

# Observers - Copy of Social Work England Board Meeting

MEETING

31 October 2025 10:30 GMT

PUBLISHED

27 October 2025

## Social Work England Board Meeting

**Friday 31 October 2025, 10.30am – 1.00pm**  
**at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference**

### AGENDA

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
		<b>Welcome</b>			Chair
1.	10.30	Apologies for absence and declarations of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Board members' register of interests link</a></li> </ul>	Verbal	<b>To note/declare</b>	Chair
2.	10.30	Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2025	Paper 01	<b>To approve</b>	Chair
3.	10.35	Matters arising and action log	Paper 02	<b>To discuss and note</b>	Chair
4.	10.40	Chair's report	Verbal	<b>To note</b>	Chair
5.	10.50	Chief executive's report	Paper 03	<b>To discuss and note</b>	Chief Executive
6.	11.00	Audit and risk assurance committee chair's report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NAO management letter and action plan</li> <li>Business case – legal services re-procurement</li> </ul>	Paper 04* Paper 04a* Paper 04b*	<b>To note</b>  <b>To approve</b>	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair; Executive Director, People and Business Support
7.	11.10	Policy committee chair's report	Paper 05*	<b>To note</b>	Policy Committee Chair
8.	11.20	Remuneration committee chair's report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People Engagement Survey results 2025</li> </ul>	Verbal Paper 06*	<b>To note</b>	Remuneration Committee Chair

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
9.	11.30	Finance and commercial report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management accounts to 30 September 2025</li> </ul>	Paper 07	<b>To discuss and note</b>	Executive Director, People and Business Support; Head of Finance and Commercial
10.	11.40	Quarter 2 performance report 2025/26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitness to Practise performance Q2 2025/26</li> </ul>	Paper 08 Paper 08a	<b>To discuss and note</b>	Executive Directors; Head of Business Planning and Improvement
11.	11.50	Corporate risk register	Paper 09*	<b>To discuss, and note</b>	Head of Business Planning and Improvement; Risk Manager
12.	12.00	Social Work Week 2026	Paper 10	<b>To discuss and agree</b>	Head of Strategic Engagement
13.	12.10	Reflections from the outgoing Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF) chair	Verbal	<b>To note</b>	Kevin Stone
14.	12.40	Corporate Governance: policy update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel and expenses policy</li> </ul>	Paper 10 Annex 10a	<b>To note</b>	Executive Director, People and Business Support; Head of Finance and Commercial
15.	12.45	Board and committee dates for 2026/2027	Paper 11	<b>To approve</b>	Chair
16.	12.50	Sub-committee appointments	Paper 12	<b>To approve</b>	Chair
17.	12.55	Any other business	Verbal	<b>To note</b>	Chair
		Date of next meeting: <b>Friday 23 January 2026</b> <b>10.30 - 1.00</b>			
	1.00	Meeting ends			
		<b>Lunch will be provided</b>			

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
	1.20 - 2.20	Board Training - EDI			Ahmina Akhtar – Head of EDI

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

## LIST OF ATTENDANCE

<b>Board members:</b>	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Chair, Non-executive Director
	Amrat Khorana	Non-executive Director
	Cheryl Hobson	Non-executive Director
	Chris Nicholson	Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Simon Lewis	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive
<b>Board Apprentice</b>	Bhavna Chandra	Boardroom Apprentice
<b>Staff in attendance:</b>	Linda Dale	Executive Director, People and Business Support
	Natalie Day	Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy
	Neil Smith-McOnie	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Phil Hallam	Executive Director, Regulation
	Rachel McAssey	Assistant Director, Regulation (Registration, Advice and Adjudications)
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Stephen Barnett	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Stephen Hale	Assistant Director - Digital Programme Manager
	Matthew Devlin	Head of Strategy Engagement
<b>Guests:</b>	Kevin Stone	Outgoing ETAF Chair
<b>Sponsor team:</b>	Andrew Wise	Department for Education
	Kate Phillips	Department for Education
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education
<b>Public observers:</b>		
<b>Staff observers:</b>	Paige Daniels	Policy Officer
	Alexandra Hayward	Fitness to Practise Performance Manager
<b>Minute taker:</b>	Penny Clarke	Corporate Governance Manager

Dani Shaw

Executive Assistant

Apologies:

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Minutes of the Social Work England board meeting for approval  
25 July 2025, 10.30am – 1.00pm  
at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

<b>Board Members:</b>	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Chair, Non-executive Director
	Amrat Khorana	Non-executive Director
	Cheryl Hobson	Non-executive Director
	Chris Nicholson	Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive
<b>Boardroom Apprentice:</b>	Bhavna Chandra	Boardroom Apprentice
<b>Social Work England staff in attendance:</b>	Ellis Christie	Head of Internal Quality Assurance and Governance
	Linda Dale	Executive Director, People and Business Support
	Natalie Day	Assistant Director, Policy and Strategy
	Philip Hallam	Executive Director, Regulation
	Rachel McAssey	Assistant Director, Regulation (Registration, Advice, and Adjudications)
	Richard Simpson	Head of Finance and Commercial
	Neil Smith-McOnie	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
<b>Sponsor Team:</b>	Stephen Barnett	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Andrew Wise	Department for Education
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education
<b>Public Observers:</b>	Kate Phillips	Department for Education
	Alan Clamp	Professional Standards Authority
	Ben Jones	Unison

	Richard West	Professional Standards Authority
<b>Staff Observers:</b>	Laura Gordon	Senior Education Quality Assurance Officer
	Mickey Hollman	Triage Lead
<b>Minute taker:</b>	Cathy Glynn	Executive Officer
<b>Apologies:</b>	Simon Lewis	Non-executive Director
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement

## 1. Welcome

1.1 The chair welcomed board members, colleagues and observers to the meeting. The chair welcomed three new members to the board (Amrat Khorana, Cheryl Hobson and Chris Nicholson). All new board members introduced themselves for the benefit of the observers.

1.2 The chair noted apologies from Simon Lewis and Sarah Blackmore.

1.3 Declarations were noted as follow:

- Dr Sue Ross – a close family member had secured a principal social worker position at City of York Council,
- Dr Adi Cooper – her partner would be head of school for social work, sociology and education and lifelong learning at University of East Anglia
- Amrat Khorana – had been appointed board member for the Association of Child Psychotherapists (ACP).

## 2. Minutes of the last meeting

Paper 01

2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 16 May 2025 were **approved** as a correct record.

## 3. Matters arising and action log

Paper 02

3.1 There were no matters arising.

3.2 The chair noted the paper. Closed actions following the last board meeting:

- **Action 117:** Further information in relation to the approach to the activity taking place on continuing professional development (CPD) to be shared at the next board meeting. *An update on CPD was included in the chief executive's report to the 16 May meeting.* **Action closed.**
- **Action 118:** Chief executive's report to include a list of upcoming meetings going forward. *The chief executive's report now featured a standing list of upcoming meetings.* **Action closed.**

3.3 Actions pending sign off at the 25 July 2025 meeting:

- **Action 120:** Executive director, professional practice and external engagement and head of equality, diversity and inclusion to arrange at least 2 informal

meetings between board members and members of the NAF per year. *Informal meetings between the board and the National Advisory Forum had been scheduled for 25 July 2025 and 26 September 2025. This requirement would be incorporated into the board programme for subsequent years. **Action to close.***

- **Action 121:** Assistant director, communications, engagement and insight to share links to negative media articles referenced in the performance report with Simon Lewis, non-executive director. *The head of communications provided details and links to both positive and negative media coverage to Simon Lewis on 16 July 2025. **Action to close.***

3.4 Progress on the open items was **noted** by the board.

#### 4. Chair's report

Verbal

- 4.1 The chair updated the board about a recent meeting with the chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Council and highlighted that he continued to meet regularly with chairs of other regulators that are overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). The chair had registered for the General Medical Council conference in the autumn.
- 4.2 The chair informed attendees that he had met with the new non-executive directors and the deputy director, social work workforce, children's social care, at the Department for Education (DfE) who would be taking on the sponsorship role for Social Work England
- 4.3 With the new members now appointed to the board the chair explained that he would be considering membership of the board's sub-committees and discussing this with the chairs of the committees in advance of the next meeting of the board in September.

#### 5. Chief executive's report

Paper 03

- 5.1 The chief executive updated the board that since his report had been drafted, confirmation had been received from the department that the process to consider the outcome of the consultation on fees had been completed. Approval had been received from the Secretary of State to increase the fees paid by social workers and those seeking to join the register. The decision was to proceed as outlined in the consultation. This had been published on the Social Work England website on 23 July 2025. Additional information including FAQs had also been published and the organisation was responding to any enquiries that arose.
- 5.2 Work completed to publish our annual report and accounts on time before the summer Parliamentary recess was highlighted. The chief executive thanked internal colleagues and the National Audit Office (NAO) for their work and thanked the board for reviewing and responding to drafts.
- 5.3 The new organisational behaviours framework had been launched at a recent all-team meeting. This framework would be at the core of an organisational change programme: Shaping Success Together. This programme was focused on embedding consistency across the organisation, to further strengthen employee engagement and drive business outcomes. The programme would progress over the next couple of years and included leadership development.

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- 5.4 Engagement roadshows were planned across the country throughout October and November. These events would provide an opportunity to engage with the profession and stakeholders on key areas including the future of education and training and continuing professional development (CPD). These events were now fully subscribed.
- 5.5 The board noted the headline results of the annual staff engagement survey. There was discussion regarding the challenges of benchmarking results against other organisations, and the importance of using other sources of information and data and of being able to monitor our own trends over time.
- 5.6 Preparation for the inspection of Best Interests Assessor (BIA) and Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) courses was discussed, including the volume of work required and timescales. It was noted that the education quality assurance team was looking to be innovative with the inspection approach and was working with inspectors with BIA and AMHP experience to tailor the approach and to ensure on site activity focused on core issues. Given the importance of these 2 roles and the potential for the proportionate approach taken to inspecting these courses to inform the future regulation of other post-qualifying courses, the board asked to be updated on the progress of the inspection programme.

***Action: Assistant director, policy and strategy to provide an update to the policy committee and board on the progress of the inspections of BIA and AMHP courses at an appropriate point once the inspection programme begins.***

## 6. Audit and risk assurance committee (ARAC) chair's report

Paper 04

- 6.1 The executive director, people and business support introduced this paper on behalf of the outgoing chair. She highlighted that the committee had discussed 3 key areas which also required board approval:
- The draft annual report and accounts, which the committee had scrutinised and recommended for approval. This approval had been provided by the board, and the annual report and accounts had now been laid before parliament. The final audit completion report was on the agenda for this meeting, for the board's information. Changes from the draft version provided to ARAC were included in blue text.
  - A draft asset management strategy, which the committee recommended for approval by the board subject to a minor amendment to include a review period. This would be discussed later in the meeting (agenda item 11).
  - A business case to extend the value of our existing contract for external legal services had also been approved by the committee and was recommended for approval by the board.
- 6.2 Board members discussed the positive outcome in respect of the annual report and accounts and noted the collaborative approach between colleagues within Social Work England and the NAO.
- 6.3 Regarding the need to extend the value of the contract with the external legal provider, board members thanked the executive for the detailed business case. It was noted that the contract related to legal work to support fitness to practise case preparation and

presentation and mandatory fitness to practise work. Given the importance of this work, the need to address the backlog of cases referred for a hearing and the level of scrutiny the business case had been subjected to by the ARAC, the board **approved** the extension of the value of the contract.

## 7. Policy committee chair's report

Paper 05

7.1 The policy committee chair informed the board that the committee had had very useful discussions on the practice implications of recent developments in the political and policy environment including:

- the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life Bill), the Families First Partnership programme and the Immigration White Paper.
- the DfE's consultation on post-qualifying standards for newly qualified children and families' social workers.
- The Casey review and plans for a National Care Service.

7.2 The committee had also welcomed the opportunity to increase National Advisory Forum (NAF) membership.

7.3 The committee chair highlighted the fruitful discussion that had taken place in the committee's deep dive of Social Work England's plans to review its future CPD requirements.

7.4 Board members were encouraged to attend future policy committee meetings as an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the context within which Social Work England is operating and the thinking behind some of the items that come to the board.

## 8. Remuneration committee chair's report

Verbal

8.1 The remuneration committee chair provided a verbal update on the committee's meeting on 21 July 2025, at which the committee had discussed the 2025/26 pay remit proposals. The committee chair explained the pay context, in that the overall pay structure had been approved by HM Treasury. Social Work England must operate within that and have regard to the civil service pay remit guidance published each year.

8.2 The committee chair explained that the proposal put forward by the executive had been considered in detail and the committee was satisfied that it was proportionate and affordable and therefore had supported the proposal.

8.3 The executive director, people and business support informed the board that the proposal would be subject to further internal approval and would also require approval from the Secretary of State.

## 9. Finance and commercial report and management accounts to 30 June 2025 Paper 06

9.1 The head of finance and commercial introduced the report. He highlighted that the management accounts for the year to 30 June 2025 showed an underspend position, primarily resulting from a shortfall in payroll expenditure due to a higher vacancy rate and capacity in FtP. The head of finance and commercial informed the board that the first detailed year-end forecast, completed in early July, estimated a year-end underspend of £560k compared to budget (a variance of 3.3%). Again, the primary reasons being the number of vacancies and capacity in FtP. He explained that work

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was ongoing to look at options to increase activity in other key strategic areas to address a potential underspend.

## 10. Quarter 1 performance report

Paper 07/7a

10.1 The new head of business planning and improvement was welcomed and introduced to the board. The head of business planning and improvement then introduced the report, highlighting that it included the new 2025/26 business plan objectives and some new KPIs. He also noted that the format had been revised significantly with the intention that it provided greater clarity and improved transparency for the board. Given the nature of the work across fitness to practise, a separate more detailed paper focusing on work in that area was provided alongside.

10.2 The board agreed that the new format was positive, and the chair encouraged board members to offer any further feedback outside of the meeting.

### Prevention and impact:

10.3 The assistant director, policy and strategy drew the board's attention to some of the key activity within the first quarter of the year including:

- The successful launch of the second phase of the 'change the script' campaign.
- The positive uptake for the roadshow events planned in October and November.
- The progress made in key areas of research including into seriousness in fitness to practise, 2 related to artificial intelligence, and practice education.

She also highlighted the priorities for Q2 including:

- Finalising the research areas noted earlier (seriousness, AI and practice education).
- Progressing work to reimagine our approach to CPD
- Work to support our understanding of the practice education landscape and how regulation might support this key role.
- Completing pre-consultation work on education and training standards.

10.4 The board discussed the importance of learning from the inspection of education and training courses and sharing any themes that might have been identified. It was noted that there would be opportunity to discuss this at the board's next meeting, when it was anticipated that the report on learning from the first full 3-year inspection cycle would be available.

10.5 The board discussed the 'change the script' campaign and how the impact of this work was being measured over time. It was explained that findings from the 2023 public perceptions of social work research undertaken by YouGov on behalf of Social Work England could be used as a baseline measure.

### Registration and fitness to practise

10.6 The executive director, regulation highlighted the strong performance in registration in Q1 and further work being undertaken by the team to improve timeliness in areas such

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as restoration. A spike in applications was anticipated as we approached the peak period for UK qualifications. Planning was underway for the start of the next annual registration renewal period on 1 September.

- 10.7 The executive director, regulation drew the board’s attention to the sustained increase in the number of referrals received into the fitness to practise process since December 2024. Despite the recent increase in staffing within the triage team and exceeding the targets for decisions made at the triage stage, the overall caseload had increased rather than reduced. Reforecasting was underway, to understand how this would affect case volumes at all stages of the fitness to practise process. Work was also taking place to explore ways to mitigate the impact of higher referrals, including a further increase to staff resource.
- 10.8 It was noted that the in-depth process review of triage and investigation was ongoing. Actions had already been identified including new guidance for staff on escalating challenges in obtaining evidence and further information from third parties.
- 10.9 The board discussed potential ways to understand the reasons for the increase in referrals and why certain concerns come through to the regulator, including the option to undertake research. The executive director explained that the increase was driven by referrals from members of the public rather than employers.
- 10.10 It was too early to have a full picture, however the types of concerns raised were thought to be consistent including poor communication and alleged dishonesty. The board discussed the need to understand the reasons for higher volumes of concerns being raised, and the interaction with other drivers and processes such as local authority complaints and initial education and training. The board emphasised the need for learning from fitness to practise to inform the approach to initial education and training, and for the current research into seriousness in fitness to practise to support work with employers and other stakeholders to ensure that concerns were resolved at a local level where appropriate.

The executive director noted that after a long period of stability with the pool of case examiners, there were number of vacancies. Recruitment was ongoing, but this would impact throughput across the year. Work was taking place to plan with the external legal provider how best to utilise the additional resources that were available this year to accelerate case progression. Work to deliver the internal advocacy service was on track, and by the end of the year mandatory reviews were expected to be managed in house. The board noted the need to evaluate the impact of the new service, which will include cost savings as well as quality indicators such as the number of appeals.

**Delivery and improvement**
- 10.11 The executive director, people and business support noted progress against the 3 corporate focused business objectives. She noted that the review of the business planning process was on track and outcomes would be shared with the board in September. Work to finalise the digital, data and technology (DDaT) strategy and implementation plan had progressed well with clear priorities and a year 1 roadmap to address the immediate recommendations from the review. Successful recruitment to technical roles in Q2 would be essential to progressing the key deliverables.

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10.12 The shaping success together programme had been welcomed across the organisation. Engagement survey results had been shared with teams and discussions at team level were underway. Teams were encouraged to link these conversations to consider how the behaviours framework and wider shaping success together programme could support the areas for development identified through the engagement survey.

