

Social Work England Board meeting 25 October 2024

MEETING
25 October 2024 10:30 BST

PUBLISHED
21 October 2024

Social Work England Board Meeting

Friday 25 October 2024, 10.30 – 13.00

at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

AGENDA

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
		Welcome			Chair
1.	10.30	Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest	Verbal	To note/ declare	Chair
2.	10.35	Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024	Paper 01	To approve	Chair
3.	10.40	Matters Arising and Action Log	Paper 02	To discuss and note	Chair
4.	10.50	Chair's Report	Verbal	To note	Chair
5.	11.00	Chief Executive's Report	Paper 03	To discuss, and note	Chief Executive
6.	11.10	Policy Committee Chair's Report	Paper 04*	To note	Policy Committee Chair
7.	11.20	ARAC Chair's Report	Paper 05*	To note	ARAC Chair
8.	11.30	Remuneration Committee Chair's Report People Engagement Survey and Commitments	Paper 06* To follow	To note	Remuneration Committee Chair
9.	11.40	Finance and Commercial Report Management accounts to 30 September 2024	Paper 07	To discuss and note	Executive Director People and Business Support; Head of Finance and Commercial
10.	11.50	Quarter 2 Performance Report 2024/2025	Paper 08	To discuss and note	Executive Directors; Head of Business Planning and Improvement

Item	Time	Topic	Paper / Ref.	Board Action	Lead
11.	12.00	Corporate Risk Register	Paper 09*	To discuss and note	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
12.	12.10	Social Work Week Review	Paper 10	To discuss and note	Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight
13.	12.20	Data and Insight – Update on Strategy	Paper 11*	To discuss and note	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
14.	12.30	Co-opted Membership of Board Committees	Paper 12	To discuss and approve	Executive Director, People and Business Support
15.	12.40	Any other Business - Travel and Expenses Policy (for information) - Whistleblowing (Prescribed Person) and role of the Board Date of Next Meeting: Friday 31st January 2025	Paper 13 Paper 14	To note	Chair
	13.00	Meeting ends			
	13.20	Risk Appetite Refresher Training			People Development Business Partner

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

LIST OF ATTENDANCE

Board Members:	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Chair, Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Simon Lewis	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Board Apprentice:	Rachael Hood	Board Apprentice
Staff in Attendance:	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Katie Florence	Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight
	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)
	Stephen Barnett	Assistant Director, Regulation (Investigations)
	Leanne Clarke	Finance Business Partner
	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement
Sponsor team:	Andrew Wise	Department for Education (DfE)
	Sonia Mosely	Department for Education (DfE)
Public observers:	Richard West	Professional Standards Authority
Staff observers:	Calvin Ngwenya	Registration and Advice Manager
	Grace Barnes	Executive Assistant
	Julie Guihen	Professional Case Examiner

	Leonie Joseph	Finance and Payroll Officer
	Phil Bowden	Head of Adjudications
	Rebecca Mulvaney	Senior Policy Manager (Research and Public Affairs)
	Tuesday Peckett	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
	Wallis Crump	Hearings Officer
Minute taker:	Elizabeth Frier	Corporate Governance Manager
Apologies:	n/a	

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Minutes of the Social Work England Board Meeting for approval
19 July 2024, 10.30-12.45
at The Don, Social Work England and by videoconference

Board Members:	Dr Andrew McCulloch	Interim Chair, Non-executive Director
	Ann Harris	Non-executive Director
	Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive Director
	Simon Lewis	Non-executive Director
	Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive Director
	Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive Director
	Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director
Social Work England staff in attendance:	Andy Leverton	Head of Business Planning and Improvement
	Katie Florence	Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight
	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
	Sophie Rees-Rumney	Executive Assistant
Guests	Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement
	Dr Kevin Stone	Chair of the Education and Training Advisory Forum
Sponsor Team:	Andrew Wise	Department for Education

	Brooke Parker	Department for Education
	Sonia Mosley	Department for Education
Public Observers:	Alan Clamp	Professional Standards Authority
	Fatima Jalloh	News UK (Boardroom Apprentice Programme)
	Richard West	Professional Standards Authority
Minute taker:	Elizabeth Frier	Corporate Governance Manager
Apologies:	Rachael Hood	Board Apprentice

1. Welcome

- 1.1 Interim Chair, Dr Andrew McCulloch, welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair informed the Board that Rachael Hood, Board apprentice had given apologies.
- 1.2 Non-executive Director Sue Ross declared that she had commenced the role of independent chair of Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Adult Board, and she was also undertaking work for Norwich City Council in relation a safeguarding adult review.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Paper 01

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 17 May 2024 **were approved as a correct record.**

3. Matters arising and action log

Paper 02

- 3.1 There were no matters arising. The Chair reviewed the action log.

