Minutes from the Board meeting held on 28 October 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
27 January 2023

Reviewed by
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

This paper is for
Assurance and Noting

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

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite
Operational delivery - Open

Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting for approval
Friday 28 October 2022, 10.30am
at The Brussels Room, RICS, 12 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AD and by videoconference

Board Members:	Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair
	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Deputy Chair, Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Mark Lam	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Social Work England staff in attendance	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Berry Rose	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Jonathan Monk	Assistant Director, Strategy and Policy
	Linda Dale	Executive Director, People and Business Support
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Regulation
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement
	Sophie Rees Rumney	Executive Assistant
	Victoria Hart	Regional Engagement Lead
Sponsor Team:	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education (DfE)
Public Observers:	Representative	Capsticks
	Representative	Professional Standards Authority
Staff Observers:	Rachael Culverson-Wilson	Head of Legal (Senior Lawyer)
	Sylvia Moffatt	Business Support Officer
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. He thanked Board member Jonathan Gorvin for hosting the meeting at the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

1.2 Dr Andrew McCulloch declared a new interest. He took up the role of Chair of the Hawk and Owl Trust in October. 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 22 July 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 at or since the last meeting were approved as follows:

- **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 closed.**
- **Action 57:** Policy Committee Chair to ensure appropriate induction for NAF members to the Committee. *NAF members confirmed – Rachael Clawson and Isaac Samuels. Policy Committee Chair conducted inductions August and September.* **Action closed.**
- **Action 58:** The Executive Director, Fitness to Practise to prepare a detailed paper on quality assurance for the July Board meeting. *Interim paper was discussed at strategy meeting 22 July and full paper on 28 October agenda.* **Action closed.**
- **Action 59:** Executive Director, People and Business Support to ensure email circulation of updated digital services business case prior to October ARAC and Board meetings. *An updated business case was circulated in August and approved by ARAC Chair.* **Action closed.**
- **Action 63:** Executive Office Lead to circulate the calendar invitation and event details for meet and greet event 27 October to Board members. *Communications circulated. Board members have received individual itineraries.* **Action closed.**

The progress on the open actions was noted:

- **Action 54**: Chair to have one to one meetings with non-executive Directors. *Chair to update at the 28 October meeting.* **Open.**
- **Action 60:** Chief Executive to follow up on sector roundtable with Board members. Chief Executive to update at 28 October meeting. **Open.**
- **Action 61:** Business Planning and Improvement team to produce a short summary of the annual report. *Following a discussion between Chief Executive, Head of Communications, and Insight and Analysis Manager this is something to be looked at for the next annual report, but not produced retrospectively. An update would be provided to the Board summer 2023*. **Open.**
- **Action 62:** Business Planning and Improvement team to review EQA reporting against KPI to ensure greater clarity. *The EQA action was in direct reference to wording in the performance report about pending EQA re-approval decisions, this has been made more explicit in the Q2 performance report, with a change in the way this information is phrased so that it's clear about the outcome of the course inspections conducted. Board to review at 28 October meeting.* **Open.**

4. Chair's Report - verbal

4.1 The Chair reported that he had completed the appraisal of Social Work England's Board and would write up the findings in a report for Board members. He planned for an external evaluation of the Board in 2023/24 to review the last 3 years and inform the shape of the next 12 months.

4.2 Meetings had taken place with the Deputy Director, Department for Education (DfE) and the newly appointed Chair of the Bradford Children's Trust. Together with the Chief Executive, the Chair had meetings scheduled with the other regulators of social work and social care in the UK. He noted his interest as President of the Royal Society for Public Health UK, through which he had been made aware of the short courses the Society provided that may be of use to social workers.

4.3 The Board had held a 'meet and greet' session at London South Bank University's (LSBU) Croydon Campus (the day before the Board meeting). This was to mark the launch of LSBU's social work degree apprenticeship. The Chair reported this had been a good session and demonstrated the significant opportunities for apprenticeships.

4.4 The Social Work England Board had been successful in becoming a 'Board Host' for the recently launched Boardroom Apprentice programme. It is designed to enable a wider diversity of individuals to play their part in public or third sector boardrooms. Social Work England's Board would host a boardroom apprentice for 12 months starting in January 2023.

5. Chief Executive's Report Paper 03

5.1 The Chief Executive reported that the renewals period was well underway. With the number of renewals slightly behind compared with last year, a busy period was expected up to the deadline for registration on 30 November.