## 11. Asset management strategy

Paper 08

- 11.1 The head of finance and commercial introduced the paper and the draft asset management strategy, noting that the biggest organisational assets were intangibles such as Forge (the internal case management system used primarily in registration and fitness to practise). Due to the significant value of intangible assets, they would be an area of focus each year within external audit.
- 11.2 The board acknowledged that the strategy had been scrutinised by ARAC, however it was suggested that accessibility might also be an important consideration when assessing the performance and suitability of each type of asset.
- 11.3 It was confirmed that ARAC and the board would receive annual reports on progress against the strategy as part of the business and budget planning cycle for the following year.
- 11.4 The board **approved** the strategy and **agreed** that accessibility should be added as an additional criterion within the framework to assess each asset's performance.

## 12. Board appointments to committee

Verbal

- 12.1 The chair noted that the position of ARAC chair was vacant and proposed to appoint Cheryl Hobson given her relevant experience. Members of the board **agreed** that Cheryl Hobson be appointed as chair of ARAC.

## 13. Any other business

Verbal

- 13.1 There was no other business, and the chair thanked all those in attendance.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Board Strategy Away Day – 26 September 2025 9.00am – 3.00pm

*The meeting ended at 12.15pm.*

## Summary of Actions

- **Action: Assistant director, policy and strategy to provide an update to the policy committee and board on the progress of the inspections of BIA and AMHP courses at an appropriate point once the inspection programme begins.**

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# Summary of actions from board meetings up to 31 October 2025

Agenda Item 3    Paper Ref 02

## Paper for the

Social Work England Board

## Sponsor

The Chair

## Author

Penny Clarke, Corporate Governance Manager

## Date

31 October 2025

## Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

## This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

## Associated Strategic Objective

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

## Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Governance and compliance – Cautious

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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## 1. Summary

The actions below provide an audit trail of items closed at or since the last meeting on 25 July 2025. Actions still in progress or yet to complete since the last meeting are listed on the log that follows.

Closed actions following the last meeting:

- **Action 120:** Executive director, professional practice and external engagement and head of equality, diversity and inclusion to arrange at least 2 informal meetings between board members and members of the NAF per year. *Informal meetings between the board and the National Advisory Forum have been scheduled for 25 July 2025 and 26 September 2025. This requirement will be incorporated into the board programme for subsequent years. Action closed.*
- **Action 121:** Assistant director, communications, engagement and insight to share links to negative media articles referenced in the performance report with Simon Lewis, non-executive director. *The head of communications provided details and links to both positive and negative media coverage to Simon Lewis on 16 July 2025. Action closed.*

## 2. Action required

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



## Social Work England Board Action Log

Action no.	Date of Meeting	Action	Owner	Due By	Update	Next review	Status
124	25/07/2025	Assistant director, policy and strategy to provide an update to the policy committee and board on the progress of the inspections of BIA and AMHP courses at an appropriate point once the inspection programme begins.	Assistant director, policy and strategy	31/10/25	At the September Policy Committee, the Head of Educational Programme provided a detailed overview of our approach to AMHP and BIA inspections, which draws on our learning from our first cycle of inspections in social work education and training, as well as broader stakeholder engagement. The first AMHP and BIA inspection cycle is just getting underway, starting with BIA in October. We will keep the board informed of progress.	23 January 2026	Open



# Chief executive's report

Agenda Item 5    Paper Ref 03

## Paper for the

Social Work England Board

## Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

## Author

Colum Conway

## Date

31 July 2025

## Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

## This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

## Associated Strategic Objective

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

## Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Strategic approach - Open

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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### 1. Introduction

We are pleased to welcome Kevin Stone to the Board meeting today. Kevin has been the Chair of the of the Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF) since its inception. It will be good to receive Kevin’s reflections on his time as chair and the opportunities and challenges in social work education and training. The Advisory Forum have played a key role in the development of our readiness for professional practice guidance and on our considerations in relation to standards and guidance. Andrea Collins, who is based at Manchester Metropolitan University will be the new Chair.

In the performance report for Q2 it is noted in relation to education and training that we have experienced some minor delays to the publication of our education landscape report, due to some capacity issues, but are looking forward to sharing our insights from our first full cycle of social work course inspections in the coming weeks. This has also had implications for our consultation timeframes around our education and training standards and guidance, but we plan to share further news with the sector on this review in due course.

The Q2 report and the separate report on fitness to practise for the board also highlights the operational impact at the triage stage of the FtP process of the additional number of concerns referred to us since the beginning of this calendar year. It is good to note that despite the volumes the number of cases closed at triage remains high. The report for the board on the FtP gives a detailed analysis of the ongoing work in this area. It also reflects a relatively stable position for the rest of the FtP process and improving forecasts for the hearings position at the end of the year.

The board will note the adjusted financial position based on spend forecasts for the second half of the financial year.

As will be reported through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair’s report we are hoping for board approval for the business case supporting the procurement of two legal firms to work within our FtP process. This is an important procurement process for us and will secure external legal contracts for the years ahead.

We will shortly be entering the final month of this year’s renewals period, and the number of renewals is tracking as expected, which is reassuring but also means that more than 60% of social workers will renew in November.

### 2. Independent Review

Work continues in preparation for an Independent Review of Social Work England which is contained in our founding legislation and is likely to be launched soon. While very good progress has been made on the development of our strategic plan 26/29 it has been decided to slow further progress while we await a possible timeline for any proposed independent review.

### 3. Practice Education

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We are pleased to be in a position to move forward with our work on practice education now, following funding from the DfE and extensive engagement with practice educators, including the National Organisation for Practice Teaching (NOPT), and others, about the significance of this role. We have established our Practice Education Development Group which will support us in this work, consisting of key stakeholders and members of our ETAF, in recognition of the links between the two areas. We have commissioned research into the current practice education landscape in England and will publish this soon. We have also recruited a dedicated Policy Manager, Policy Officer, Communications Officer specifically for this work, and seconded one of our Professional Advisors who will also support us here. Practice education was a common theme throughout our recent roadshow events, so it has been positive to be able to provide assurance that this is a key area of focus for us.

4. Partnership working

We are pleased to be working closely with Skills for Care and other key stakeholders on 2 areas that we know are important to the profession: workforce issues and AI. Following our workforce roundtable, we are now establishing a steering group to look in more detail at workforce issues in adult social work. This will draw on the work of the earlier roundtable, as well as the successful Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy developed by Skills for Care last year. The group will of course be alert to developments in other areas of social work practice and ensure alignment where appropriate.

Given the increasing prevalence of AI in social work practice and arising as an issue for the sector, we are planning to hold a national conference in April next year to look at AI at all levels of social work – from students to leadership. This will be underpinned by research we have commissioned and are currently reviewing, and the feedback we have had from social workers and others.

5. Mental Health Social Work

On 18 October the government announced that it intends to implement the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) to replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) legislative framework, it will launch a consultation in the first half of 2026.

The Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 paved the way for the introduction of a new legislative framework around deprivation of liberty, known as the Liberty Protection Safeguards.

It is worth noting for context that this reflects a previous position on the introduction of LPS to replace DoLS and the work we have already done on approved mental capacity professional (AMCP). In 2019, we were asked to prepare for the introduction of the new role of approved mental capacity professional, which would be introduced under that framework to replace that of best interests assessor (BIA) under DoLS. From early 2020, we worked in close consultation with DHSC policy staff, preparing our AMCP education and training course

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approval standards in parallel with their work to finalise the establishing secondary legislation.

In April 2023, the government decided to delay the implementation for the rest of that Parliament. As a result, we withdrew our AMCP standards and instead introduced equivalent standards for BIA courses. The implementation of LPS is likely to have an impact on this existing work, as well as future work in this area.

An update to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice has also been announced.

6. Change the Script

Following successful initial phases of our Change the Script campaign, we are now working with the DfE on Phase 3. This will allow us to broaden the campaign to show the variety of contexts in which social workers work and have such impact. As previously, we aim to launch this during Social Work Week 2026.

7. Conclusion

Next week we will be concluding our series of roadshows with the final event in London. We have been to Sheffield, Bristol, Birmingham and Newcastle and throughout have had very useful conversation with social workers on the key themes of CPD, seriousness in FtP and Education and Training. We have also taken the opportunity to talk about our overall strategic direction in the years ahead and what is important to social workers in relation to regulation of the profession. We have had a number of staff involved in the roadshows from different teams across the organisation which has proved a positive learning experience for them and for the organisation.

The roadshows have underpinned the value of ongoing engagement with all our key stakeholders, and it is helping us to consider ways in which this can continually be improved.

8. Annexes

Annex 1: Chief Executive’s meetings

- President of the Association of Directors of Children’s Services
- Chief Executives of the Professional Regulators Body
- Ofsted Engagement Group
- Regulated Professions Advisory Group at the Department of Business and Trade
- Minister for Children and Families
- Chief Social Worker for Children
- Chief Social Worker for Adults
- National Practice Group
- National Advisory Forum
- Roadshows



# Finance and Commercial Update

Agenda Item 9    Paper Ref 07

## Paper for the

Social Work England Board

## Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

## Author

David Mellers, Senior Finance Business Partner

## Date

31 October 2025

## Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

## This paper is for

Assurance and Noting

## Associated Strategic Objective

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

## Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Financial governance - Cautious

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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## 1. Summary

This paper provides an update on the following:

- Management accounts for the period ending 30 September 2025
- Recent commercial activity

## 2. Action required

For discussion and noting.

## 3. Commentary

### Management accounts

A summary set of the management accounts for the year to 30 September 2025 can be found in Annex A.

Key highlights are set out below.

At the end of September, year to date revenue expenditure, net of fee income, was £6,665k compared to the budgeted amount of £7,318k, an underspend of £653k. This relates to capacity challenges in being able to rapidly increase activity via external suppliers, for example legal services, as well as the timely recruitment of vacant roles.

During 2025/26, there have been significant changes to the forecasted level of income and expenditure, due to the timing of key decisions. As noted, capacity challenges for both ourselves and external suppliers to commit to increased in-year expenditure have also affected the end-year forecast position.

As a result of these changes, we have agreed with DfE that we will draw down a lower amount of grant-in-aid than originally allocated in the second half of the year. This adjustment has been made and will return the forecast year-end variance to within the 1.5% KPI tolerance next month.

Year to date capital expenditure is below budget, with an underspend compared to budget of £216k. We expect the rate of activity and spend on capital projects to increase during Q3 and this increased activity will reduce the underspend by the end of the financial year.

### Commercial update

As reported previously to the board, plans to procure a second legal advocacy provider are ongoing. The business case is on the agenda for discussion and approval under item 6.

## 4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

N/A

## 5. Annexes

### Annex A – Management accounts at 30 September 2025

#### Income and Expenditure Statement

Directorates £000's	Year to date amount	Year to date budget	Year to date £ variance	Year to date % variance	Full year forecast	Full year budget	Full year £ variance	Full year % variance
Fee income	(5,128)	(5,101)	27	(0.5%)	(10,953)	(11,242)	(289)	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>(5,128)</b>	<b>(5,101)</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>(0.5%)</b>	<b>(10,953)</b>	<b>(11,242)</b>	<b>(289)</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>								
Wages & Salaries	296	282	(14)	(5.0%)	613	572	(42)	(7.3%)
Support	26	20	(6)	(29.0%)	40	40	(0)	(0.0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(6.6%)</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(6.8%)</b>
<b>People &amp; Business Support</b>								
Wages & Salaries	1,570	1,763	193	11.0%	3,611	3,815	205	5.4%
Support	1,958	1,689	(269)	(16.0%)	3,425	3,464	39	1.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,528</b>	<b>3,452</b>	<b>(76)</b>	<b>(2.2%)</b>	<b>7,036</b>	<b>7,280</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
<b>Regulation</b>								
Wages & Salaries	3,538	4,014	476	11.9%	8,768	9,554	786	8.2%
Support	3,017	3,229	212	6.6%	7,246	7,595	349	4.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,555</b>	<b>7,242</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>16,014</b>	<b>17,149</b>	<b>1,135</b>	<b>6.6%</b>
<b>Professional practice and external engagement</b>								
Wages & Salaries	1,225	1,249	24	1.9%	2,767	2,716	(51)	(1.9%)
Support	164	174	11	6.0%	597	570	(27)	(4.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,388</b>	<b>1,423</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>3,364</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>(79)</b>	<b>(2.4%)</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11,793</b>	<b>12,419</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>27,067</b>	<b>28,326</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>6,665</b>	<b>7,318</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>16,115</b>	<b>17,084</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

<b>Depreciation/Amortisation</b>	1,248	1,131	(117)	(10.4%)	2,329	2,262	(67)	(3.0%)
<b>Net Expenditure inc Depreciation</b>	7,914	8,449	536	6.3%	18,444	19,346	902	4.7%
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	1,098	1,314	216	16.4%	2,705	2,800	95	3.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,012</b>	<b>9,763</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>7.7%</b>	<b>21,149</b>	<b>22,146</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>4.5%</b>



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Balance Sheet at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025

	Cost £000's	Depreciation £000's	N.B.V £000's
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Buildings	1,264	(1,028)	236
Right of Use Asset	1,126	(602)	525
IT Equipment	1,227	(1,028)	200
Fixtures & Fittings	336	(321)	15
Intangible Assets	11,389	(4,573)	6,816
Assets under construction	2,001	-	2,001
	<b>17,345</b>	<b>(7,552)</b>	<b>9,793</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Prepayments			265
Bank			4,156
Debtors			5
			<b>4,425</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Accruals			(3,257)
Deferred Income			(2,012)
Payables			(1,876)
			<b>(7,146)</b>
<b>Working Capital (Current Assets less Current Liabilities)</b>			<b>(2,721)</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities			(686)
Provisions			(1,038)
			<b>(1,724)</b>
<b>Total Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>			<b>5,348</b>
<b>Taxpayers equity</b>			<b>5,348</b>



# Performance report Q2 2025-26

Agenda Item 10 Paper Ref 08

## Paper for the

Social Work England Board

## Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

## Author

Neil Smith-McOnie, Head of Business Planning and Improvement

## Date

31 October 2025

## Reviewed by

Executive Leadership Team

## This paper is for

Discussion and Advising

## Associated Strategic Objective

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

## Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Strategic approach - Open

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

## 1. Summary

This report presents our performance for Q2 of 2025/26 with regards to our business plan objectives and our key performance indicators (KPIs). We report on this quarterly.

We have added a page to the report this quarter providing an update on annual renewals. We've added this to provide clarity on this business-critical process which, due to its seasonality, is not included in our KPIs.

We intend to share a document of KPI definitions for 2025/26, to provide the Board with transparency on measurement and rationale. We will share this with the Board shortly.

We also include – at paper 08a – a detailed fitness to practise performance report. Given the complexity and breadth of fitness to practise reporting, and the additional investment being made in this area to address backlogs and improve performance, we intend to provide a more detailed description of fitness to practise performance alongside our quarterly performance reports throughout 2025/26.

We have split Business Plan objective 3.1 into two parts: 3.1a and 3.1b. This is to enable effective ongoing tracking of the objective while part of it – the creation of our 2026 to 2029 strategy – is on hold awaiting the outcome of the Independent Review.

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# Social Work England

## Quarterly report for July – September 2025



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# Executive summary



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## Executive summary

### Business plan progress

We are on track to deliver 9 of our 11 business plan objectives.

We have paused the development of a new strategy for 2026-29 to await the findings and recommendations of the Independent Review of Social Work England.

We experienced minor delays to the publication of the education landscape report.

We received ministerial approval on the changes to the fees, published the consultation outcome and amended rules, and implemented the associated changes.

We commenced an internal leadership development programme.

### Performance update

We achieved 14 of our 18 KPIs.

*FIN1 Forecast year-end variance to budget:* The September forecast indicated a full year underspend, due to challenges in being able to rapidly increase internal and supplier activity. An adjustment has been made to grant-in-aid that will bring the KPI back to tolerance next month.

We did not achieve *FTP1 Time taken to complete triage* and *FTP4 Time from receipt of concern to final fitness to practise outcome at case examination*. We continue to receive significantly more referrals than forecast.

We did not achieve *FTP3 Time taken to complete case examination process* due to staff turnover affecting output.

We achieved *P2 Sickness absence over last 12 months* – an improvement from Q1 – a result of overall sickness levels stabilising and long-term sickness reducing significantly.

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# Business plan progress



## Business plan progress overview

## Business plan progress

ID	Business plan objective description	RAG
1.1	Build trust and confidence in social work and in regulation by engaging with the profession, stakeholders, people with lived experience and the public.	Green
1.2	Embed our research function to enhance and inform our understanding of the profession, and to positively impact public policy through evidence-based advice and insight.	Green
1.3	Reflect on the learning from our recent review of continuing professional development (CPD) to advance a more comprehensive and valued approach to our CPD requirements, with staged implementation.	Green
1.4	Refine and develop our approach to social work education and training, working in partnership with providers and the social work sector to improve the consistency and quality of courses, and the readiness of graduates for professional practice.	Amber
1.5	Build a more in-depth knowledge of the practice education landscape to inform and support the critical role of practice educators, including exploring potential regulatory levers.	Green
2.1	Take action to improve timeliness in our triage, investigations and case examiner functions whilst maintaining decision making quality and fairness.	Green
2.2	Use the additional funding to take action to address the hearings backlog.	Green

Business plan progress overview

Business plan progress

ID	Business plan objective description	RAG
2.3	Identify and realise further efficiency and effectiveness opportunities in our hearings and case review functions.	Green
3.1a	Develop and publish a new strategy for 2026 to 2029	On hold
3.1b	Align and strengthen approach to annual business planning and performance management	Green
3.2	Finalise and start to implement our new digital, data and technology strategy.	Green
3.3	Adopt and embed our new behaviours framework.	Green



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# Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

## Communications, engagement and insight

## Business plan progress

**1.1:** Build trust and confidence in social work and in regulation by engaging with the profession, stakeholders, people with lived experience and the public.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG				

### Activity and assurance

#### Public consultations

- We received ministerial approval on the changes to the fees, published the consultation outcome and amended rules, and implemented the associated changes.
- We published our response to the registration rules consultation and implemented the associated changes.
- We launched a consultation on new guidance to support social workers communicating online.