Closed actions following the last meeting:

- **Action 103:** Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement to work with the Head of Business Planning and Improvement to link objectives, actions taken, and outcomes for quantitative evidence in the quarterly performance report. *This action has been addressed in the Quarter 1 Board performance report presented at this meeting.* **Action closed.**
- **Action 107:** The Executive Office Team to reschedule the 26 July 2024 Board meeting to the 19 July 2024. *This meeting has been rescheduled.* **Action closed**

- 3.2 Actions pending sign off at the 19 July 2024 meeting:

- **Action 98:** The Board to be kept updated on the outcomes of the meeting with BASW and the unions and the progress in this area. *The meeting between Social Work England, BASW and the unions took place on 15 July 2024. The Board will be updated on the progress and outcomes during the meeting.* **Action to close.**
- **Action 99:** The Board to be kept updated on the developments of the Early Career Framework and the professional registration of the children's homes. *The*

Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement will provide an update of recent developments as part of the quarterly performance report.
Action to close.

3.3 The open items were **noted** by the Board.

4. Chair's report

Verbal

- 4.1 The Chair advised the Board of the appointment of Simon Lewis, Non-Executive Director, to the audit and risk assurance committee. He thanked Jonathan Gorvin for his service to the Board, as his appointment as Non-executive Director was due to end on 9th August 2024.
- 4.2 The Chair reported having met with the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and Chairs of Health and Social Care Regulators. Several issues were discussed including the recent NMC independent culture review report.
- 4.3 The Chair also reported having met with DfE colleagues to discuss recruitment of Non-executive Directors and to the position of Chair. Decisions were awaiting Ministerial approval, there was a delay due to changes in the Government following the general election.
- 4.4 The Chair highlighted that a meeting with BASW and the trades unions was very constructive and further information would be provided by the Chief Executive in his report.

5. Chief Executive's report

Paper 03

- 5.1 The Chief Executive provided an overview of his report, highlighting the appointment of new Ministers at the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care. He had had the opportunity to meet the Secretary of State for Education and the Parliamentary Under -Secretary of State for Children and Families.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive informed the Board that, following the recent statement issued by the British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Unison and the Social Workers Union (SWU), a meeting took place with the unions to discuss the fitness to practise (FtP) process, explaining the reasons behind the processes, and outlining the regulatory and legislative constraints.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive advised the Board that it was a positive and constructive meeting. Social Work England understood the role of BASW and the unions in representing their members and acknowledged the impact of delays to the timeliness of hearings within the fitness to practise process on individuals. Feedback from the representative groups would contribute to learning, and future meetings would be framed differently to enable constructive discussion of the FtP process. An annual meeting would take place involving the Chair and Chief Executive of Social Work England.
- 5.4 The Chief Executive highlighted the following:
 - The new course approval standards for Approved Mental Health Professionals and Best Interest Assessors courses had been published and an implementation plan was being prepared.

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- The people engagement survey 2024 results had been received and further details and accompanying commitments would be shared with the Remuneration Committee and then with the Board in October 2024.
- Preparations were being made for renewals in September and the Board would be updated on the plans.
- Recruitment and retention activity was underway following the pause in recruitment as part of the 2023/24 budget plan.

5.5 The Board noted the high response rate to the engagement survey as being positive, and sought assurance that the survey allowed for ‘candid’ feedback without people feeling concerned that they may be identified.

5.6 Executive Director, People and Business Support assured the Board that the survey was confidential and individual responses were held by the company administering the survey. Responses were aggregated to ensure that staff could not be identified individually, for example where teams were below a certain size.

5.7 The Board **noted** the report.

Action: Further details of the people engagement survey and organisational commitments to be shared with the Remuneration committee and then the Board in October 2024

6. Policy Committee Chair’s report

Paper 04*

6.1 The Policy Committee Chair informed the Board that this was his last report as Chair and thanked committee members and staff for their support during his tenure.

