# Policy Committee

# Terms of Reference

## Purpose

The Board provides leadership, direction and a steer on the overall strategy for the organisation. It has established a Policy Committee as a sub-committee of the Board to support the Board, the Chair and Deputy Chair with oversight of the positioning of Social Work England as the single-profession regulator for social workers in England, in relation to matters of public policy.

This includes the organisation's programme of policy development, consultation, research and publications in delivering the current and future corporate strategy. The Committee will provide the Board with assurance with regard to the process and content of the organisation's policy programme, enabling the Board to delegate detailed scrutiny of the policy process, but also to receive regular reports and advice from the Committee.

## Responsibilities

The Policy Committee

- Advises the Board on developing external policy, significant changes to existing policy, presentation of policy and relations with key stakeholders.
- Advises the Board on research priorities, procurement and progress of research partnerships, and recommendations and action issuing from research activity.
- Advises the Board on the programme of public consultation, to ensure inclusive and widespread engagement with people and agencies who may be affected by proposals and those who have an interest in our work.
- Advises the Board on matters relating to the link between policy and legislation, understanding the legal basis for developing policy and significant changes to regulation.
- Assures the Board on the development of a data and insights strategy.
- Reflects the Board's views on major policy publications, including but not limited to, state-of the-nation or landmark policy publications and advises the Board on horizon scanning, progress to delivery and the impact of policy outputs.
- Works alongside the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to advise the Board on matters relating to regulatory risk, developing 'right-touch' mitigations, and monitoring and evaluating measures taken to protect the public.
- Agrees the executive's strategic aims on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and then advises the Board on the executive's progress towards delivery.

- Considers wider contextual issues that could impact us and relevant policies both social work specific and generic (e.g. workforce, regulation, health and social care).
- takes account of Stakeholder management. i.e. how we relate to stakeholders in our policy arena tactically and strategically to achieve maximum appropriate impact.

## Decision-making

The Policy Committee acts only in an advisory capacity and has no executive or decision-making powers.

## Membership

The Chair of the Board is responsible for appointing the Chair of the Policy Committee.

The membership of the Committee is comprised of:

- The Chair (a Non-Executive Director)
- At least one other Non-Executive Director
- Two Executive Directors with responsibility for regulatory functions
- Two members of the National Advisory Forum
- Optionally, one or two co-opted members.

### Co-opted Members

Any co-opted member appointed by the Board shall:

- Sign a Social Work England confidentiality agreement prior to commencing their appointment.
- Abide by the Board Code of Conduct.
- Act in an advisory capacity on a temporary basis only to fill a gap in the committee's knowledge or experience.
- Be a non-voting member.
- Receive no remuneration for the role, but reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence will be covered in accordance with Social Work England's travel and expenses policy.
- Be appointed for a term of 12 months, subject to any early resignation, suspension, termination or extension.
- Be able to resign on 3 months' notice to the Board.

Suspension, early termination and extension of a co-opted member's term:

- Suspension and early termination of the appointment are at the discretion of the Board and must be communicated in writing to the co-opted member.
- There is no right of appeal.

- The effect of suspension and early termination is that the co-opted member shall not attend meetings or give advice to the committee and should return any confidential information or personal data shared with them.
- Extension of the appointment is at the discretion of the Board.

## Meetings

- The Policy Committee will meet at least four times a year.
- The Chair of the Policy Committee may convene additional meetings, as they deem necessary.
- A minimum of 3 members of the Policy Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate, including the Committee Chair (or a Non-Executive Director Committee member to whom the Committee Chair has delegated the role).
- If the Chair of the Policy Committee is absent for a meeting, the role of chairing the meeting will be delegated to a Non-Executive Director Committee member.

## Reporting and Administration

The Policy Committee Chair will report to the Board after each meeting.

The Executive Office will provide secretariat facilities to the Committee.

Papers for all Board and Committee meetings will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

The minutes of meetings will be confidential and will not be reported at the public element of any full Board meeting. The minutes shall be made available within 10 working days to the Chair of the Committee

## Access

The Chief Executive will have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Policy Committee.

## Review and Evaluation

The Policy Committee will periodically review its own effectiveness annually and will report the results of that review to the Board.

The terms of reference of the Policy Committee shall be reviewed and reapproved annually.

Last reviewed: October 2024

Next review date: October 2025

Signed off Board:

Policy Owner: Executive Director – People and Business Support