#### Roadshow events

- All 5 roadshow events which will take place in Q3 'sold out' in days.

### Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change

### Outcome and impact

- The timely publication of the fees consultation response allowed us to implement the changes in time for the current renewal period.
- We completed an evaluation of the short-term impact of Change the Script phase 2, which highlighted significant media coverage and digital view, and positive behavioural change impact by testing perceptions through a survey.

### Key planned activity next quarter

- We'll explore next steps for our phase 2 EDI analysis.
- We'll continue communications planning activity on:
  - Social Work Week
  - AI conference.
- We'll launch our consultation on accepted consensual disposal.
- We'll analyse our responses to the communicating online consultation and prepare our response.
- We'll hold 5 roadshow events focused on the future of social work regulation, education and training, FtP and CPD.

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

Policy and strategy

Business plan progress

1.2: Embed our research function to enhance and inform our understanding of the profession, and to positively impact public policy through evidence-based advice and insight.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG	<div></div>	<div></div>		

Activity and assurance

- We are finalising all our commissioned research and considering publication timelines.
- See 1.4 for update on education landscape report.

Outcome and impact

- The commissioned research has positioned us well to advance our work in those areas.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change

Key planned activity next quarter

- We'll deliver research on:
  - 'Seriousness' in FtP
  - Artificial intelligence in social work
  - Practice education course provision
- We'll consider other areas of research focus for delivery this year.
- We will finalise a set of principles to inform our approach to disseminating and measuring the impact of our research as part of developing our broader research strategy.

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

Policy and strategy

Business plan progress

1.3: Reflect on the learning from our recent review of continuing professional development (CPD) to advance a more comprehensive and valued approach to our CPD requirements, with staged implementation.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG	<div></div>	<div></div>		

Activity and assurance

- We established a steering group to deliver the defined work strands.
- We launched the new communications for the renewal period, anchored in the statement “CPD is an essential reflection and learning activity that is central to a social worker’s practice”.
- We carried out initial engagement with other regulators to learn more about their approaches to CPD.
- We began scoping IT options that may improve our processes and the CPD recording experience for social workers.
- We prepared for the roadshow events (which will include a focus on CPD) and finalised our engagement plan for employers, social workers and people with lived experience.

Outcome and impact

- Our renewals messaging demonstrates that we see CPD as having value in itself, not just as a regulatory requirement.
- Early scoping has prepared us well to be able to test our thinking at roadshow events and other engagement.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change

Key planned activity next quarter

- We’ll develop options, and host targeted engagement events with social workers, employers and people with lived experience to test our thinking on CPD.
- We’ll establish what CPD looks like for specialist roles.
- We’ll complete analysis of feedback from all activities.

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

Policy and strategy

Business plan progress

1.4: Refine and develop our approach to social work education and training, working in partnership with providers and the social work sector to improve the consistency and quality of courses, and the readiness of graduates for professional practice.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG	<div></div>	<div></div>		

Activity and assurance

Education landscape report

- We finalised the report and gathered executive leadership feedback.

Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) and Best Interest Assessors (BIA)

- We developed our inspection model for AMHP and BIA courses. Work is continuing in preparation for our AMHP and BIA inspections which commence in October 2025.

Outcome and impact

- Publishing the education landscape report ahead of the consultation will provide a useful resource for the sector and help shape our approach to future inspection cycle.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- We experienced minor delays to the publication of the education landscape report.
- This has also had implications for our consultation timeframes around our education and training standards and guidance, but we plan to share further news with the sector on this review in due course.

Key planned activity next quarter

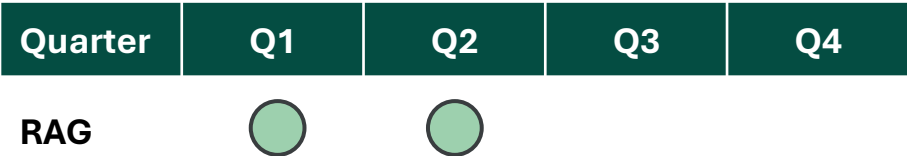
- We'll publish the education landscape report.
- We'll commence BIA inspections in October.

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

Policy and strategy

Business plan progress

1.5: Build a more in-depth knowledge of the practice education landscape to inform and support the critical role of practice educators, including exploring potential regulatory levers.



Activity and assurance

- We recruited to the roles of policy manager, policy officer and communications manager, who joined the team at the end of Q2.
- We seconded a practicing practice educator into the team.
- We commenced engagement with other regulators to explore their approaches to the regulation of specialist roles.
- We explored further research opportunities into CPD, student experience and the assessment of students on placements.

Outcome and impact

- Seconding a practice educator into the team will ensure regular access to current knowledge and expertise, to strengthen our thinking, and ultimately our proposals.
- The research will provide invaluable insight into the current practice educator training landscape.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- Progress has been delayed due to time needed for recruitment. Work will continue at pace in Q3, now that all roles are filled.

Key planned activity next quarter

- We'll deliver our research on practice education
- We'll finalise and implement our broader communication and engagement plan.
- We'll work with the practice education development group to draft guidance for practice educators and prepare to implement our data collection process for the workforce.

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Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

Fitness to practise

Business plan progress

2.1: Take action to improve timeliness in our triage, investigations and case examiner functions whilst maintaining decision making quality.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG				

Activity and assurance

- We concluded process mapping for existing triage and investigation processes.
- We undertook research and visits to other regulators as part of the process review.
- We engaged a management consultancy to assist with the next stages of the process review.
- We approved further additional triage resource including a new ‘Head of Triage’ role.
- We improved our accepted disposal process.
- More information on this objective, along with a detailed picture of fitness to practise performance is in the accompanying report: FtP Performance Q2 2025-26.

Outcome and impact

- Nothing to report

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- The number of referrals we received remained 29% higher per month than seen in the previous two years.

Key planned activity next quarter

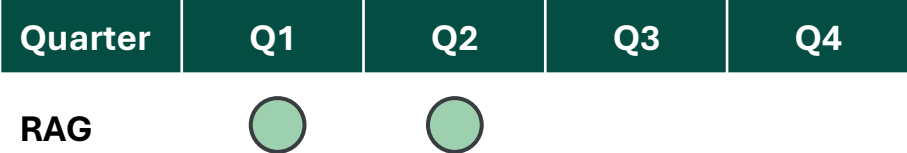
- We’ll prioritise process improvement suggestions and begin mapping potential new processes.
- We’ll recommence the investigation review group.
- We’ll update the independence guidance for case examiners to further support quality assurance work.

# Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

## Fitness to practise

### Business plan progress

2.2: Use the additional funding to take action to address the hearings backlog.



#### Activity and assurance

- Having agreed the listing schedule for Q1-Q3, we identified further cases for Q4.
- We progressed previously ‘paused’ cases.
- We increased the number of active cases being investigated by our external legal provider.
- We began a further review of the post-case examination caseload with our external legal provider
- We progressed our project to reprocur our external legal services, as well as moving from a single provider to two.
- More information on this objective, along with a detailed picture of fitness to practise performance is in the accompanying report: FtP Performance Q2 2025-26.

#### Outcome and impact

- Increased activity at the hearing stage, and changes to modelled throughput across fitness to practise, has further reduced modelled number of cases awaiting a hearing at the end of the financial year.

#### Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change

#### Key planned activity next quarter

- We’ll go out to tender for procurement of our FtP legal services.
- We’ll confirm the strategy and roadmap to further scale up capacity to increase the volume of hearings from 26/27 onwards and achieve a stable ‘pipeline’ of ready cases.

Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

Fitness to practise

Business plan progress

2.3: Identify and realise further efficiency and effectiveness opportunities in our hearings and case review functions.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
RAG	<div></div>	<div></div>		

Activity and assurance

- We agreed to continue with the current criteria for two-person panels for substantive hearings, and we updated representative bodies.
- We are drafting guidance on adjudicator consensual disposal, for consultation in autumn.
- We have recruited all six roles for the new in-house legal advocacy team, and all have now started in post.
- More information on this objective, along with a detailed picture of fitness to practise performance is in the accompanying report: FtP Performance Q2 2025-26.

Outcome and impact

- Nothing to note

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change

Key planned activity next quarter

- We'll roll out two-person panels to further suitable final hearings.
- If needed, we'll share any further updates to our two-person panel plans with representative bodies and other stakeholders, and update public guidance.
- We'll undertake training of our new in-house advocacy team.

# Strategic theme: Delivery and Improvement

## Policy and strategy

### Business plan progress

**3.1a:** Develop and publish a new strategy for 2026 to 2029

**3.1b:** Align and strengthen our approach to annual business planning and performance management.

Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1a	<div></div>	<div></div>		
3.1b	<div></div>	<div></div>		

### Activity and assurance

NB We have separated the two elements of this objective to enable better clarity

#### 3.1a Develop and publish a new strategy for 2026 to 2029

- We held a joint session with Board and NAF members and heard their reflections on the draft strategy.
- We have agreed a revised approach and timelines for the strategy work to account for the timing of the Independent Review.
- We have RAG-rated this as ‘on hold’

#### 3.1b Aligned and strength our approach to annual business planning and performance management

- We are progressing the review of our business planning and performance management processes in line with plan

### Outcome and impact

- We’re in a good place ahead of the independent review

### Changes to risk, any further concerns

### Key planned activity next quarter

- We’ll communicate the revised approach and timelines for the new strategy within the organisation
- We’ll continue to consider the draft strategy, so as not to lose momentum, but at a more measured pace.
- We’ll agree a timeline for the 2026/27 Business Plan.
- We’ll establish the Business Planning Steering Group.
- We’ll agree themes and priorities for the 2026/27 Business Plan with Board.

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Strategic theme: Delivery and Improvement

Digital, data and technology

Business plan progress

3.2: Finalise and start to implement our new digital, data and technology strategy



Activity and assurance

- The DDaT Programme Manager and Business Support Officer are now in post and leading the programme
- We led a DDaT session at the board strategy day in September, for feedback on direction and progress
- The newly established DDaT board has met to discuss key papers on programme delivery
- Each DDaT workstream now has a target roadmap, including a prioritised backlog of tasks and projects. The workstreams cover:
  - User-centred digital services
  - Data-driven regulation
  - Modern technology & security
  - People, skills & culture
  - Governance & delivery
- There are currently 96 tasks and projects in the DDaT roadmap, of which 9 are live and 6 have been completed
- We are currently on track to deliver business plan deliverables by March 2026 (on: case management security, data governance, workforce planning, emerging technologies)

Outcome and impact

- It is too early to report impact, but work is underway to establish outcomes, benefits and success criteria

Changes to risk, any further concerns

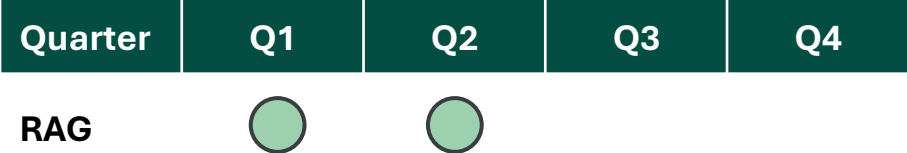
- The decision for publication of the DDaT strategy to follow the corporate strategy means we won't have a *published* DDaT strategy until around Oct 2026
- Delays in recruitment to key data governance role will have knock-on effect to related data actions
- There is no dedicated delivery team, so DDaT tasks and projects will draw on the same resources as ongoing digital work

Key planned activity next quarter

- Embed formal programme governance
- Initiate key pieces of work on technology platform, user-centred-design, and data architecture
- Complete skills mapping work to inform workforce plan

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3.3: Adopt and embed our new behaviours framework



Activity and assurance

- Initial team discussions about the behaviours framework began in August and early September, followed by 1:1 discussions throughout September. These are focusing on where people and teams currently are, and actions to align to the new behaviours.
- We procured a provider for a leadership development programme, focusing on specific behaviours. We held the first two sessions of this programme.
- We procured a 360° feedback provider and agreed the survey questions.
- We shared the results of the engagement survey with the organisation. We asked leaders to discuss with their teams and develop actions and commitments. This is linked to conversations about the behaviours.
- We've agreed how we will measure and track progress in the short term, though we'll need to give further consideration to measurement of longer-term outcomes and impact.

Outcome and impact

- It's too early to identify impact. We'll share more about progress, and early examples of change, next quarter.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No changes to risk

Key planned activity next quarter

- We'll complete 1:1 discussions on the behaviours framework.
- We'll hold the October all-team meeting, themed around 'be goal oriented' and 'be a catalyst for success'.
- We'll complete the first cycle of 360° feedback for leaders.
- In Q3 and Q4, we'll agree how to measure the longer-term impact of the behaviours framework.

# Quarterly performance report for July – September 2025



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# KPI performance overview

Performance update

ID	KPI	Target	RAG
EQA1	Time taken from end of course inspection to regulator decision	≤ 60 working days (median)	53
REG1	Time taken to approve UK registration applications	≤ 10 working days (median)	3
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications	≤ 20 working days (median)	11
REG3	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days (median)	2
REG4	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 minutes (median)	4
FTP1	Time taken to complete triage	≤ 26 weeks (median) by March 2026 Q2: ≤ 34 weeks (median)	38
FTP2	Time taken to conclude investigation	≤ 54 weeks (median) by March 2026 Q2: ≤ 62 weeks (median)	50
FTP3	Time taken to complete case examination process	≤ 12 weeks (median)	13
FTP4	Time from receipt of concern to final fitness to practise outcome at case examination	≤ 92 weeks (median) by March 2026 Q2: ≤ 96 weeks (median)	113
FTP5	Time from receipt of concern to final fitness to practise outcome at hearing	No target. Weeks (median)	227

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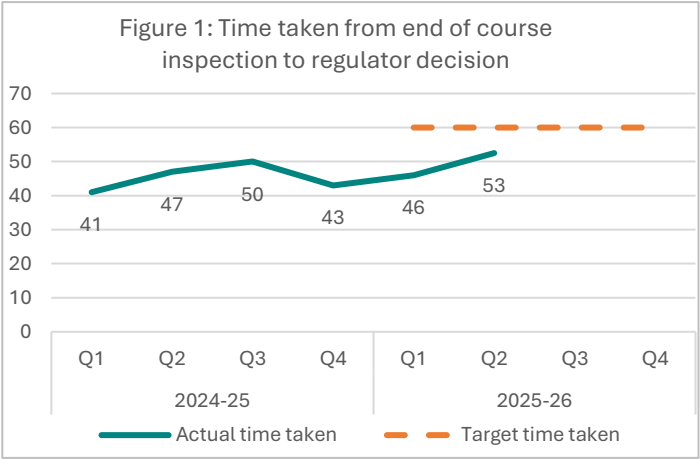


## KPI performance overview

Performance update

ID	KPI description	Target	RAG
FTP6	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤ 20 working days (median)	18
IG1	Time taken to complete FOI requests	≥ 90% within statutory deadline	100%
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	≥ 90% within statutory deadline	100%
C1	Corporate complaints response time	≥ 80% within 20 working days	98%
P1	Retention rate	≥ 80%	87%
P2	Sickness absence over last 12 months	≤ 7.8 days per person	7.5
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.5%	5.7%
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≥ 99%	100%

**EQA1:** Time taken from end of course inspection to regulator decision  
Target: ≤ 60 working days (median)



**Commentary**

- We achieved the KPI in this quarter
- We made decisions on 6 courses from 4 course providers.
- The number of inspections will increase from quarter 4 as our reapproval period for BIA and AMHP courses commences in October 2025.

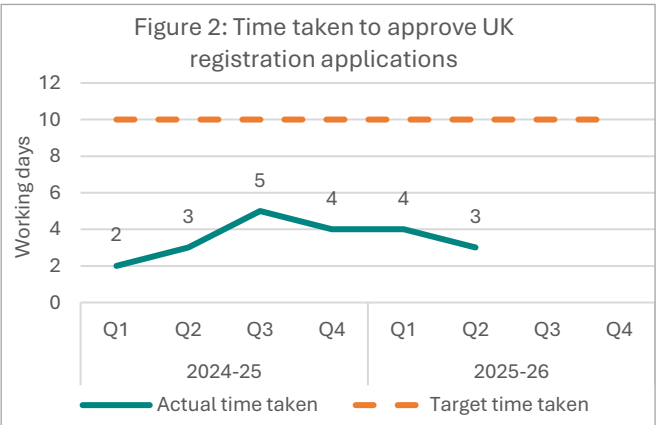
**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

No change

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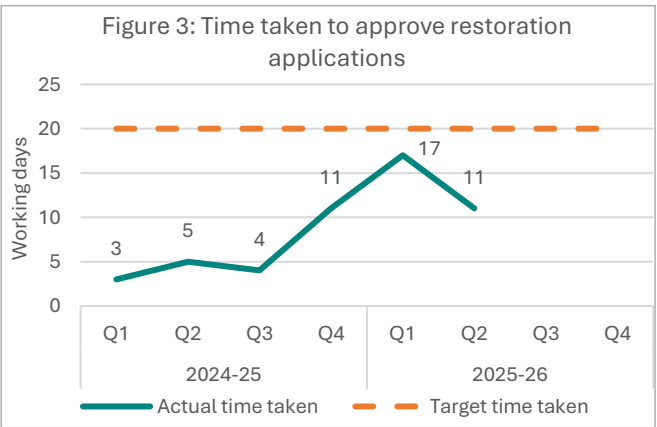
**REG1:** Time taken to approve UK registration applications

Target: ≤ 10 working days (median)



**REG2:** Time taken to approve restoration applications

Target: ≤ 20 working days (median)



**Commentary**

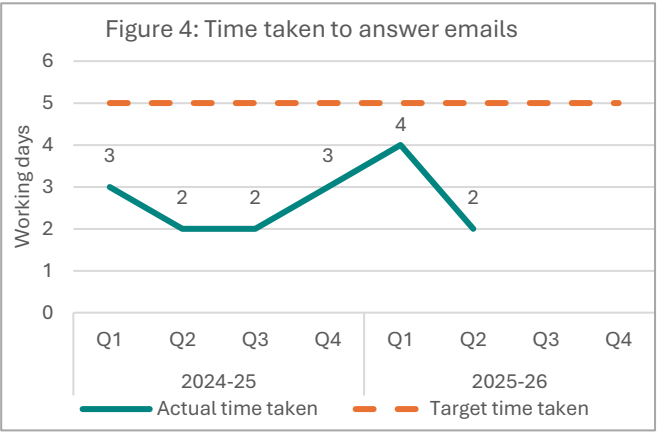
- We achieved both KPIs in this quarter.
- We received 3,461 UK applications compared to 3,521 in Q2 of 2024/25.
- We received 200 restoration applications compared to 180 in Q2 of 2024/25.
- We maintained KPI performance through the peak of UK applications by cross-skilling registration officers to enable all of them to process UK registrations.
- We have improved the time taken to approve restoration applications by simplifying the form for updating skills and knowledge. We expect this change to decrease the time taken further in Q3.