6.2 The Chair updated the Board on items discussed at the meeting, which had included:

- Horizon scanning
- Children’s social care reform and the Early Career Framework
- An education provider that failed to meet the education and training standards, and the positive steps taken to manage this situation, working closely with the provider as well as the Office for Students.
- Potential future use of annotations in specialist areas of advanced practice.
- Future direction of the Policy Committee

6.3 The Chief Executive informed the Board that sources of support were being explored for the new Chair of Policy Committee, Dr Adi Cooper, who would be the only Non-Executive Director member of the committee for the time being.

6.4 The Board suggested that another Non-Executive Director could attend the next Policy committee meeting to support the Chair. This was **agreed**.

6.5 The Board **noted** the report.

Action: The date of the next Policy Committee to be circulated to Board members to attend and support the new Chair.

7. ARAC Chair’s report

Paper 05*

7.1 The ARAC Chair informed the Board her report provided assurance on routine reports received by the committee at its last meeting on 26 June 2024.

7.2 The ARAC Chair highlighted one matter for the attention of the Board. The Committee had been unable to recommend the annual report and accounts to Board for sign off/subsequent signature and laying pre summer recess. This was because of

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additional work required to re-state figures for legal fees and calculate prior year adjustments which, until complete, meant the NAO could not finish their audit work and issue the completion report. The annual report and accounts were now nearing completion and were on the agenda for approval at this meeting.

- 7.3 The ARAC Chair informed the Board that the re-statement was due to a judgement about the most appropriate accounting treatment. It was not a control issue and would not change the overall level of spending on legal fees. However, it would affect budget management and forecasting of spend in 2024/25 and also past/future years.
- 7.4 The Chair thanked all those involved in the preparation of the annual report and accounts.
- 7.5 The Board **noted** the report.

8. Draft audit completion report and letter of representation

Paper 06a

- 8.1 The Board noted the draft audit completion report and letter of representation.

Annual report and accounts 2023/2034

Paper 06b

- 8.2 The Executive Director, People and Business Support presented the annual report and accounts, advising the Board that there would be some final adjustments to some of the figures. The Board was asked to agree the annual report and accounts in principle, subject to approval of any final changes by the Chair of the Board and ARAC Chair.
- 8.3 The Board **agreed** the draft annual report and accounts 2023-2024 in **principle** subject to final sign off by the Chair of the Board and ARAC Chair.

9. Finance and Commercial Report

Paper 07

- 9.1 The Head of Finance and Commercial updated the Board on the year-to-date management accounts.
- 9.2 The accounts were impacted by the accounting treatment of legal fees, which had the effect of moving £2.7 million of future costs into prior years. The accounting change also required prior-year adjustments to be made to grant-in-aid, which were being incorporated into DfE's 2023 to 2024 accounts. Further work was needed to fully assess the budgetary impact of the change and how to manage expenditure for legal fees going forward.
- 9.3 In addition, there was also a year-to-date underspend against payroll costs due to the ongoing impact of the vacancy pause in the previous year 2023/24.
- 9.4 A detailed analysis of the budget position, including an end-year budget forecast, would be presented to the Board in October. This would reflect the outcome of current work to evaluate the impact of the accounting change and develop plans to bring spending back in line with budget by year-end.
- 9.5 Finance and Commercial were working with DfE and the legal team to prepare for implementation of the new Public Procurement Act. Due to the size of the organisation and relative lack of complexity of our contracts, it was expected that the Act would have a limited impact.
- 9.6 .

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9.7 The Board **noted** the update.

10. Quarter 1 Performance Report 2023/24

Paper 08

10.1 The Head of Business Planning and Improvement introduced the quarter 1 performance report, which set out performance against the business plan and key performance indicators (KPIs). The format of the performance report for 24-25 had been amended following feedback from the Board and ARAC.

2024/25 Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

10.2 The Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement advised the Board that the objectives were on track and that risks were within risk appetite.

Highlights included:

- Communication, marketing and engagement activity would restart following the general election. Discussions were taking place with DfE colleagues on how to maintain the momentum of the 'change the script' campaign.
- A newly-formed Practice Education Development Group would meet at the end of July 2024 and positive conversations had taken place with the National Association of Educators in Practice and groups of Practice Educators across the country about working together going forward.
- The first annual survey of social workers closed on 20 May 2024 and 2,120 responses were received. The results were being analysed and would support future engagement with social workers. A paper would be presented to the Board following discussion at the executive leadership team.
- The first cycle of education inspections would be completed in March 2025 and a detailed analysis would be carried out on the learning from inspections.
- Following our annual submission to the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion's TIDE benchmarking tool (talent, inclusion, diversity and equity) a score of 73% was received. This was 3% higher than last year.

