG Dip Social Work full time (Masters exit route)	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	221205_lbur2_ma_pgdexit_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
	PG Dip Social Work part time (Masters exit route)	Yorkshire and Humber	10 May 2022	13 May 2022	221205_lbur2_ma_pgdexit_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved
University of Lincoln	MSc Social Work	East	17 May 2022	19 May 2022	ulir1_reapproval-inspection-report-final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work (Masters exit route)	East	17 May 2022	19 May 2022	ulir1_reapproval-inspection-report-final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
London Metropolitan University	BSc (Hons) Social Work	London	05 July 2022	08 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 16122022_LMUR1_BSc_CONDITIONS (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	MSc Social Work	London	05 July 2022	08 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 16122022_LMUR1_MSc_CONDITIONS (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route)	London	05 July 2022	08 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 16122022_LMUR1_MSc_CONDITIONS (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
Liverpool John Moores University	MA Social Work	North West	12 July 2022	15 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 15112022_LJMUR1_MA_FINAL (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work (masters exit route)	North West	12 July 2022	15 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 15112022_LJMUR1_MA_FINAL (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
University of Bedfordshire	BSc (Hons) Social Work	East	19 July 2022	22 July 2022	20221221_uber1_bsc_msc_social-work_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	MSc Social Work	East	19 July 2022	22 July 2022	20221221_uber1_bsc_msc_social-work_final_v2.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
London South Bank University	BA (Hons) Social Work	London	26 July 2022	29 July 2022	20220906_lsbur1_report_v12_final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	MA Social Work	London	26 July 2022	29 July 2022	20220906_lsbur1_report_v12_final.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
Nottingham Trent University	BA (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship	Midlands	02 Aug 2022	04 Aug 2022	Microsoft Word - 01112022_NTU_V3_draft_final (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions

New course approval decisions Q3 22-23

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
Liverpool John Moores University	MA Social Work	North West	12 July 2022	15 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 15112022_LJMUR1_MA_FINAL (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
	PG Dip Social Work (Masters exit route only)	North West	12 July 2022	15 July 2022	Microsoft Word - 15112022_LJMUR1_MA_FINAL (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions
University of East Anglia	BA (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship	East	31 Aug 2022	02 Sept 2022	final-approval-report-uea-ba-hons-social-work-apprenticeship.pdf (socialworkengland.org.uk)	Approved with conditions