**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

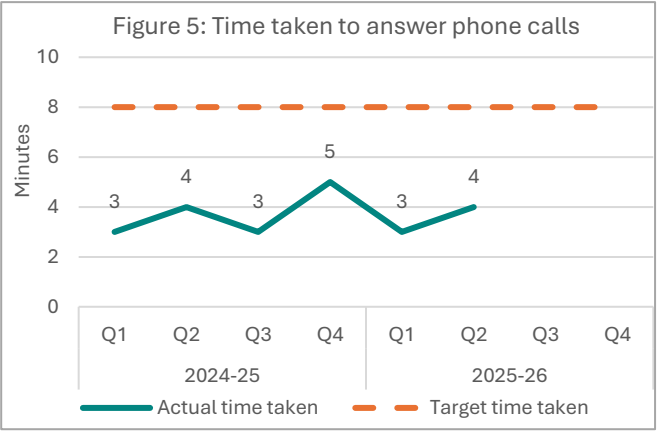
- Annual renewals has started. The volumes of restorations following removal and staffing capacity are the main risk factors.
- After renewals, there will be a peak of restoration activity as we restore those who have failed to renew in time but still wish to remain on the register. We are recruiting an additional two renewals officers to support a potential increase in this peak.

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**REG3: Time taken to answer emails**  
Target: ≤ 5 working days (median)



**REG4: Time taken to answer phone calls**  
Target: ≤ 8 minutes (median)



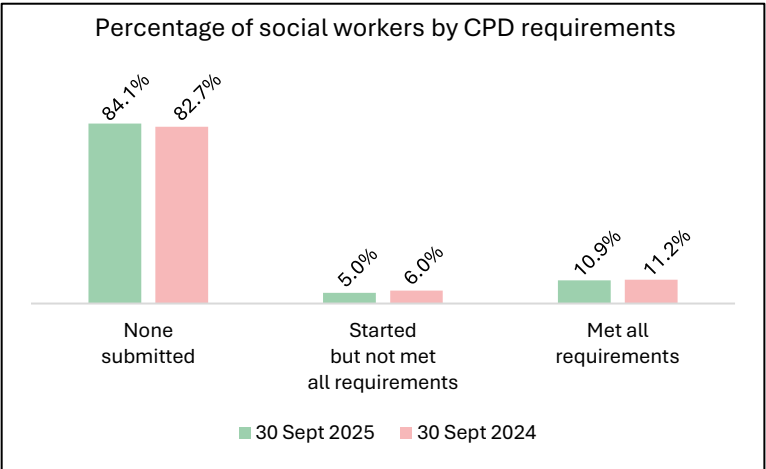
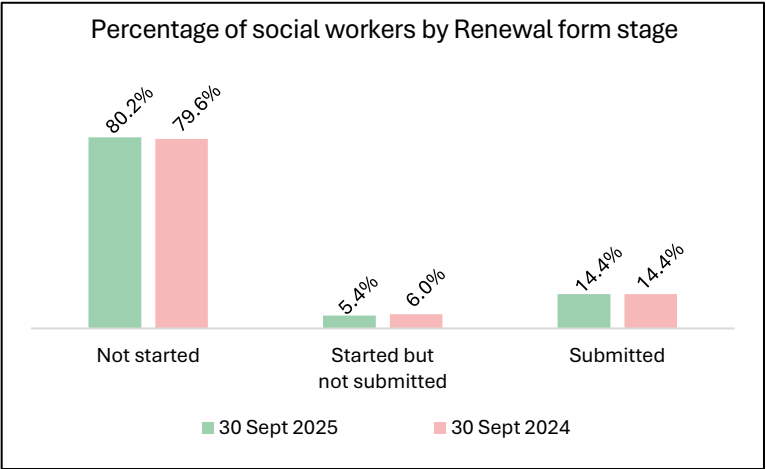
**Commentary**

- We achieved both KPIs.
- We received 5,953 calls this quarter compared to 6,245 in Q2 of 2024/25.
- We received 9,741 emails this quarter compared to 10,069 in Q2 of 2024/25.

**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

- Annual renewals registration closes on Sunday 30 November 2025. We will operate an enquiries service over the final weekend to support those social workers with actions outstanding.

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Commentary

- We launched our renewals communications strategy on 1 September 2025, reaching 107,077 social workers.
- Early renewal compliance is in line with last year, with 15,339 applications submitted by 30 September 2025 (14,995 in 2024).
- We contacted 50,416 social workers who do not have a Direct Debit mandate in place which resulted in over 1,100 social workers setting one up.
- Enquiries regarding the change to the registration fee remain low.
- Forge and the website have performed as expected, with no significant IT issues impacting social workers' ability to renew.

Any concerns

- We have prepared a plan of actions to respond to any sudden increase in enquiries or complaints about the fee changes.
- We are implementing early training on restoration after renewals applications, and we will increase headcount of the renewals team.

# Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

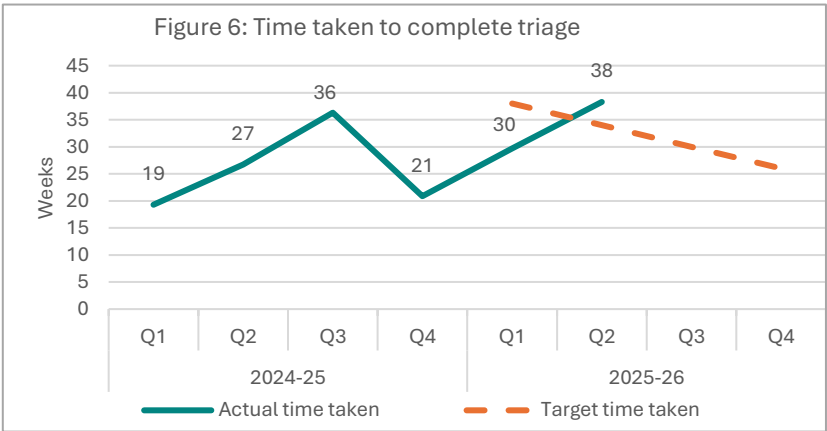
## Fitness to practise KPI overview

## Performance update

### FTP1: Time taken to complete triage <sup>1</sup>

Target: ≤ 26 weeks (median) by March 2026.

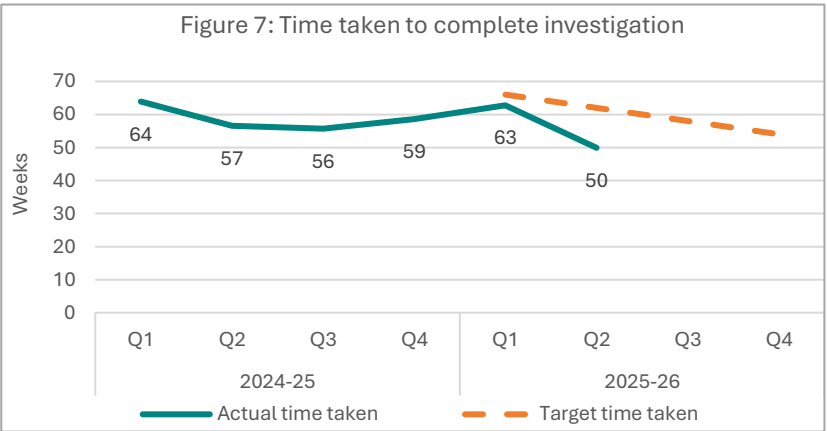
Q2 target: ≤ 34 weeks (median)



### FTP2: Time taken to complete investigation

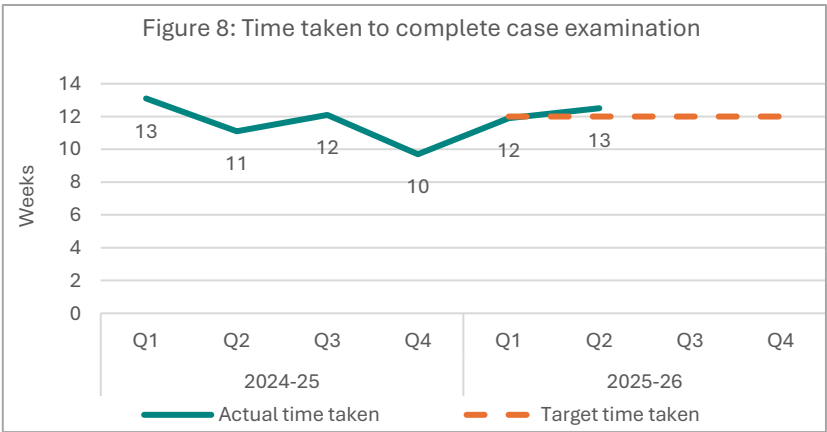
Target: ≤ 54 weeks (median) by March 2026.

Q2 target: ≤ 62 weeks (median)



### FTP3: Time taken to complete case examination

Target: ≤ 12 weeks (median)



### Commentary

- Triage timeliness is impacted by the high numbers of referrals being received. Performance will be volatile until the backlog is reduced; but we are consistently concluding higher numbers of triage cases than 24/25. We are beating our timeliness targets in investigation.
- The case examiners are currently under-resourced due to turnover, which has slowed down output. Following a successful recruitment, new team members will join in December.

<sup>1</sup> The quarter 1 figure differs from last quarter's submission. This is due to a case previously closed during the quarter being closed in error, and subsequently re-opened.

# Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

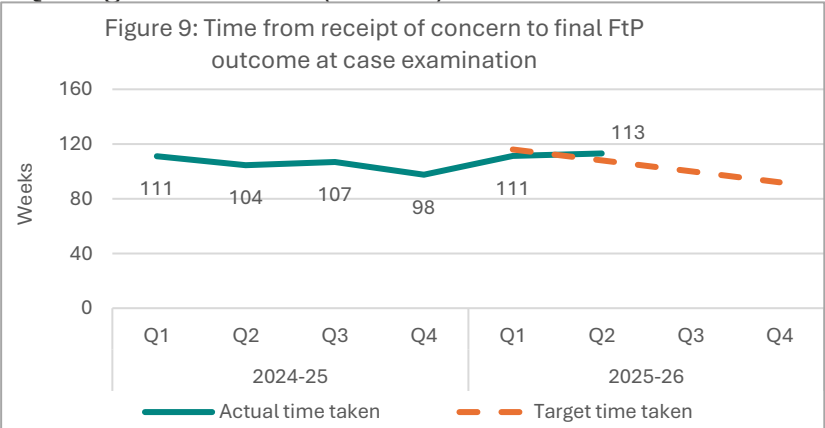
## Fitness to practise KPI overview

## Performance update

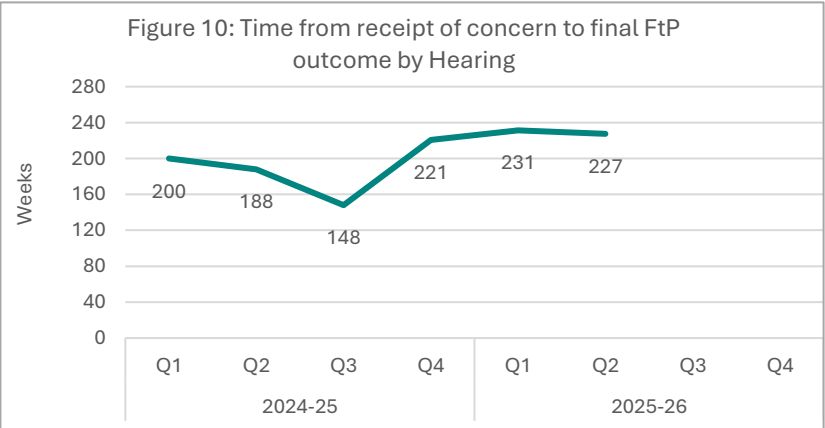
**FTP4:** Time from receipt of concern to final fitness to practise outcome at case examination<sup>2</sup>

Target: ≤ 92 weeks (median) by March 2026.

Q2 target: ≤ 96 weeks (median)

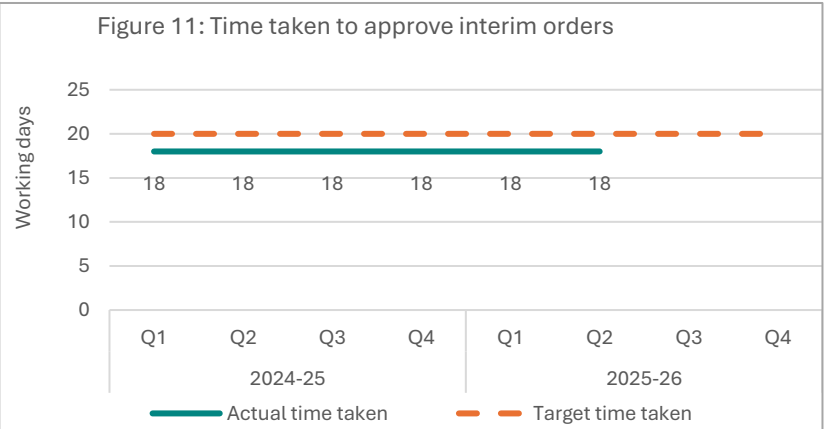


**FTP5:** Time from receipt of referral to final fitness to practise outcome at hearing<sup>3</sup>



**FTP6:** Time taken to approve interim orders

Target: ≤ 20 working days (median)



### Commentary

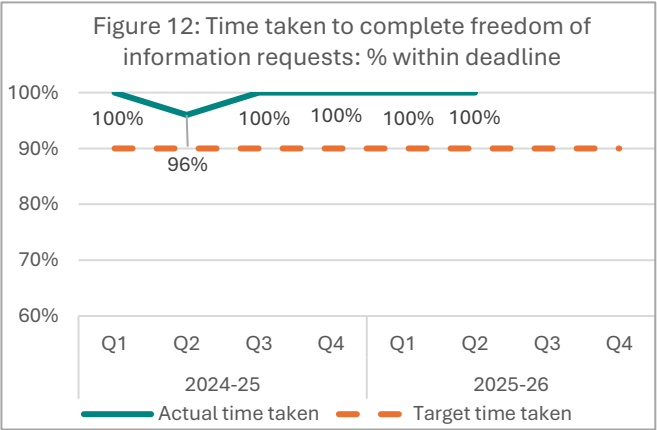
- Interim order performance remains within KPI.
- Age and volume of triage caseload, and age of hearings caseload, continues to affect overall time to conclude cases.
- More information on fitness to practise performance is in the accompanying report: FtP Performance Q2 2025-26.

<sup>2</sup> The quarter 1 figure differs from last quarter's submission. This is due to a case previously closed at the Triage stage being subsequently re-opened and closed at the Case Examiner stage.

<sup>3</sup> 2024-25 figures differ from last quarter's submissions. This is due to an error in reporting backdated 2024-25 figures to reflect the new calculations for this metric for this financial year.

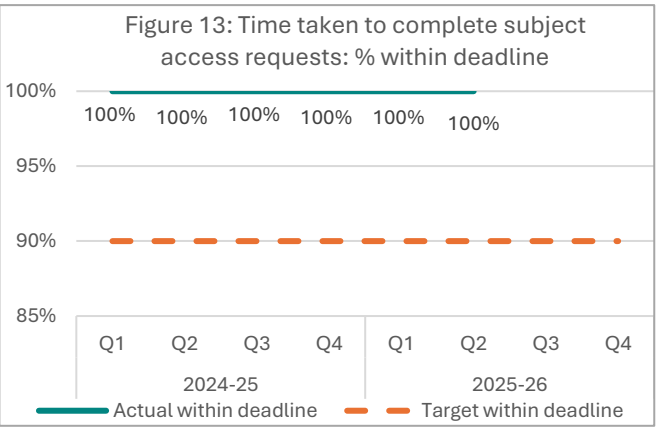
**IG1: Time taken to complete FOI requests**

Target: ≥ 90% within deadline



**IG2: Time taken to complete subject access requests**

Target : ≥ 90% within deadline



**Commentary**

- We responded to all SARs and FOI requests within the statutory deadline.
- We responded to 47 SARs in Q1. We responded to 64 SARs in Q2

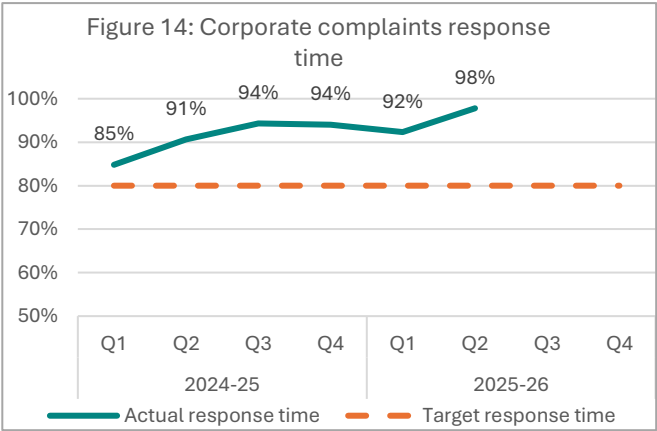
**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

- We experienced a sharp increase in the number of SARs received in July and August.
- The majority of SARs we receive relate to FtP cases. The increase in SARs received has put additional pressure on Triage resource (who are required to assist in responding).