10.3 The Board enquired whether social work registrants were canvassed directly about the social work survey as the response rate seemed low, at around 2% of the register. Were there any steps that could be taken to drive up the response rate?

10.4 The Assistant Director, Communications, Engagement and Insight advised the Board that data held in relation to registrants could not be utilised for marketing purposes, however various channels had been used to promote the survey.

2024/25 Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

10.5 The Executive Director, Regulation updated the Board on business plan activity and performance, noting the following in particular:

- Work had commenced to review the approach to registration renewal and Continuing Professional Development.
- Recruitment in Fitness to Practise and the legal team was underway. Short-term resources would be brought in from our external legal provider to support the Investigations leadership team.
- Work had begun to scope options for bringing elements of the preparatory and advocacy work for mandatory hearings activity 'in-house'.

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- Work was continuing to explore alternative mechanisms to dispose of fitness to practice cases and conversations had taken place with representative bodies and unions.
- A number of activities had taken place to support timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency in triage and investigations including the recruitment of additional triage staff. It was anticipated that performance in triage would improve in quarter 3.

10.6 In relation to registration, it was noted that the overseas applications performance was improving. Performance in relation to misuse of title would be a focus during the next quarter, the caseload was relatively small and therefore the KPI was prone to fluctuation. It was not yet clear whether a measure of timeliness could be meaningful.

10.7 It was noted that overall timeliness in investigations would benefit from the increase in staffing resource at the triage stage, as the time cases spend at triage is included within the investigations KPI measure. The case examination KPI target was not being met, this was primarily due to absence, and it should be brought back into tolerance in the next quarter.

10.8 Finally, the Board was advised that a small number of hearings would be taking place this year, within the resource allocated. This included cases remitted back from appeals, cases part-heard and the oldest cases.

10.9 The Board inquired about a possible underspend in the budget this year, and the potential for this to assist with the hearings backlog. The Executive Director, Regulation advised the Board that all opportunities would be explored. However, in order for extra resource to assist with the backlog of hearings, notice was required prior to the start of the financial year as there was a significant lead-in time to prepare and list cases. Longer term commitment of resources would be needed to address the hearings backlog.

2024/25 Strategic theme: Delivery and improvement

10.10 The Executive Director, People and Business Support highlighted objective 8, and the completion of digital development projects including;

- A new cookies manager on the website
- New functionality to store and manage contact details within the case management system
- Accessibility improvements to the public website
- The development of an application programming interface on behalf of Department for Education.

10.11 It was noted that challenges had been experienced building the new data architecture. This work would be paused to ensure the organisation had the right capabilities. The project had been technically demanding and an update would be provided to ARAC in autumn 2024.

10.12 The Executive Director, People and Business Support updated the Board on the value for money evaluation which was nearing completion. An executive summary would be shared over the summer.

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- 10.13 The Board noted that the quality and assurance plan was on track, including the review of the decision review group and further roll out of the assurance framework in quarter 2.
- 10.14 In relation to the specific business plan objectives 9.1 and 9.2, the manager development programme was scheduled across the full year and engagement had been excellent so far. Capacity issues in the people team due to maternity and vacancies had led to a short delay on the behaviour framework and organisational culture work, however this was now moving forward and specialist external support would be sought to start the project towards the end of quarter 2.
- 10.15 Finally, the Executive Director, People and Business Support reported that performance against the corporate KPIs was mostly good. The sickness absence KPI remained high at 8.9 days on average across the rolling 12-month period. This was due to an upturn in sickness absence during quarter 1, the most common reasons being mental health, viruses and time off for recovery from operations. None of the cases were work-related and the individuals were expected to return to work shortly, there was optimism that we would start to see a reduction in the rolling absence figure during the next period.
- 10.16 The Board **noted** the report.