5.2 The Statutory Instrument to amend the regulations had been laid before both Houses on 17 October and was on track for implementation by mid-December. The Chief Executive thanked colleagues and the DfE sponsor team for their significant efforts to achieve this.

5.3 Social Work England had been actively consulting on further changes to its rules, policy and guidance, and had just completed consultation on a new approach to education and training. Consultation on the draft Strategic Plan was still live and on target for reporting to the Board in the new year.

5.4 Committee meetings had taken place since the last Board meeting. The Remuneration Committee had overseen the work on the pay remit and the submission had been successful. The Committee would continue to focus on health and wellbeing and cost of living impact.

5.5 The Board discussed the impact of the rising cost of living on the health and wellbeing of Social Work England employees, and the wider impact across the sector. Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement noted Social Work England had the opportunity to harness and promote the positive impact of social workers' CPD and peer reflection upon recruitment and retention. In relation to health and wellbeing of Social Work England employees, Executive Director, People and Business Support said that a range of support was offered, including mental health and wellbeing support and a life assurance scheme was introduced this year. Health and wellbeing would continue to be a strong focus within the People Strategy, which was in development. The Executive Director was happy to speak to any Board members who wished to have input to this work or an interim update.

Action: Board members were welcome to contact Executive Director, People and Business Support to discuss the People Strategy in development.

6. Remuneration Committee (Remco) Chair's Report - verbal

6.1 Mark Lam, Remco Chair reported that the last meeting was held on 9 September. Remco's terms of reference had been broadened to include people and culture. Remco had applauded the results of the people engagement survey; the survey results evidenced that there was a supportive and inclusive culture within Social Work England. The Committee would be reviewing the People Strategy in the new year and then would bring this to a seminar style meeting with the Board. The Executive Director, People and Business Support reported that the pay remit had been agreed by DfE. There was an overall 3% salary increase, this was weighted to a 3.6% increase at the lower salary tier and 2.5% at the higher tier.

Action: Executive Director, People and Business Support and Executive Office Lead to arrange a seminar style meeting with the Board to discuss the People Strategy.

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

7.1 Ann Harris, ARAC Chair was pleased to report that the Committee had received its first full assurance report at the last meeting and that this was a good report. A new Data Protection Officer was in post and the Committee was encouraged to receive a commitment from him with regard to working with the risk management team to ensure risk reporting to the Committee was aligned.

7.2 The ARAC Effectiveness Review had been conducted using the National Audit Office (NAO) tool. The NAO would be taking Social Work England's external annual audit in house next year with Steph Krogmann as our lead audit partner.

7.3 ARAC had reviewed 2 business cases. The Committee had asked Non-executive Director, Mark Lam, to also review the business cases. Both business cases were endorsed by ARAC and recommended to the Board for approval. **The Board approved the 2 business cases.**

7.4 The Chair of the Board thanked ARAC Chair and the Committee for the great amount of work delivered.

8. Quality Assurance in Fitness to Practise (FtP) — Paper 05

8.1 Executive Director, Regulation introduced the report. It provided the Board with an overview of the quality assurance processes, both internal and external, in place for FtP, to ensure the quality of delivery and decision making.

8.2 **The Board was happy with the report**. The Chief Executive noted that Social Work England can now take a longer-term planning approach with the data being accumulated. **The Board supported the planned work towards building trust in Social Work England as the regulator using quality and performance data.** This would also contribute towards establishing trust in the profession.

(Head of Finance and Commercial joined the meeting)

9. Finance and Commercial Report Paper 06

9.1 Head of Finance and Commercial reported that the management accounts up to 30 September 2022 remained consistent and close to budget.

9.2 The review by Government Digital Services (GDS) of the digital services business case was due to be completed imminently. Following GDS approval, the tender would be issued. An option to extend the contract with the existing supplier by 3 months had been taken, in case of any delay in being able to complete the procurement process.

9.3 The Board discussed the larger number of overseas applications received, which had contributed to an increase in fee income. As this growth was expected to continue, the Chief Executive noted that Social Work England should be mindful of the sector's responsibility in terms of the pastoral needs of social workers from overseas.

(Head of Finance and Commercial left the meeting)

10. Policy Committee Paper 07

10.1 Andrew McCulloch, Policy Committee Chair reported that 2 members of the National Advisory Forum, Isaac Samuels and Rachael Clawson, had joined the Committee.