C1: Corporate complaints response time

Target:  $\geq 80\%$  within 20 working days



Commentary

- We continued to meet this KPI.

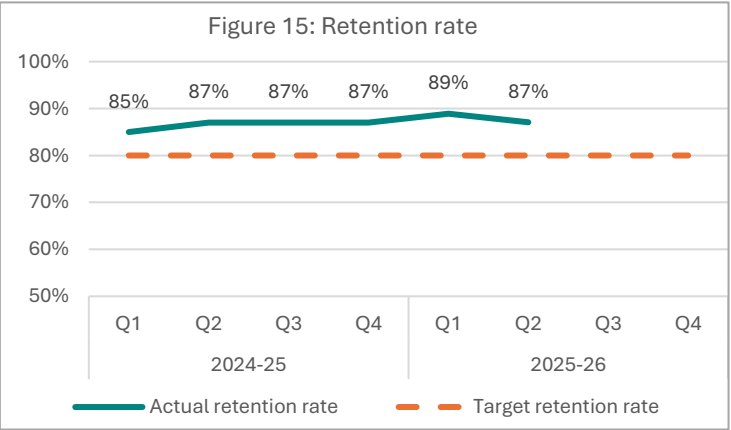
Changes to risk, any further concerns

- No change.

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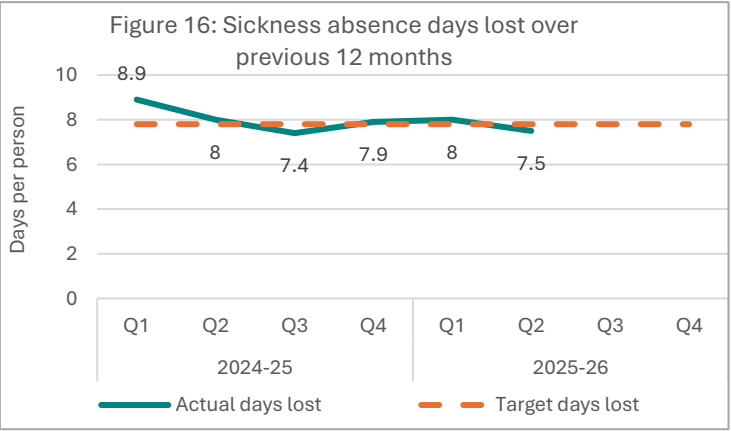
P1: Retention rate

Target:  $\geq 80\%$



P2: Sickness absence over last 12 months

Target : 7.8 days



Commentary

Staff retention

- We achieved our KPI for staff retention.

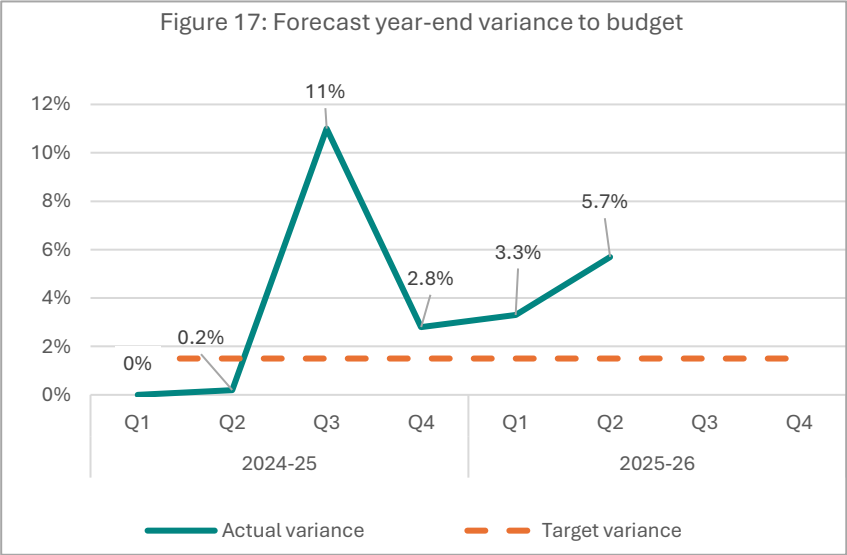
Sickness absence

- Rolling 12-month days lost to sickness has gone down, which is a similar pattern to last financial year, due to reduction in long term sickness. In general, compared to the last financial year, sickness levels are relatively stable.
- Long-term sickness has reduced by 10 percentage points this quarter. This is due to some colleagues on long-term sick leaving the organisation.

Changes to risk, any further concerns

- Our assessment is that our corporate risk in relation to people capacity and capability remains stable.

**FIN1:** Forecast year-end variance to budget  
Target: +/- 1.5%



**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

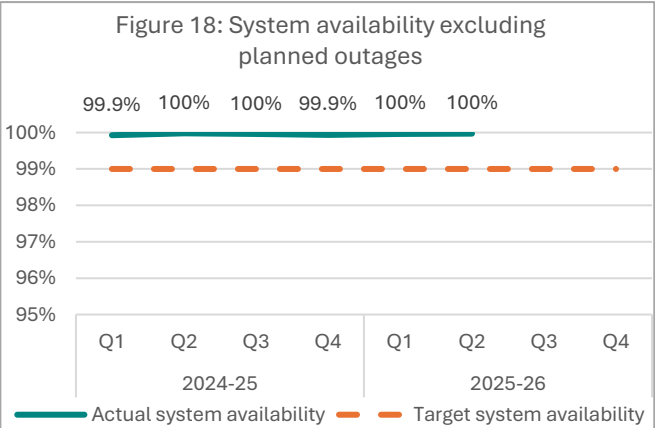
- The September end-year forecast indicated a full year underspend. This relates to capacity challenges in being able to rapidly increase activity via external suppliers, for example legal services, as well as the timely recruitment of vacant roles.

**Commentary**

During 2025/26, there have been significant changes to current forecast income and budget, due to the timing of key decisions and capacity challenges for ourselves and external suppliers to commit to in year expenditure. These have affected the end-year forecast position. In April, we received additional grant-in-aid from DfE to focus on fitness to practise. In July, the decision was made to increase registration fees which is expected to raise a further c£1m in income over the remainder of the financial year. We have agreed with DfE that we will draw down less grant-in-aid than originally allocated in the second half of the year. This adjustment has been made and will return the forecast year-end variance to within KPI tolerance next month.

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**IT1:** System availability excluding planned outages  
Target:  $\geq 99\%$



**Commentary**

- We achieved this KPI, nothing further to note.

**Changes to risk, any further concerns**

- Focusing on Q3, which includes the renewal activity, we will continue to closely monitor performance and scale our infrastructure as required.

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# Annex A

## Q2 2025-26 performance data



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Education and training		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time taken from end of course inspection to regulator decision (working days)	2025-26	N/A	38	54	47	47	58						
	2024-25	41	30	42	47	38	47	50	56	61	43	37	42
Time taken for report to be written and agreed after inspection end date	2025-26	N/A	25	30	28	35	26						
	2024-25	27	25	28	28	29	29	36	32	30	30	22	29
Time taken for the regulator decision after final report sent to regulator	2025-26	N/A	3	14	6	7	14						
	2024-25	5	3	5	10	6	8	8	8	5	2	8	4
Number of course inspections decisions made	2025-26	0	7	5	3	1	2						
	2024-25	10	8	9	13	4	12	15	5	9	6	7	3
Number of BIA reapprovals decisions made	2025-26	0	0	0	0	0	0						
	2024-25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of AMHP reapprovals decisions made	2025-26	0	0	0	0	0	0						
	2024-25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of approvals decisions made (including AMHP & BIA approvals)	2025-26	0	7	5	3	1	2						
	2024-25	4	3	3	6	2	3	4	2	4	3	0	1

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Registration			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of registered social workers		2025-26	105,007	105,337	105,454	106,294	107,070	108,088						
		2024-25	103,000	103,133	103,353	104,270	105,025	105,814	106,395	105,625	103,893	104,351	104,594	104,857
Number of social workers joining the register		2025-26	275	380	280	888	856	1,188						
		2024-25	245	198	332	966	812	946	843	378	515	479	267	319
Number of social workers leaving the register		2025-26	123	49	161	42	76	169						
		2024-25	103	65	109	48	56	157	263	1,186	2,216	16	23	56
Number of new registration applications received	All applications	2025-26	349	457	521	1,230	1,226	1,351						
		2024-25	298	255	580	1,356	976	1,569	677	542	285	411	283	525
	UK graduates	2025-26	235	338	413	1,104	1,125	1,232						
		2024-25	139	122	451	1,221	858	1,442	535	431	190	312	172	392
	Overseas graduates	2025-26	114	119	108	126	101	119						
		2024-25	159	133	129	135	118	127	142	111	95	99	111	133
Median time taken to approve registration applications (working days)	All applications	2025-26	5	4	4	2	3	3						
		2024-25	8	12	2	3	3	4	7	3	4	5	8	3
	UK graduates	2025-26	5	4	4	2	3	3						
		2024-25	2	2	1	2	2	4	6	2	3	5	6	2
	Overseas graduates	2025-26	12	20	17	21	19	20						
		2024-25	65	48	35	26	21	23	19	15	21	19	17	19
Number of restoration applications received		2025-26	57	42	52	70	71	59						
		2024-25	59	61	72	60	49	71	62	85	526	101	72	67

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# Registration

# Performance data

Registration		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time taken to approve restoration applications (working days)	2025-26	15	18	15	10	14	11						
	2024-25	3	3	2	3	7	5	5	6	4	9	12	17
Number of misuse of title cases opened	2025-26	17	11	7	5	7	5						
	2024-25	9	4	10	4	3	6	11	7	25	18	22	19
Number of misuse of title cases closed	2025-26	24	22	19	20	7	13						
	2024-25	14	7	5	12	8	8	1	9	18	4	5	11
Median time taken to conclude misuse of title cases (working days)	2025-26	22	14	12	24	58	9						
	2024-25	88	32	54	53	62	64	5	24	0	9	0	16
Number of phone calls received	2025-26	1,314	1,309	1,359	1,752	1,571	2,630						
	2024-25	1,455	1,400	1,473	1,782	1,793	2,670	3,381	5,107	4,208	1,912	1,377	1,613
Median time taken to answer phone calls (minutes)	2025-26	4	2	3	3	3	7						
	2024-25	3	3	3	3	3	6	3	2	8	5	4	5
Number of emails received	2025-26	2,438	2,404	2,380	2,611	2,915	4,215						
	2024-25	3,387	2,793	2,473	2,973	3,022	4,074	4,058	4,402	3,462	2,595	2,513	2,759
Median time taken to answer emails (working days)	2025-26	3	2	7	3	2	2						
	2024-25	4	1	5	3	4	2	1	2	2	3	3	3

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Continued professional development		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Percentage of social workers that have submitted at least one piece of CPD	2025-26	3%	4%	5%	7%	8%	16%						
	2024-25	4%	5%	6%	7%	10%	17%	33%	96%	0%	1%	2%	3%
Percentage of social workers meeting all CPD requirements	2025-26	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%	11%						
	2024-25	1%	2%	2%	3%	5%	11%	26%	96%	0%	0%	0%	1%

## Fitness to practise - triage

## Performance data

Fitness to practise – triage <sup>1</sup>		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of concerns received	2025-26	193	184	210	250	211	194						
	2024-25	128	158	151	158	140	156	155	150	193	180	191	175
Median time taken to complete triage (weeks)	2025-26	25	31	30	36	42	35						
	2024-25	22	21	11	28	26	27	38	33	36	28	18	17
Number of open triage cases	2025-26	1,907	1,926	1,993	2,083	2,128	2,134						
	2024-25	1,298	1,344	1,399	1,436	1,458	1,505	1,527	1,573	1,696	1,769	1,843	1,887
Median time open cases have spent in triage (weeks)	2025-26	25	26	25	24	22	22						
	2024-25	22	23	25	27	28	29	26	27	27	28	27	27
Number of concluded triage cases	2025-26	187	179	149	175	173	206						
	2024-25	157	123	112	128	122	105	136	107	78	126	135	138
Percentage of cases closed at triage	2025-26	87%	80%	79%	87%	82%	86%						
	2024-25	80%	82%	83%	78%	80%	74%	89%	81%	76%	79%	85%	80%
Percentage of cases progressed to investigation	2025-26	13%	20%	21%	13%	18%	14%						
	2024-25	20%	18%	17%	22%	20%	26%	11%	19%	24%	21%	15%	20%

<sup>1</sup> These figures differ from last year's submissions. We have grouped three stages (concern, pre-triage and triage) into one triage stage, and recalculated these metrics accordingly.

Fitness to practise - investigation

Performance data

Fitness to practise - investigation		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time taken to complete investigation (weeks)	2025-26	64	57	64	50	50	51						
	2024-25	66	73	33	63	65	32	56	45	63	54	56	80
Number of cases into investigation (including adjournments)	2025-26	29	40	34	33	35	37						
	2024-25	42	34	30	44	57	39	25	26	23	37	31	43
Number of open investigation cases	2025-26	464	460	441	434	430	434						
	2024-25	567	555	547	552	535	537	522	506	493	487	465	471
Median time open cases have spent in investigation (weeks)	2025-26	55	53	47	46	45	44						
	2024-25	44	45	49	50	50	44	63	55	55	44	55	28
Number of concluded investigation cases	2025-26	35	42	53	40	38	33						
	2024-25	46	45	38	38	74	37	40	42	37	41	53	37

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Fitness to practise – case examiner

Performance data

Fitness to practise – case examiner		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time taken to complete case examination (weeks)	2025-26	12	11	13	7	13	14						
	2024-25	14	12	13	11	11	12	13	12	10	12	12	8
Number of cases into case examination (including adjournments)	2025-26	39	43	53	41	40	32						
	2024-25	54	43	41	40	74	39	42	45	36	44	53	40
Number of open case examination cases	2025-26	80	101	120	119	130	129						
	2024-25	133	142	140	122	123	111	82	89	87	91	101	80
Median time open cases have spent in case examination (weeks)	2025-26	7	7	7	8	9	10						
	2024-25	9	10	11	12	8	8	8	6	7	8	5	7
Number of concluded case examination cases	2025-26	32	18	31	32	23	23						
	2024-25	33	22	30	41	40	39	59	29	34	27	33	45
% of cases closed at case examination	2025-26	47%	67%	61%	81%	74%	57%						
	2024-25	45%	91%	80%	78%	70%	72%	80%	83%	74%	67%	70%	78%

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## Fitness to practise – case examiner

## Performance data

Fitness to practise – case examiner		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
% of cases progressed to hearings	2025-26	53%	33%	39%	19%	26%	43%						
	2024-25	55%	9%	20%	22%	30%	28%	20%	17%	26%	33%	30%	22%
Median time from receipt of concern to final FtP outcome at case examination (weeks)	2025-26	122	130	84	111	104	136						
	2024-25	104	107	133	100	91	109	113	99	98	106	103	85
Number of cases closed with 'No Impairment'	2025-26	6	7	9	15	9	4						
	2024-25	8	11	15	22	14	18	32	17	14	13	17	22
Number of cases closed with 'Impairment'	2025-26	9	5	10	11	8	9						
	2024-25	7	9	9	10	14	10	14	7	11	5	6	13
Number of Accepted Disposals offered	2025-26	4	11	10	17	11	6						
	2024-25	14	7	11	21	20	11	10	14	7	10	15	14

Fitness to practise – hearing

Performance data

Fitness to practise – hearing		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time from receipt of concern to final FtP outcome at Hearing (weeks)	2025-26	231	217	260	337	204	214						
	2024-25	198	229	193	226	166	185	181	230	133	174	221	228
Number of cases into hearings	2025-26	27	7	13	8	6	14						
	2024-25	19	5	12	14	12	11	13	6	11	12	11	16
Number of open cases in hearings	2025-26	428	431	440	442	446	449						
	2024-25	392	391	386	386	393	399	410	414	421	426	426	412
Median time open cases awaiting a hearing (weeks)	2025-26	140	103	106	106	109	112						
	2024-25	79	82	84	108	113	118	114	116	125	129	133	140
Number of concluded hearings	2025-26	1	3	2	4	2	7						
	2024-25	5	6	2	6	4	3	3	1	1	4	13	22
Median time concluded cases spent in pre-hearing (weeks)	2025-26	162	132	140	160	114	165						
	2024-25	105	115	172	140	115	100	91	166	86	92	117	117

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Fitness to practise – interim order and quality

Performance data

Fitness to practise – hearing		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Median time take to approve interim orders (working days)	2025-26	14	18	18	N/A	18	19						
	2024-25	17	18	26	N/A	18	18	18	18	21	18	17	17
Number of interim order application hearings	2025-26	2	6	4	0	2	8						
	2024-25	1	3	1	0	3	3	1	2	4	3	2	2
Number of interim orders imposed	2025-26	2	6	4	0	2	8						
	2024-25	1	3	1	0	3	3	1	2	4	3	2	1