11. Education and Training Advisory Forum presentation

Paper 09

- 11.1 Dr Kevin Stone, Chair of the Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF) provided the Board with details of the work of the ETAF in shaping and supporting delivery of the Social Work England approach to education and training. The forum consisted of a broad range of stakeholders including education academics, practice educators and the National Advisory Forum.
- 11.2 The forum's initial priority had been development of the knowledge, skills and behaviour statements which underpinned readiness of professional practice. This would be the standard to assess students against in their final year of education. The statements were ready for implementation and consultation with the sector would be the next stage in the process of implementation.
- 11.3 The forum was a critical friend, providing robust feedback and guidance on specific areas of development and engagement. Recruitment of new members was underway, including Best Interest Assessors and Approved Mental Health Professionals to ensure a whole system approach as no educational framework worked in isolation.
- 11.4 The Board enquired about the timescale for implementation of readiness for professional practice guidance.
- 11.5 The Executive Director Professional Practice and External Engagement advised the Board that the timescales had not been confirmed yet as the framework needed to be aligned with the Early Career Framework. The Board would be updated as soon as an implementation plan was ready.
- 11.6 The Chair raised the issue of multiple standards and the confusion this can cause for students and newly qualified students and was advised that the ETAF were working to streamline understanding of the standards.

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11.7 The Executive Director Professional Practice and External Engagement clarified that any education and training provider delivering a social work training programme was measured, inspected, approved and reapproved against Social Work England's professional standards and education and training standards. Students were given the opportunity to provide input to the current approval cycle as part of testing the quality of the course.

11.8 The Board asked that an update on the readiness for professional practice guidance be provided as part of the future Board work programme.

11.9 The Board **noted** the presentation.

Action: Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement to provide an update on readiness for professional practice guidance as part of the future Board work programme.

12. AOB

12.1 The Chief Executive thanked Jonathan Gorvin for his service to the Social Work England Board. All agreed.

Date and Time of Next Meeting: Friday 27 September 2024 11.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.15pm.

Summary of Actions

- **Action: Further details of the people engagement survey and organisational commitments to be shared with the Remuneration committee and then the Board in October 2024**
- **The date of the next Policy Committee to be circulated to Board Members to attend and support the new Chair.**
- **Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement to provide an update on readiness for professional practice guidance as part of the future Board work programme.**

* Papers marked with an asterisk are 'private' to protect confidentiality according to our guidance for publishing Board papers.

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Summary of Actions from Board meetings up to 25 October 2024

Agenda Item 3 Paper Ref 02

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

The Chair

Author

Cathy Glynn, Executive Officer

Date

25 October 2024

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 – Minimalist

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 19 July 2024. 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 98:** The Board to be kept updated on the outcomes of the meeting with BASW and the unions and the progress in this area. *The meeting between Social Work England, BASW and the unions is due to take place on 15 July 2024. The Board will be updated on the progress and outcomes of the meeting during the meeting. Action closed.*
- **Action 99:** The Board to be kept updated on the developments of the Early Career Framework and the professional registration of the children's homes. *The Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement will provide an update of recent developments as part of the quarterly performance report. Action closed.*

Actions pending sign off at the 25 October 2024 meeting:

- **Action 100:** Incorporate a strategic exercise on risk appetite into the upcoming September strategy day agenda to ensure all Board members have had the opportunity to explore the risk appetite statement and test that it continues to be fit for purpose. *Risk appetite refresher session scheduled to take place immediately following on from the 25 October 2024 Board meeting. Action to close.*
- **Action 104:** The Board to be kept up to date on Value for Money and the benefits management approach. *The executive summary of our value for money report is on the agenda for discussion at the 25 October 2024 Board private strategy meeting. Action to close.*
- **Action 108:** Further details of the people engagement survey and organisational commitments to be shared with the Remuneration committee and then the Board in October 2024. *Report provided to Remuneration committee for discussion on 18 October 2024. Summary of feedback shared with the Board on 25 October 2024. Action to close.*
- **Action 109:** The date of the next Policy Committee to be circulated to Board members to attend and support the new Chair. *Ann Harris attended the Policy Committee meeting in September to support the new Chair. Action to close.*
- **Action 95:** A discussion on the professional registration of children's residential workforce and the inspection process for Approved Mental Health Professionals and Best Interests Assessors course to form part of a strategy session with the Executive and Board. *The Policy Committee's September meeting included a deep dive into the exploratory scoping of the professional registration of children's residential workforce, enabling the Chair to provide reassurance to Board of the Committee's input and advice. Further updates on this work will be provided as part of the CEO's Report. Work is ongoing in terms of developing an*