10.2 At its last meeting, the Committee had received a positive report on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and had a detailed discussion on research priorities. The Board's input into the research priorities was welcomed. The different audiences for the research publications was discussed. Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement said she was happy for the forthcoming Social Work in England report to be discussed in detail at the next Policy Committee meeting. Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy noted that the report would include a combination of data, insight, anecdotes and case studies to make it as practical and relevant as possible.

10.3 The Chair of the Board thanked NAF members for joining the Policy Committee.

11. Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022/23 Paper 08

11.1 Head of Business Planning and Improvement was pleased to present the mid-year performance report. The forecasts indicated that performance was on track to meet year end targets regarding investigation and triage caseload and course reapprovals.

Our regulatory approach

11.2 Executive Director, Regulation reported that staff recruitment had been a challenge during quarter 2 and the time taken to process registration applications had increased due to an increase in UK graduates and overseas applications. The recruitment issues had now been addressed effectively by the Assistant Director, Regulation and the team.

11.3 The legacy caseload was progressing well with most of the legacy caseload at the case examiner or hearing stage and the internal quality score continuing to exceed target.

The social work profession

11.4 Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement reported on the consultations that had taken place for publications, research, policy, our rules and guidance. Feedback was received from sector bodies including the Professional Standards Authority, British Association of Social Workers (BASW), UNISON and Ofsted. A national consultation event held for Social Work England's draft Strategy 2023 to 2026 had received a high level of engagement.

11.5 The sessions to support social workers with their extra CPD requirements had been well received and there had also been an increase in EDI data submitted. The education quality assurance team had experienced some capacity issues in dealing with the continuing changes to social work courses. Since his recent appointment, Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy had focused into the education work programme and would be working closely with Kev Stone, our new Education Associate.

Our organisation

11.6 Executive Director, People and Business Support said that recruitment and retention were on target, though turnover in some specific areas of the business had been higher than the target. Bespoke strategies and mitigations were being explored to deal with this. Wellbeing was a key focus, with managers receiving support to put return to work plans in place and refer colleagues to occupational health where appropriate.

11.7 The findings from the 2022 people engagement survey, which included benchmarking against similar organisations, were positive. There had been a lot of activity in learning and development during the period, involving both internal and external courses.

11.8 The Forge roadmap was on track and the migration of the infrastructure underpinning Forge and the public facing website in quarter 2 had been successful and was delivered ahead of the quarter 3 deadline.

11.9 The Chair thanked the Executive Director, People and Business Support and noted that this was a positive first report from her.

(Vicky Hart, Regional Engagement Lead joined the meeting)

12. Social Work Week 2023/24 – slide deck

12.1 The proposed approach for Social Work Week 2023/24 was presented by Vicky Hart, Regional Engagement Lead on behalf of Heather Martin, Head of Strategic Engagement. Next year's event would take place 20 to 24 March 2023 and would align with the launch of the next Strategy. Planning had started earlier this year with expressions of interest soon to close, so the final programme could be agreed by end December. Support from the Board was welcomed. The content would be about:

- learning, focusing on the breadth of social work: lived, learned and professional experiences
- connection, thinking about the social work identity and sharing best practice, and
- influence, looking back at the past 3 years, and looking forward to the next 3 years ahead for social work in England.

12.2 The Chair thanked Regional Engagement Lead and colleagues involved in all the work towards Social Work Week so far. The Chair noted that this was an opportunity to collect EDI data from attendees if this was possible. **The Board members were happy to support the event in any way required.**

Action: Executive Office Lead to follow up with Social Work Week team on Board engagement and to circulate slide deck to Board members.

(Vicky Hart, Regional Engagement Lead left the meeting)

13. Any other business – verbal

13.1 ARAC Chair noted that she would be on the interview panel at the end of November with Executive Director, People and Business Support and Head of Finance and Commercial for the internal audit services contract.

13.2 The Chair informed the Board that Social Work England was expected to become a prescribed person in December. Board members were asked to look out for an email explaining what to do if approached by someone wishing to make a disclosure.

13.3 The Chair said that whilst a detailed GDPR training programme for the Board was planned for next year, there would be a Board GDPR update session run by Executive Director, Regulation, for the Board immediately following this meeting.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday 27 January 2023 10.30 am.
The meeting ended at 12.10pm.

Summary of Actions

- Board members were welcome to contact Executive Director, People and Business Support to discuss the People Strategy in development.
- Executive Director, People and Business Support and Executive Office Lead to arrange a seminar style meeting with the Board to discuss the People Strategy.
- Executive Office Lead to follow up with Social Work Week team on Board engagement and to circulate slide deck to Board members.