Fitness to practise – internal quality		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
FtP internal quality score	2025-26	100%	89%	100%	91%	N/A	94%						
	2024-25	97%	88%	94%	87%	90%	88%	97%	97%	97%	100%	87%	94%

People		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Retention rate	2025-26	89%	88%	89%	88%	88%	87%						
	2024-25	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	87%	86%	87%	87%	86%	86%	87%
Headcount of staff	2025-26	276	271	276	279	288	285						
	2024-25	233	232	234	237	241	247	250	255	258	263	264	275
Days lost to sickness per employee over previous 12 months	2025-26	8.2	8.2	8	7.9	7.8	7.5						
	2024-25	8.9	8.8	8.9	8.9	8.5	8	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.1	7.4	7.9

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Corporate complaints

Performance data

Corporate complaints		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Corporate complaints responded to within timescales	2025-26	91%	90%	100%	93%	100%	100%						
	2024-25	74%	94%	91%	83%	100%	92%	96%	100%	88%	94%	100%	89%
Number of corporate complaints received (stage 1 only)	2025-26	5	9	10	17	6	9						
	2024-25	18	12	6	9	8	16	15	10	12	11	5	11
Number of corporate complaints that missed 20-day timescale	2025-26	1	1	0	1	0	0						
	2024-25	5	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	1
Median response time over previous 12 months (working days)	2025-26	16	16	15	16	16	16						
	2024-25	15	15	15	15	16	16	16	15	16	16	16	16

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# Annex B

## Q2 2025-26 course approval decisions



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## Course approval decisions

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
University of Chester	Social Work - Part time	North West	25 March 2025	27 March 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/zhbhfry1/approval-report-10072025-uchcpp491.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/zhbhfry1/approval-report-10072025-uchcpp491.pdf</a>	Approved with conditions
University of Chester	Social Work (masters exit route)	North West	25 March 2025	27 March 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/zhbhfry1/approval-report-10072025-uchcpp491.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/zhbhfry1/approval-report-10072025-uchcpp491.pdf</a>	Approved with conditions
University of Plymouth	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	South East	28 January 2025	11 February 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4pxl4p4r/100725_up_cpp476_inspection-report_swda_rd.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4pxl4p4r/100725_up_cpp476_inspection-report_swda_rd.pdf</a>	Not approved
Bournemouth University	BA (Hons) Social Work Apprenticeship	South West	13 May 2025	15 May 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/q5qj0szb/final-approval-report-bu-08082025.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/q5qj0szb/final-approval-report-bu-08082025.pdf</a>	Approved
University of Bedfordshire	Social Work	East	10 June 2025	13 June 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/y5jduwgg/20250922_ubecpp481_cpp482_inspection_report.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/y5jduwgg/20250922_ubecpp481_cpp482_inspection_report.pdf</a>	Approved
University of Bedfordshire	Social Work Apprenticeship	East	10 June 2025	13 June 2025	<a href="https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/y5jduwgg/20250922_ubecpp481_cpp482_inspection_report.pdf">https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/y5jduwgg/20250922_ubecpp481_cpp482_inspection_report.pdf</a>	Approved



## Fitness to practise – performance Q2 2025/26

Agenda Item 10    Paper Ref 08a

**Paper for the**  
Social Work England Board

**Sponsor**  
Philip Hallam, Executive Director, Regulation

**Author**  
Philip Hallam, Executive Director, Regulation  
Stephen Barnett, Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)  
Alexandra Hayward, fitness to Practise Performance Manager

**Date**  
31 October 2025

**Reviewed by**  
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

**This paper is for**  
Assurance and Noting

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

**Impact: Risk Type and Appetite**  
Statutory regulatory functions - Open

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**  
N/A

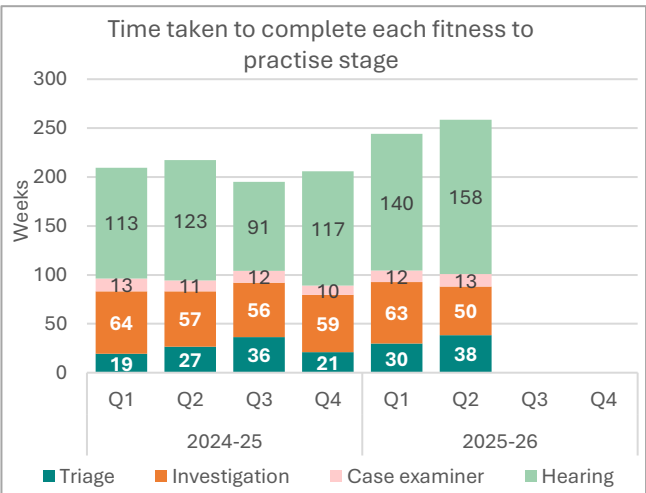
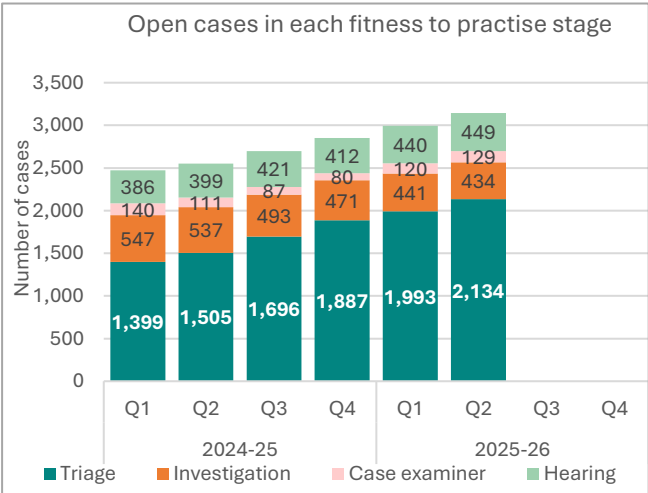
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1. Summary

This report sets out performance across the fitness to practise service for the second quarter of 2025-26. In line with discussions with the Board in March and July 2025, and the papers provided at that time, this paper focuses on the throughput of cases at each stage of fitness to practise and sets out our projections for caseloads at the end of the financial year. The paper also considers closure rates and decision-making outcomes, and references performance against timeliness indicators. It sets out activities that have taken place over the quarter and looks ahead to activities planned for the next quarter.

Headline performance for this quarter is as follows:

- We have closed more concerns at triage in Q2 than any of the previous five quarters. But we have also adjusted our forecast for the number of decisions made to reflect the high number of referrals being received and current staffing capability.
- The number of open triage cases remains high and is higher than we forecast earlier in the year. We have seen a 29% increase in referrals since December 2024. This has affected our ability to reduce the overall triage caseload, notwithstanding the higher number of triage decisions made.
- Investigations and case examination performance is broadly in line with our forecast expectations.
- Additional resources at the post-case examinations stage has allowed for more cases to be progressed and readied for hearing than originally forecast. Alongside this, our re-forecast of throughput has reduced the expected number of cases we anticipate will be referred for hearings this year. We therefore anticipate fewer cases will be awaiting a hearing at the end of the financial year than modelled.



## 2. Triage

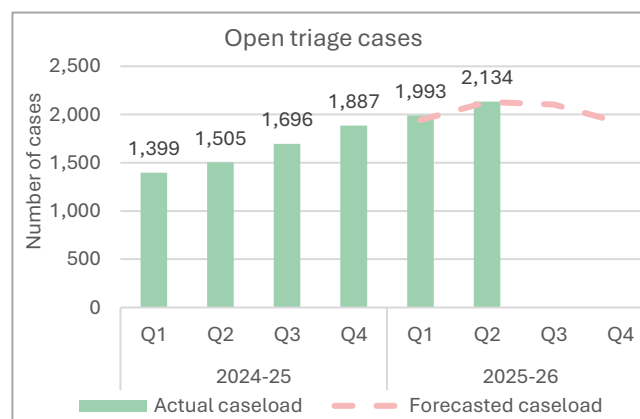
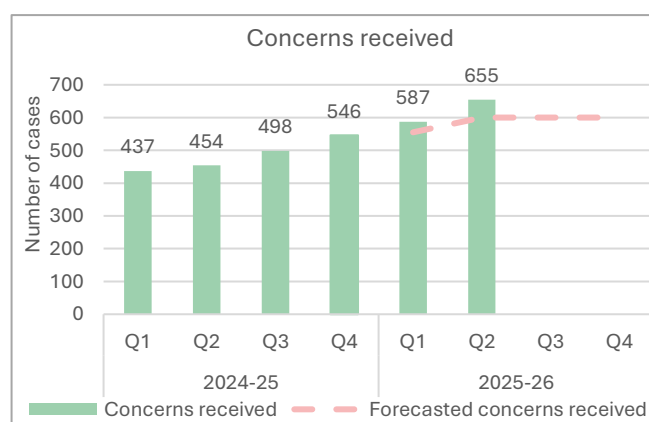
Triage have made a higher number of decisions in Q2 than any of the last six quarters. However, the number of decisions made is lower than forecast in April 2025 and continues to be affected by the backlog of cases, and the large and sustained increase in the number of referrals coming in. In each of the last six quarters the number of concerns received has increased, and exceeded the number of decisions being made.

The key performance indicator, time taken to complete triage, has deteriorated in Q2 and we are unlikely to meet the end-of-year target. However, as previously discussed with the Board there will be continued volatility in this indicator as older backlog cases are closed alongside newer ones.

The last ten months have seen a 29% increase in referrals received when compared to numbers of referrals seen in 2023/24 and 2024/25. Q2 has also seen a higher number of new concerns received than Q1. The average number of concerns received during 23/24 and 24/25 was 154 per month, and the average for this financial year is currently 207. We have re-modelled the incoming referral rate again to reflect this further increase.

Helped by additional resources, in Q1 of 25/26 we made more triage decisions than in any quarter of 24/25, and we have exceeded this again in Q2. However, any gains made through making more decisions have effectively been cancelled out by the concurrent rise in referrals received. Since our last report in July, we have re-forecast our targets and agreed to bring in further fixed term resources into triage. The 29% increase in referrals through 2025 means that assumptions and targets made at the beginning of the year have changed, and that progress to clear the triage backlog will be slower.

Concerns received	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25 (first re-forecast)	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25 (second re-forecast)	Aug-25	Sep-25	YTD
<b>Actual</b>	193	180	191	175	193	184	210	250	211	194	<b>1,981</b>
<b>Forecast</b>	154	154	154	154	185	185	185	200	200	200	<b>1,771</b>
<b>Variance</b>	+39	+26	+37	+21	+8	-1	+25	+50	+11	-6	<b>+210</b>



The sustained increase in referrals shown above has had a material impact on our forecast for open triage cases for the remainder of 25/26. We have continued to receive more referrals than

planned for at the start of the financial year, and have re-forecasted in April and July 2025 the number of referrals coming in (from 154 to 185, and then again to 200). We are now planning and re-forecasting on a monthly basis, based on referrals received and available resource. Alongside this, we are planning with colleagues in the policy team research to understand the reasons for this sustained increase in referrals.

Decision making in Q1 was slightly above our April forecast. However, in Q2 it was below forecast. This is mainly due to unforeseen staff changes. Two permanent members of staff left during the quarter; three agency staff finished earlier than we expected when the forecast was prepared in April overall activity levels were also lower in August. We have completed a further re-forecast in September 2025 which anticipates that decision making will remain the same in Q3 with an expected uplift in Q4, reflecting further recruitment activity and the successful induction and onboarding of staff recruited recently.

For Q2, the total number of triage decisions made was 554 against an April forecast of 720. Open caseload at the end of Q2 was 2,134 against an April forecast of 1,683. The numbers of triage decisions expected in Q3 and Q4, alongside the expected caseload, have been re-forecast in September and are shown in the table below.

Triage throughput 2025/26						
	Q	Forecast Jan 25	Forecast April 25	Forecast Sept 25 <sup>1</sup>	Actual	Variance to April forecast
No. of decisions	Q1	474	501		515	+14
	Q2	637	720	598	554	-166
	Q3	651	638	598		
	Q4	723	702	773		
Caseload	Q1	1,761	1,941		1,993	+52
	Q2	1,586	1,683	2,137	2,134	+451
	Q3	1,397	1,507	2,137		
	Q4	1,136	1,267	1,964		

In Q2, closure rates at the triage stage were at 85% (see below). Closure rates in both quarters of 2025/26 continue to be higher than our assumption of 80% of cases closing once the triage test is applied. We will continue to monitor the closure rate over the course of the financial year.

The table below also highlights the higher number of triage decisions made in 2025/26 when compared to 2024/25. The first two quarters of this financial year have seen a 46% increase in the total number of triage decisions made when compared to last year. However, in each of the last six quarters the number of decisions made each month was outstripped by the number of new referrals coming in. This has led to the triage backlog increasing, despite additional resources being brought in and more decisions being made

<sup>1</sup> Forecasts are now being completed monthly. It should be noted that forecasting both staff resource and potential triage decisions being made each month is difficult to achieve with any degree of accuracy. The length of time it takes to conclude individual triage cases varies significantly. There has also been movement of staff out of the triage team alongside recruitment and induction of new staff through the year.

Triage decisions						Total decisions made
FY	Q	Closed		Progressed		
2025-26	Q2	472	85%	82	15%	554
	Q1	423	82%	92	18%	515
2024-25	Q4	326	82%	73	18%	399
	Q3	267	83%	54	17%	321
	Q2	275	77%	80	23%	355
	Q1	319	81%	73	19%	392

The KPI for time taken to complete the triage stage of the fitness to practise process will fluctuate over the course of the financial year as older cases are concluded or progressed. For Q2 the time taken was 38 weeks against the quarterly target of 34 weeks. The end of year KPI target is 26 weeks.

Actions we have taken this quarter to address the high volume of cases in triage, and improve our approach, have included:

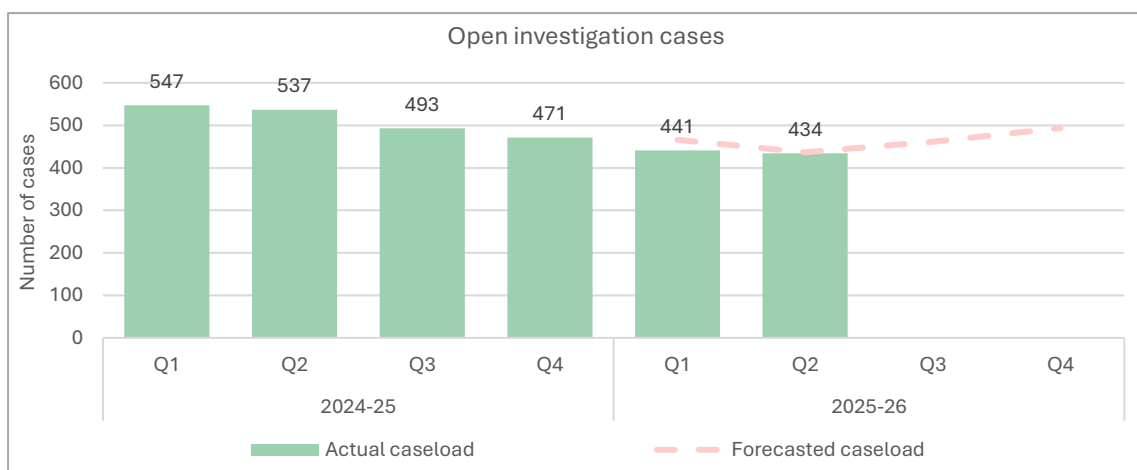
- Induction and onboarding of fixed term additional resources (10 different triage roles brought in this financial year).
- Agreement by the Executive Leadership Team to bring in further 5 fixed term roles to help address the sustained increase in referrals (in addition to resource identified to address the backlog).
- Making good progress on the process review project to streamline processes across triage and investigations. Recommendations expected in Q4 of 25/26.
- Ongoing focus on performance through a service delivery plan; balanced scorecard; improved approaches to performance management.
- A focus on employee engagement – with the latest organisational survey showing an engagement score of 83% for the triage team, compared to 65% in 2024 and 76% for the wider organisation.

### 3. Investigations

Performance in the Investigations service is generally tracking in line with expectations:

- Time taken to conclude investigations is better than the Q2 target. It has improved from 63 weeks in Q1 to 50 weeks in Q2.
- The overall caseload is lower than planned and, as a result, concluded investigations and decisions are correspondingly also lower than planned. Forecasts have been adjusted accordingly.





Our targets, and results, in the investigations service for Q2 are as follows:

Investigation throughput 2025/26						
	Q	Forecast Jan 25	Forecast April 25	Forecast Sept 25	Actual	Variance to April forecast
No. of decisions	Q1	147	147		130	-17
	Q2	161	161	108	111	-50
	Q3	176	176	114		
	Q4	176	176	147		
Caseload	Q1	473	466		441	-25
	Q2	512	519	437	434	-85
	Q3	541	550	460		
	Q4	596	605	493		

The open caseload is affected by a higher percentage of cases being closed at triage than originally planned (and therefore fewer cases progressing into an investigation), as well as the backlog in triage. Consequently there are fewer cases in the investigations service than originally modelled.