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*inspection process for AMHPs and BIAs, which was discussed briefly as part of a broader session on the education and training landscape and the shifting role of Social Work England at the Board Strategy Day. This will continue to be an ongoing priority this business year, as we prepare for inspections from summer 2025. **Action to close.***

- **Action 110:** Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement to provide an update on readiness for professional practice guidance as part of the future Board work programme. *Following extensive engagement with our Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF), we are now preparing to publish our Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours statements (KSBs). These will be a core component of new curriculum guidance on “readiness for professional practice” as part of the education and training standards review. Work is already underway to prepare for this review, before a public consultation in 2025 to 2026. **Action to close.***

Updates on open actions are noted in the action log that follows.

2. Action required

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

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Social Work England Board Action Log

Action no.	Date of Meeting	Action	Owner	Due By	Update	Next review	Status
101	17/05/2024	Executive Director, People and Business Support to arrange cyber awareness training in consultation with the IT team, the chair and the ARAC chair.	Executive Director, People and Business Support; Head of Information Technology and Data	19/07/2024	Planning is underway to develop and deliver a focused session for the Board at the January 2025 meeting.	31/01/2025	Open
102	17/05/2024	Executive Office Team to diarise an annual meeting between the Chair and the DPO around April/May.	Corporate Governance Manager	19/07/2024	This action will remain open until April/May 2025.	01/05/2025	Open
105	17/05/2024	An updated caseload volume report to be presented at the Social Work England Board meeting on 31 January 2025. This report will provide an overview of the end-of-month caseload volumes and allow for reporting and identification of any emerging trends.	Executive Director, Regulation	31/01/2025	This is on the forward plan for the Board. To remain open until 31 January 2025.	31/01/2025	Open
106	17/05/2024	The Executive Office Team to plan a forward schedule for the Board to reflect the arrangements agreed in the Board effectiveness review interim action plan. This will	Corporate Governance Manager	19/07/2024	A forward schedule of regular agenda items for the Board and each committee was approved at the Board strategy awayday on 27 September 2024. This will be kept under	31/01/2025	Open

Action no.	Date of Meeting	Action	Owner	Due By	Update	Next review	Status
		include two strategy days per year, one stakeholder visit/meeting, one meeting at a location away from Sheffield convenient to the Board and two meetings per year dedicated to Non-Executive Director discussions only.			regular review. The corporate governance manager is liaising with Board members to identify a suitable date for a stakeholder visit in spring 2025.		



CEO Report to the Board October 2024

Agenda Item 5 Paper Ref 03

Paper for the
Social Work England Board

Sponsor
Colum Conway, Chief Executive

Author
Colum Conway

Date
25 October 2024

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

As this is our October meeting the first note of importance belongs to the annual renewal of registration for social workers which has been live since the beginning of September and will remain so until the end of November. In terms of overall numbers, the process is progressing along similar lines as in previous years. We continue with high levels of targeted communication to encourage social workers to complete their three step renewals process as soon as possible and to avoid leaving it until the last week in November.

At our meeting today alongside our regular agenda items we will be discussing the Quarter 2 (Q2) Performance Report, the Evaluation of Social Work Week and intent for 2025, and our progress on delivery of the Data and Insight Strategy. The detail of the performance report will be discussed in the meeting by the Executive Leadership Team. Overall, it indicates at this half year stage we are on track for the delivery of most of our business objectives and KPIs. This points to a high level of activity across the organisation and is a positive outcome at this stage as we have experienced higher than anticipated levels of vacancies through the first part of this year, which is noted in our finance update as an underspend.

I was pleased to meet the Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP, along with Andrew recently. I think it was a very good introductory meeting with the minister who understands social work, its role and context, having been a registered social worker in England in her early career.

2. Fitness to Practise

The higher than expected level of vacancies noted above have had a particular impact on delivery targets and KPIs in Fitness to Practise. Good progress on recruitment, selection and induction is being made in these areas across the teams which will have a positive impact on business objectives and KPIs into the second part of the year. The range of work that is taking place to improve timeliness in triage and investigations is outlined in the performance report. It's important that we continue to set our sights on the targets presented by the KPIs and continue to work towards achieving them, while at the same time reviewing and learning about what constitutes the right sort of KPIs in the context of regulation for social work in England.