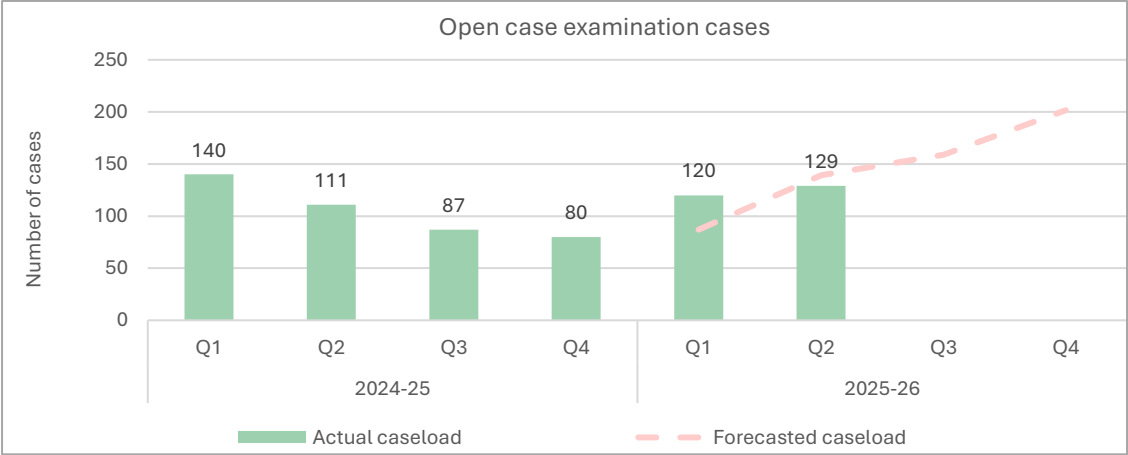
As with the triage KPI, the KPI for time taken to complete the investigation stage of the fitness to practise process will fluctuate over the course of the financial year as older cases are concluded or progressed. However, performance on this indicator is tracking better than originally planned. For Q2 the time taken was 50 weeks against a quarterly target of 62 weeks. The end of year KPI target is 54 weeks.

We continue to improve our approach to the investigation of cases, and activities we have taken in the investigations service this quarter have included:

- Progressing a process review and re-engineering project (alongside the triage process review).
- Strengthening our joint approach to working with local authorities through both the Engagement Project and closer working with the Regional Engagement Team.
- Ongoing focus on performance through a service delivery plan; balanced scorecard; improved approaches to performance management.

- A focus on employee engagement – with the latest organisational survey showing an engagement score of 72% for the investigations team, compared to 35% in 2024 and 76% for the wider organisation.

4. Case examination



Performance at the case examination stage this quarter has been impacted by 3 vacancies within the team, following a long period of relative stability. Case examiners make decisions in pairs (1 lay, 1 professional case examiner), and therefore a vacancy has an immediate impact on the number of cases we are able to conclude. We have now recruited back into these roles and the new case examiners will commence training from December onwards.

Consequently, volumes at the end of the quarter are as follows:

Case examiner throughput 2025/26						
	Q	Forecast Jan 25	Forecast April 25	Forecast Sept 25	Actual	Variance to April forecast
No. of decisions	Q1	114	114		81	-33
	Q2	124	124	76	78	-46
	Q3	132	132	73		
	Q4	132	132	86		
Caseload	Q1	97	87		120	+33
	Q2	106	98	139	129	+31
	Q3	123	116	149		
	Q4	141	134	189		

Of those cases concluded at the case examination stage, outcomes have been as follows:

Case examiner decisions								Total decisions made
FY	Q	Closed no further action		Accepted disposal		Referred to hearing		
2025-26	Q2	28	36%	28	36%	22	28%	78
	Q1	22	27%	24	30%	35	43%	81
2024-25	Q4	52	50%	24	23%	29	28%	105
	Q3	63	52%	32	26%	26	21%	121
	Q2	54	45%	34	28%	32	27%	120
	Q1	34	40%	25	29%	26	31%	85

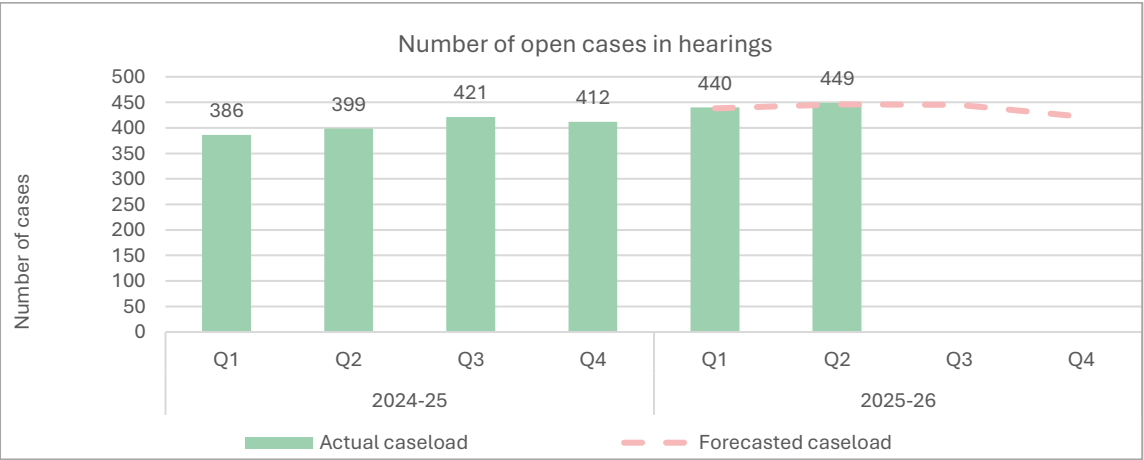
The referral rate to hearing was within the 30% forecast range, with 28% of cases referred this quarter. We continue to improve our approach to engagement with social workers, and project work in this area will continue over 2025/26.

For Q2, we saw a number of complex older cases progressed and several adjourned cases returned to the queue, therefore the median time taken to complete the case examination stage of the fitness to practise process has raised slightly to 13 weeks.

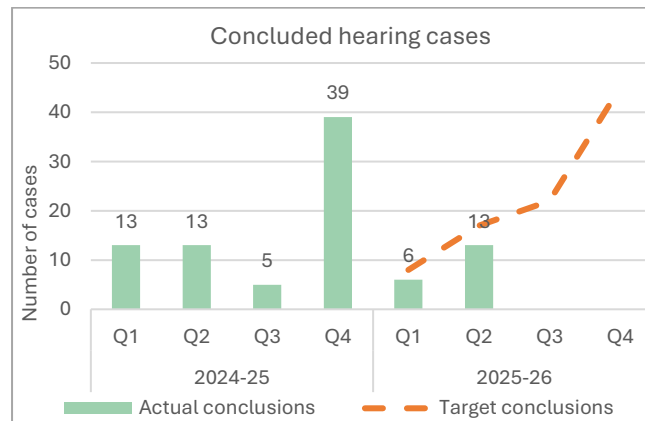
For 25/26, we have also set out a target for the median time taken from receipt of a concern to the closure at the case examination stage. By the end of the year, we have set out that this time taken should be 92 weeks. For this quarter, the time taken is 113 weeks. Based on current performance in both triage and case examination, it looks unlikely that the end of year target will be met.

5. Hearings

There are currently 449 cases at the hearings stage of the fitness to practise process. Over the course of the quarter, 22 cases have been referred by case examiners, against a forecast of 23.



We continue to work closely with our external legal provider to use our available financial resources to progress as many cases for hearing as possible. Additional resources available this year are enabling more cases to be progressed than previously anticipated. At the end of Q2 we forecast that 92 cases will be concluded at the hearings stage by the end of the financial year (this number takes into account our modelled 18% adjournment rate). This would mean that the end of year number of cases awaiting conclusion at this stage would be 425, a reduction from the 538 cases forecast earlier in the year.



The process of procurement for a second legal provider to provide extra capacity to address the hearings backlog continues. This process will conclude at the end of 2025/26, and we anticipate that a second provider would be able to add extra capacity from Q1 2026/27.

We continue to monitor the time taken from receipt of concern to the final outcome at the hearings stage. Timeliness here will continue to be affected by the backlog of cases awaiting conclusion at this stage. For Q2, this KPI is 227 weeks.

This quarter, 13 cases were disposed of via a final hearing, with the following outcomes:

Hearing outcomes	2025-26		2024-25			
	Q2	Q1	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1
No impairment, no further action	5	2	6	1	1	4
No impairment, advice	0	0	0	0	0	0
No impairment, warning	0	0	2	0	0	2
Impaired, no further action	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impaired, advice	0	0	0	0	0	0
Impaired, warning order	0	0	8	0	0	0
Impaired, conditions of practice order	0	0	1	0	1	2
Impaired, suspension order	3	3	8	0	3	3
Impaired, removal order	5	1	14	4	8	2

## 6. Interim orders and case review

We continue to meet our KPI target for the time taken to approve interim orders.

In Q2, 10 interim order applications were considered by adjudicators, and 10 orders granted (9 suspension orders and 1 conditions of practice orders).

Our case review team considered to support social workers subject to interim or final orders, and in Q2 71 interim order review and 19 final order review hearings events were held.

## 7. Other fitness to practise activities

In Q2 we have one ongoing County Court claim in relation to a case closed at triage, and one ongoing High Court appeal by a former registrant relating to a final order review meeting. We conceded one judicial review in relation to a voluntary removal decision and that decision will be remade.

Alongside this, we continue to receive learning points from the Professional Standards Authority relating to cases they have considered through their section 29 process. This process allows for the Professional Standards Authority to review final fitness to practise panel decisions and disseminate any learning identified. We review these learning points and share internally and with our partners.

Our Decision Review Group continues to review decisions from across the different stages of the fitness to practise process. Our internal quality score for Q4 is 93%.

In Q2, our legal team received 2 new applications to review a case examiner decision, and we had 2 applications ongoing. Of these applications:

- 1 was determined ineligible for review
- 2 were considered at stage 1 of the process, and were closed at this stage of the process
- 0 cases were referred back to the case examiners for a fresh decision
- 1 application remains ongoing at the end of the quarter and is awaiting a stage 1 decision.

In Q2 we have received 8 applications for voluntary removal from the register by registrants currently in the fitness to practise process. We made decisions on 4 applications in the quarter, with 1 application granted, and 3 refused. 3 applications were withdrawn.

## 8. Looking ahead to Q3 and beyond

We will continue to pro-actively monitor and make adjustments to our referral assumptions and our decision-making targets in Q3 and Q4. On the assumption that referral rates remain high, our progress at reducing the **triage** backlog is forecast to take longer than originally planned, with modest improvements in Q3 and Q4 and a more sustained reduction in 2026/27. We will consider the possibility of adding even further fixed term staff resources into the triage stage, though this will need careful consideration to prevent disruption to current performance.

In **investigations** we will continue to work closely with our external legal provider to ensure that a pipeline of ongoing work at all stages is maintained. We are currently moving 200 cases awaiting a hearing back into the investigations team, and our external legal provider will undertake a review of all these cases to help progress them ahead of further pre-hearing work.


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Our process review in **triage and investigations** will move into the next phase of work – prioritising improvement suggestions; starting to map out new processes; and considering broader recommendations on changes to ways of working, roles and structures.

In **case examinations** we have recruited a new cohort of case examiners who are due to start in December and have a clear induction plan in place. We continue to work towards embedding the revised decision making framework and further develop the quality assurance framework which is due for roll-out in Q4.

In **hearings and case review** we will consult on revised impairment and sanctions guidance and a new piece of guidance on consensual panel disposals during Q3. By Q4 we will conclude our project on additional support and implement the improvements. We continue to work with all parties where a case is ready for listing to identify appropriate listing dates in the 25/26 and 26/27 hearings schedule.

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# Social Work Week 2026

Agenda Item 12    Paper Ref 10

**Paper for the**  
Social Work England Board

**Sponsor**  
Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement

**Author**  
Matthew Devlin, Head of Strategic Engagement

**Date**  
31 October 2025

**Reviewed by**  
Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement

**This paper is for**  
Assurance and Noting

**Associated strategic objective**  
SO1: Build trust and confidence in the social work profession, and in regulation, by strengthening our relationship with the sector.

**Impact: Risk type and appetite**  
N/A

**Equality impact assessment (EIA)**  
N/A

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## 1. Summary

Social Work Week brings people together to learn, connect, and influence positive change. A core aim of the week is to increase understanding of Social Work England’s unique role as the specialist regulator for the profession. As a national organisation, we oversee the entire social work journey from assuring the quality of education and training, to registering social workers and protecting the title, to setting and upholding professional standards for safe and effective practice.

Social work is a diverse and complex profession, and effective regulation requires us to stay connected to the realities of practice. That’s why we are committed to an engagement-led approach: listening to the profession, collaborating with people with lived and learned experience, and remaining alert to emerging issues that affect social workers and those they support.

Social Work Week is a key opportunity to explain what we do, why it matters, and how regulation supports both the profession and the public. Through open conversations and accessible national events, we aim to demystify our work, address misconceptions, and build stronger relationships across the sector. By doing so, we help ensure that everyone; social workers, employers, students, and the public, understands our purpose and the value we bring to social work in England.

## 2. Social Work Week 2025

During Social Work Week 2025, we delivered a focused programme of 15 sessions, engaging a total of 6,754 attendees, a figure consistent with the previous three years, despite a more streamlined schedule.

The most attended session of the week drew 1,137 participants and was led by Jenny Molloy, author, expert contributor, motivational speaker, and care leaver, whose lived experience of social work resonated powerfully with the audience.

Of the 15 sessions, 12 were co-produced with individuals who bring either lived or learned experience of social work, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive and authentic dialogue. We also saw strong engagement from key stakeholders across the profession, including a joint regulator session featuring all social work regulators from the devolved nations, an important demonstration of sector-wide collaboration.

## 3. Social Work Week 2026

Social Work Week 2026 will take place from 16–20 March, with World Social Work Day falling on Tuesday, 17 March. Social work week 2025 marked a significant turning point, establishing a refreshed model with clear objectives and themes that will guide future events. Our focus now is on building and refining this approach rather than redesigning it.



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4. Social Work England Programme

The Social Work Week programme will consist of events delivered in close partnership with the sector, with a suggested maximum of three events per day to ensure quality and focus. Each event will be clearly aligned with our long-term mission and strategic priorities, underpinned by a rigorous Expression of Interest (EOI) process.

We will leverage our stakeholder mapping to identify prevalent themes and targeted relationship building opportunities, ensuring our programme is both relevant and impactful. Early and proactive engagement with DfE and DHSC officials will be a priority, including exploring opportunities for ministerial attendance. We will also seek to showcase the full breadth of social work settings, ensuring diverse representation and sector-wide relevance.

We will launch the expression of interest process in November and bring a draft programme to the board in January 2026.

5. Public awareness

Social Work Week also presents a valuable opportunity to build on the success of our “Change the Script” campaign. Our aim is to further increase public understanding and recognition of social work as a regulated profession, stimulate interest in social work as a career, and lay the groundwork for longer term aspirations to improve standards across the profession.

The heightened engagement with our digital channels and increased media attention during Social Work Week will enable us to ramp up activity and generate national conversations about the value and impact of social work. To support this, we will provide a stakeholder toolkit, similar to the one developed for 2025, to help partners amplify key messages and ensure consistent, sector-wide communication.

By capitalising on this momentum, we can broaden our reach, strengthen the profession’s profile, and inspire the next generation of social workers.

6. 2026 objectives

- To continue to use this national moment to inform and educate the public on the role of social work as part of our #ChangetheScript campaign.
- To co-produce the week with those with lived and learned experience, ensuring that the programme reflects the diversity of social work practice and the voices of people who have social work in their lives
- To use this as an opportunity to listen to the experiences of social workers so that we have a rich picture of professional practice to draw from, to further our work to embed our professional standards

- To encourage local ownership of the week, by having a programme of events developed and delivered independently to those hosted by Social Work England
- To bring together leaders across one social work profession, sharing regional and national intelligence on the challenges and influencing discussions on collective solutions
- To ensure that we, as a national organisation, but also as an employer of social workers mark world social work day effectively.

## 7. 2026 themes

- **Data and insight:** how do we ensure that social workers' practice and its regulation are data driven? And how will this improve people's experience of the profession?
- **Education and training:** how do we support social workers throughout each step of their career journey? Why is continuous learning and supervision essential?
- **Innovation:** what can we learn from the adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) to improve professional practice? And where are the ethical tensions?
- **Professional identity:** is a greater sense of professional identity crucial for the future of social work?
- **Safe and effective practice:** how does professional competence contribute to building public trust in the social work profession? What can we learn from fitness to practise?

## 8. Conclusions and/or recommendations

The board is asked to note our proposal and continue to support the delivery of Social Work Week 2026.

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# Corporate governance: policy update

Agenda Item 14 Paper Ref 10

## Paper for the

Social Work England Board

## Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

## Author

Penny Clarke, Corporate Governance Manager

## Date

31 October 2025

## Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

## This paper is for

Decision

## Associated Strategic Objective

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

## Impact: Risk type and appetite

Governance and compliance - Cautious

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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### 1. Summary

This paper is provided for information purposes as part of the scheduled cycle of policy updates/reminders for board members.

### 2. Action required

Board members are asked to read the travel, subsistence and expenses policy and note the content.

### 3. Commentary

This policy provides guidance on:

- the types of expenses which can and cannot be reimbursed.
- making sure public interest is central to the decision-making process.
- maintaining high ethical standards.
- demonstrating value for money (VFM) within the decision-making process.

The principles outlined in this policy are consistent with the guidance contained within Managing Public Money.

This policy applies to all employees, non-executive directors and partners.

### 4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

The policy remains largely unchanged. However, amendments have been made to:

- Make it clearer that the policy covers partners following the change to worker status.
- Increase the nightly hotel allowance.
- Clarify that line managers are required to check the license of the driver and ensure the insurance policy and MOT certificates are in place for staff using personal vehicles for business travel.

### 5. Annexes

Annex 10a: Travel, subsistence and expenses policy

# Travel, subsistence and expenses policy

## Why do we need this policy?

This document outlines our principles, rules and thresholds as an arm's length body (ALB) in relation to travel, subsistence and expenses.

This policy provides guidance on:

- the types of expenses which can and cannot be reimbursed.
- how to ensure compliance with HMRC tax exemption requirements
- making sure public interest is central to the decision-making process.
- maintaining high ethical standards
- demonstrating value for money (VFM) within the decision-making process

The principles outlined in this policy complement the guidance contained within [Managing Public Money](#).

## Who needs to follow this policy and why?

This policy applies to all employees, non-executive directors, partners, and other workers including volunteers and agency staff.

## What's our policy and how will we implement it?

All bookings and claims for travel, subsistence and expenses must be related to a genuine business need. No travel and accommodation bookings can be made, or expenses claimed, for the purpose of attending your normal place of work as stipulated in your contract (i.e., Sheffield for the majority of employees).

Expense claims must be submitted within 3 months of when the activity occurred.

The following sections outline the principles and procedures for each travel, subsistence and expenses claim.

All limits and values included in the policy are fully inclusive of VAT where applicable.

### Travel

Where possible all travel and accommodation should be booked via the corporate travel system, Clarity. The use of alternative booking methods is not permitted without good reason.

Where travel costs have been incurred through out-of-pocket expenses these will be reimbursed via the corporate expenses system, Enable. A receipt or statement of these journeys will be required when making an expense claim.

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Where possible, all travel requirements should:

- demonstrate value for money.
- be booked via the corporate travel system, Clarity. The use of alternative booking methods is not permitted without good reason.
- adhere to our sustainability commitments. This means using low carbon transport such as buses and trains wherever possible, or an electric hire vehicle if public transport cannot be used.
- be authorised by your line manager prior to booking.

### *Rail Travel*

When travelling by rail you must:

- always travel standard class
- pre-book your tickets to travel on specific (timed) trains. You may book an open return ticket if you have no way of knowing what time your meeting will finish. If this is the case, you should still book a ticket for a specific train on your outward journey.

First class travel can be booked if (any of the following apply):

- there are no standard class facilities to accommodate reasonable adjustments, or other special needs requirements, such as the use of a wheelchair.
- you are travelling outside of reasonable working hours.
- the cost of first-class travel is only slightly more than standard class and travelling first class would represent an efficient and necessary use of time to catch-up on emails and documentation.

If it is agreed to purchase a first-class travel ticket for business efficiency reasons, it is expected that employees will undertake the business activities that have been agreed during their journey.

All first-class travel must be approved by a head, assistant director or director before booking.

### *Tube, Coach and Bus Travel*

- When travelling by tube, coach or bus it is important to consider (any and all of the following): all tube, coach and bus fares will be reimbursed as incurred.
- if travelling within London, use a contactless debit/credit card or an Oyster card in order to take advantage of the cheaper fares available.
- If using an Oyster card, the cost of 'topping-up' an Oyster card will not be reimbursed. Only the cost of individual journeys will be reimbursed.

## Air Travel

Air travel can be booked if (any of the following apply):

- there is a justifiable business reason.
- the options available represent value for money.

The class of air travel will be determined by the flight duration as follows:

- Up to six hours - Economy/Standard
- Over six hours - Business

On journeys over six hours, consideration should be given to using *premium economy* or *traveller plus* if these fares are available.

Checked baggage charges may be applicable depending on (any of the following):

- ticket type
- fare
- route

In cases where baggage charges do apply, we will fund the cost of one piece of hand baggage and one piece of checked baggage (25kg).

Extra baggage will only be funded if either of the following facilitate the need for this:

- disability
- other special needs requirements

Journeys taken via air travel should be signed off by a head or director prior to booking.

## Taxi Travel

Use of taxis is not an entitlement and official journeys should be made using public transport wherever possible. This is because:

- taxi travel does not represent value for money.
- taxis are a less sustainable option compared with public transport.

Use of taxis may only be permitted in the following circumstances:

- where disability or other special needs requirements would make use of public transport difficult
- if no public transport is available within a reasonable walking distance
- Where the number of passengers means this would be cheaper overall
- public transport is infrequent and will significantly and unreasonably increase travel time.

## Hire Cars

The use of a hire car is permitted if (any of the following apply):

- savings will be made by using a hire car compared to an alternative mode of transport.
- public transport is not available.

When using a hire car, you must:

- take out the relevant insurance offered by the hire company. This ensures you are covered against any excess charge in the event of loss or damage to the vehicle.
- only use the vehicle for business purposes. Private use, such as for personal journeys, is not permitted.
- use ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) unless this option does not represent reasonable value for money.

### *Mileage Limits and Allowances*

Mileage allowances are applicable where an individual chooses to use a personal vehicle as an alternative to rail or other travel means. All value for money options must be considered before using a personal vehicle.

Where a personal vehicle is used, the owner of the vehicle must be able to show that the vehicle is fit for use on the public highway. You must evidence (all of the following):

- MOT certificate (if applicable)
- vehicle excise duty (road tax)
- confirmation of insurance for business use (such as insurance to cover travel away from your usual place of work)
- valid driving licence

It is line managers' responsibility to check the required documents on an annual basis and the first time when staff are claiming mileage. Failure to provide these documents may result in delays or claims not being approved for payment.

Approved Mileage Allowance Payments:

Transport Method	< 10,000 miles per annum	>10,000 miles per annum
Cars	45 pence	25 pence
Motorcycle	24 pence	24 pence
Cycle	20 pence	20 pence
Additional passengers (must be on Social Work England business) <sup>1</sup>	+5 pence	+5 pence

The AMAP allowance covers the full cost of using a private vehicle. This includes (all of the following)

<sup>1</sup> If additional passengers are in the vehicle an additional 5p per mile can be claimed.



- fuel
- insurance
- road tax
- servicing
- wear and tear

### *Charges and Fines*

Individuals will be responsible for ensuring (all of the following):

- they have valid travel tickets for their journey.
- private (personal) or hire vehicles are parked legally.
- all toll or congestion charges are paid prior to reimbursement.
- any fines incurred whilst using a vehicle to travel for work, such as a speeding fine, are paid.

We will not reimburse or accept any liability for fines levied as a result of (any of the following):

- penalty fares
- parking tickets
- late or non-payment of toll and congestion charges

### *Extended Travel (Personal/Private)*

Individuals may extend business travel to take leave subject to the following criteria:

- leave has been booked in advance. This must be done by following the usual authorisation procedure.
- authorisation has been provided by a head or director.
- no additional costs are transferred to us as a result of extended personal travel.

### *Subsistence*

Subsistence rates are maximum allowances to cover any expenses incurred whilst travelling for business. Subsistence expenses will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis; receipts must be provided. This includes (but is not limited to):

- meals and drinks
- accommodation

### *Day Subsistence rates*

The following limits apply to all day subsistence expenses.

Criteria	Allowance	Max Allowance (8pm)
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Duration of travel and/or absence in that day is 5 hours or more	£5.00	£15.00
Duration of travel and/or absence in that day is 10 hours or more	£10.00	£20.00
Duration of travel and/or absence in that day is 15 hours or more	£25.00	£25.00

An additional £10.00 is payable under the 5 and 10-hour allowance if travel or absence from home or the office is ongoing at 8.00pm.

The period of absence should be calculated based on departure time from home or office and time of arrival back to home or office.

Valid receipts are required in order to claim expenses.

### Overnight Accommodation

Overnight accommodation costs are acceptable where (any of the following apply):

- individuals cannot reasonably be expected to make the return journey to and from a meeting or other workplace in the same day.
- it would be more cost effective for an individual to stay over for meetings on consecutive days.

Overnight accommodation costs cannot be incurred to attend meetings or events in your normal place of work, as stipulated in your contract. Accommodation must be booked in advance wherever possible using the corporate travel system, Clarity.

Overnight accommodation costs are subject to the following limits:

Location	Overnight Limit (B&B)
London	£160
UK (other locations)	£100

The overnight limits may not be exceeded without good reason. For example:

- if no other accommodation is available
- To meet additional needs and/or disabilities

Overnight expenses are subject to value for money considerations and must be authorised by a head, assistant director or director prior to booking.

Where accommodation is not booked through Clarity and to be claim via expense reimbursement, you must settle the balance of your bill on departure. You will be reimbursed for all necessarily incurred business and overnight costs subject to this policy and the limits detailed within it.

### Overnight Incidental Expenses

Incidental overnight costs are personal (non-business) expenses incurred by an individual while travelling overnight for business purposes. Incidental expenses may include (but are not limited to):

- buying newspapers
- paying for laundry
- phone/internet charges

Incidental expenses will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis per night up to the following limits:

Location	Overnight Limit
All UK Locations	£5
Overseas	£10

### Child and Other Caring Responsibilities

If you have incurred child and dependent care costs while working away from your usual place of work these can be reasonably claimed as expenses. When making a claim it is important to note the following:

- child and dependent care costs will only be reimbursed up to a maximum of £65 per child/dependent per day.
- child/dependant costs will only be reimbursed if the care is required in addition to your regular care arrangements.
- Care costs may only be claimed by the parent, or an individual who has parental responsibility for the child/dependent. Reimbursement can only be made if the care giver is registered with the appropriate agency. A valid invoice must also be provided. The invoice must be addressed to the individual with parental/dependant responsibility.

### Personal Assistants

We will reimburse the cost of a personal assistant in the following circumstances:

- the assistant is accompanying an individual to a meeting or event where the individual's attendance is required.
- where the cost of the support worker is not covered by *Access to Work* funding

Reimbursement will be subject to receipt of an invoice. We are not able to pay personal assistants directly.

We will cover all reasonable travel and subsistence costs incurred as a result of the support work.

### Working Lunches

Working lunches, or the provision of refreshments, will only be allowed in the following circumstances:

- when promoting the smooth running of official business
- a meeting over 2 hours long at which external guests are in attendance.
- when conducting interviews

The cost of a working lunch or the provision of refreshments is subject to a limit of £10 per head (inclusive of VAT)

### Teamwork Based Training

The cost of teamwork-based training should be no more than £50 per head. This excludes the cost of travelling to the event.

Requests for work-based training expenses must be approved by an executive director.

### Hospitality

Providing hospitality is subject to the following limits:

- only the executive leadership team can provide hospitality.
- hospitality may only be provided in the form of lunch or dinner.
- only functions with external guests present qualify for reimbursement.

Employee attendance at hospitality functions should be agreed by a director and is subject to the following limits:

- employees should only attend hospitality lunches or dinners if there is a necessary business requirement.
- The number of employees in attendance should not be higher than the number of visiting guests.

The reimbursement of hospitality is subject to the following limits:

- £25 per head for lunch
- £35 per head for dinner

### Non-Reclaimable Expenses

Personal expenses are non-reclaimable. These are expenses that are incurred outside of work and are not related to work. This includes (but is not limited to):

- alcoholic drinks
- tobacco products
- personal gifts
- hairdressing
- hire of clothing
- ancillary hotel services e.g., Spa/PayPer-View
- parking fines and traffic violations

If this policy isn't followed, the most appropriate course of action will be agreed between the policy owner and the senior people business partner.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The claimant

- you must always ensure that your business or official travel arrangements comply with the requirements set out in this policy. This must be done before making a booking or incurring costs for which you intend to make a claim.
- If you intend to claim mileage allowance, you must provide your line manager with copies of the documents set out in this policy
- If you incur any non-refundable losses as a result of cancelled or unused travel, notify the finance team immediately.
- If you experience rail delays over one hour in length, you would usually be entitled to claim reimbursement from the rail company. In these circumstances, you may keep the reimbursement to compensate for your lost time. Otherwise, this amount must be offset against your next rail journey.

### Line manager / budget holder

line managers/budget holders are free to decide the best course of action for the performance of their business providing they ensure this policy is followed. All expenses incurred will be met from their respective budget.

Line managers/budget holders must approve all expenditure incurred by their respective teams. This includes:

- Ensuring that travel and associated expenses are necessary for the effective and efficient delivery of our business objectives.
- Ensuring that proposed bookings and/or claims are in line with requirements set out in this policy.
- Checking and confirming that any team members claiming mileage allowance have the required documents as set out in this policy

### Finance team

- ensure that all claims are in line with the requirements of this policy.
- validate all expenses to the specific areas of work or budget lines.
- ensure all expenses claims are supported by receipt evidence.
- where no receipt evidence is available, ensure written evidence is provided explaining why the claim has been accepted without evidence.
- where any errors within a claim are noted, or misuse of the policy is evident:
  - rectify the error and recover any money that may have been over claimed.
  - monitor future claims to ensure compliance with this policy.
  - take any training/disciplinary action where necessary

## Related policies, procedures and information sources

[Witness expenses policy](#)

[Anti-fraud policy](#)

[Gifts and hospitality policy](#)

## Queries?

If you have a query about this policy, please contact the head of finance and commercial

## Definitions

**AMAP (approved mileage allowance payment)**

Payments made by an employer to employees or volunteers using their own vehicle for business travel.

**Benchmark scale rates**

Rates which employers can use for payment or reimbursement of employee or volunteer expenses.

**Business entertainment**

Hospitality provided free of charge to the recipient, or hospitality that is subsidised for a genuine business reason. For example:

- discussing a business project
- forming or maintaining a business connection.

**Non-business entertainment**

Entertaining an employee, volunteer or business acquaintance for social reasons.

**VAT (value added tax)**

A tax placed on goods or services.

**Regularity**

Compliance with relevant legislation and the guidance contained within this policy.

**Propriety**

Meeting high standards of public conduct. This includes robust governance and transparency.

**Subsistence**

Any other costs incurred whilst travelling. This includes (but is not limited to):

- parking charges

- tolls
- congestion charges

**Last reviewed:** August 2025

**Next review date:** August 2026

**Policy Owner:** Executive Director – People and Business Support

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## Dates for board and committee meetings 2026 - 2027

Agenda Item 15    Paper Ref 11

### Paper for the

Social Work England Board

### Sponsor

The Chair of the Board

### Author

Penny Clarke, Corporate Governance Manager

### Date

31 October 2025

### Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

### This paper is for

Decision

### Associated strategic objective

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

### Impact: Risk type and appetite

Governance and compliance - Cautious

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

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## 1. Summary

The proposed schedule of dates for board and committee meetings in 2026-2027 is presented to the board for approval.

Dates are to be published on Social Work England’s website following formal approval.

## 2. Action required

The board is asked to:

- Approve the schedule of meetings for 2026-2027.

## Social Work England – Proposed board and committee dates 2026/2027

Please note, all board and committee Yesdates are proposed on a Friday and as usual, would be held as hybrid in The Don and through Microsoft Teams. Arrangements for off-site meet and greet opportunities to be decided by the board.

Q1 April - June		Q2 July - September		Q3 October - December		Q4 January – March	
Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	1 May 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Social Work England Board (and Private Strategy)	17 July 2026 09.15 – 10.15 10.30 – 1.00	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	9 October 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Social Work England Board (and Private Strategy)	22 January 2027 09.15 – 10.15 10.30 – 13.00
Remuneration Committee	8 May 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Policy Committee	18 September 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Remuneration Committee	16 October 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	12 February 2027 10.00 – 12.00
Social Work England and Board (and Private Strategy; Strategic Away Day pm)	15 May 2026 09.00 – 09.45 10.00 – 12.30 12.45 – 15.00	Social Work England Board (Strategic Away day)	25 September 2026 11.00 – 16.00	Social Work England Board (and Private Strategy)	30 October 2026 09.15 – 10.15 10.30 – 13.00	Policy Committee	26 February 2027 10.00 – 12.00
Policy Committee	12 June 2026 10.00 – 12.00			Policy Committee	4 December 2026 10.00 – 12.00	Social Work England Board (and Private Strategy)	12 March 2027 09.15 – 10.15 10.30 – 13.00
Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	26 June 2026 10.00 – 12.00						
Remuneration Committee	10 July 2026 11.00 – 13.00						

## Proposed changes to sub committee membership

Agenda Item 16    Paper Ref 12

### Paper for the

Social Work England Board

### Sponsor

The Chair of the Board

### Author

Penny Clarke

### Date

31 October 2025

### Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

### This paper is for

Decision

### Associated strategic objective

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

### Impact: Risk type and appetite

Governance and compliance - Cautious

### Equality impact assessment (EIA)

N/A

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### 1. Summary

This paper is seeking approval for proposed changes to the membership of the board sub committees.

### 2. Action required

For discussion and approval.

### 3. Commentary

Following a public appointments process<sup>1</sup> , 3 new non-executive directors have been appointed to the board of Social Work England<sup>2</sup>.

Over the past 18 months or so, the board has been operating with a low number of non-executive directors due to several non-executive directors' terms of appointment concluding and the process for appointing new non-executive directors taking longer than anticipated (for example as a result of the general election). This means that non-executive directors have been appointed onto multiple committees to ensure quoracy.

The chair of the board proposes a refresh of membership across all sub-committees to redress this and also ensure that non-executive directors are allocated to committees to utilise their wealth of expertise and diverse perspectives. These plans have been discussed individually with each board member.

The chair of the board is therefore proposing the new membership as follows:

#### Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Proposed committee membership  
Cheryl Hobson - chair  
Amrat Khorana  
Simon Lewis

Dr Sue Ross and Dr Adi Cooper to be called upon from time to time in an advisory capacity on any social work-related risk issues.

#### Remuneration Committee

Proposed committee membership  
Dr Sue Ross - chair  
Chris Nicholson  
Simon Lewis

<sup>1</sup> [Appointments made: April 2025 to March 2026 - GOV.UK](#)  
<sup>2</sup> [Board members announcement - Social Work England](#)

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**Policy Committee**

Proposed committee membership  
Dr Adi Cooper - chair  
Chris Nicholson

The other members of the board are to be invited to attend as observers as appropriate.

**4. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

The board is asked to consider and approve these changes.