It is good to note that referral rates through the stages of Fitness to Practise are stable, these are important indicators of the range of outcomes that are achieved by our overall Fitness to Practise process. While the number of cases in hearings remains much higher than we would consider acceptable we have been able to direct some additional resources so that up to 47 additional hearing may take place before the year end. We continue to explore the options for the cases in hearings with our sponsor team at DfE.

A new approach to engaging with the representative bodies - BASW, Unison and SWU on matters that specifically relate to FtP and Case progression has been established following discussion with the groups over the summer. We are hopeful that this new focus on FtP will help underpin positive relationships and shared learning going forward.

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3. Organisation

The Q2 report indicates a range of activity across the organisation. To note, after 6 years of ongoing development in our digital, data and technology (DDaT) we are undertaking a review of our needs in this area to inform our strategy. As we know this is an ever-evolving environment and it is important we are exploring all the opportunities we may have for the efficient and effective use of technology to support our aims and objectives.

The Board have always placed emphasis on the central value of the people who work in Social Work England. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee will be reporting on the people report that was presented to the committee last week. As part of our business plan, we committed to carrying out a culture and behaviour review to help align our culture, values and behaviours. This review is now under way and will be completed by the end of the year. We look forward to reporting on the outcomes.

Following the election in July we have been working with colleagues in the sponsor team at DfE to prepare proposals for the three-year spending review and on scenarios to support us in addressing the high levels of cases awaiting hearings in FtP. We will advise the Board when we have any further feedback on this work.

We have published an update on the work we've done since our first analysis of diversity data in Fitness to Practise (FtP). This is very important work and aligns with the work other professional regulators are doing. It is crucial that we keep making steady progress that is based on solid evidence and leads to lasting change.

4. Policy and Engagement

I was pleased to attend the in-person workforce roundtable meeting in our office in Sheffield in September. It was a very useful meeting attended by many of the senior leaders across the sector. Collaborating towards a vision for the social work profession is complicated and detailed consideration needs to be given to complex issues that impact on and are priorities for the social work profession. The role of Social Work England at this stage is to simply facilitate the discussion, the process belongs to all of the stakeholders.

It is great that we will have the opportunity to share details on the round table at a workshop session at the National Children's and Adults Services Conference (NCASC) in Liverpool in November. We will be joined in our presentation by Gillian Ruch, Professor of Social Work and Co-Chair of APSW and Robert Lewis, Mental Health Social Work Lead, Office of the Chief Social Worker for Adults at the Department for Health and Social Care.

We have been pleased with the level of interest in suitably experienced social workers becoming inspectors for the new standards and guidance for Adult Mental Health Professionals and Best Interest Assessors training programmes. We now have 24 inspectors to begin to prepare for the QA of these programmes next year.

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Although mentioned in the performance review I would like to note the publication of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours statements which are core components of the 'readiness for professional practice' guidance which will be part of the education and standards review. A great deal of work and consideration has gone into the knowledge skills and behaviours statements by members of the policy team and by the expertise provided by our Education and Training Advisory Forum. This is an important first step in setting out our ambition for transformation in initial education and training in social work.

5. Conclusion

This December we will mark the 5th anniversary of Social Work England. While we acknowledge there are areas of our work that require improvement and in the 5 years we haven't always got it right, I think we have achieved a great deal in a relatively short time in the life cycle of a new organisation. For the many hundreds of people who have made a contribution to the first 5 years of Social Work England this should be a proud and encouraging time. It was good to have the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities for the organisation at our Board strategy day with the leadership team a few weeks ago. In many ways we are still quite close to the start of our ambition for Social Work England, however I think we have a good platform upon which to build the next 5 years and bey

6. Annex

Annex 1: Chief Executive's meetings

Skills for Care Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy Steering Group

Chief Executives of Regulatory Bodies

Chief Executive BASW

National Practice Group

General Secretary of Social Workers Union

Permanent Secretary and Chief Executives of ALBs

National Officer, Unison

Chair of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

UK wide Social Care professional regulators

Minister for Children and Families

Ofsted External Reference Group

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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

Leanne Clarke, Finance Business Partner

Date

25 October 2024

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 2024.
- A commercial update.

2. Action required

For discussion and noting.

3. Commentary

Management accounts

A summary set of the Management Accounts for the year to 30 September 2024 can be found in Annex A.

Key highlights are:

Revenue expenditure net of fee income is £3,846k, an underspend of £1,508k compared to budget. This is predominantly as a result of lower than anticipated payroll costs due to a higher level of vacancies than budgeted (c£506k) and lower than anticipated legal fees as a result of the change in accounting method for these costs (c£621k). The remaining underspend is due to expenditure timing differences and a small shortfall in fee income.

Year to date capital expenditure is £953k, which is £33k lower than budgeted. Capital expenditure is expected to continue to remain close to budget throughout the remainder of the financial year.

We have undertaken an initial forecast of the full year outcome and whilst it is difficult to forecast performance accurately at this stage in the year, we are currently projecting to end the year with a small underspend compared to budget of c£19k, within the KPI tolerance of +/-1.5% budget variance. The improvement in the underspend from the current year to date position is primarily due to an increased level of hearings activity in order to address the current backlog of cases. It should be noted that the underspend will continue to grow until the increase in hearings activity takes full effect towards the end of Q3.

We will review the forecast on a monthly basis for the remainder of this financial year, regularly update the executive team and take action as appropriate.

Cash remains at a level in line with our working capital requirements, this is expected to increase in Q3 due to the receipt of the half-yearly registration fee in October and the drawdown of grant-in-aid funding will be adjusted accordingly.

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Commercial update

At the Board meeting in May, the business case was approved for the re-procurement of translation and transcription services. This procurement has now concluded and the contract awarded. The provider of translation services will be a new supplier. Onboarding will take place over the next two months prior to the current contract expiring.

Procurement is ongoing for an external partner to undertake a strategic review of our digital, data and technology (DDaT) arrangements and guide on the key principles of our future DDaT strategy. The invitation to tender is currently live and evaluation and moderation is due to take place during November with a view to awarding the contract in early December.

Procurement Act 2023

The implementation date for the Procurement Act has been delayed and it will now come in to force on 24 February 2025. The reason for the delay is to allow time for a revised National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS) to be produced and published which will set out the Government's strategic priorities for public procurement.

The introduction of the Procurement Act will only result in minor changes to our internal procurement processes, with the impact mostly on the construction of the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) frameworks and the publication of notices. These changes include the following:

- The CCS will have greater flexibility to appoint new suppliers during the life of the framework scheme to assist small/medium sized enterprises (SME) and voluntary or social enterprises bid for public contracts.
- There will be an extension of dynamic purchasing frameworks to a wider range of goods and services, which will offer greater flexibility to public sector buyers.
- Increased transparency through the use of a new single digital data platform which brings together supplier information and a single repository for procurement notices.

We are working closely with the department for education (DfE) commercial team to fully understand the impact to our processes and will communicate any changes to the wider organisation in advance of the launch date.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

N/A

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5. Annexes

Annex A – Management accounts at 30 September 2024

Income and Expenditure Statement

Directorates	Year to date amount	Year to date budget	Year to date variance
Fee income	(5,015,390)	(5,028,753)	(13,363)
Executive Leadership Team			
Wages & Salaries	277,241	253,950	(23,292)
Support	24,702	17,500	(7,202)
Total	301,944	271,450	(30,494)
People & Business Support			
Wages & Salaries	1,069,070	1,225,736	156,666
Support	1,201,981	1,234,868	32,887
Total	2,271,051	2,460,604	189,553
Regulation			
Wages & Salaries	2,858,312	3,135,423	277,111
Support	2,279,112	3,116,427	837,315
Total	5,137,424	6,251,850	1,114,426
Professional practice and external engagement			
Wages & Salaries	987,674	1,082,833	95,159
Support	163,611	316,549	152,937
Total	1,151,286	1,399,382	248,096
Total Expenditure	8,861,704	10,383,285	1,521,582
Net Expenditure	3,846,314	5,354,532	1,508,219
Depreciation/Amortisation	1,081,000	1,081,000	0
Net Expenditure inc Depreciation	4,927,314	6,435,532	1,508,219
Capital Expenditure	953,174	986,000	32,826
Total	5,880,487	7,421,532	1,541,045

Balance Sheet

	Cost £	Depreciation £	N.B.V £
Fixed Assets			
Buildings	1,264,299	(1,038,000)	226,299
Right of Use Asset	1,124,002	(413,581)	710,420
IT Equipment	1,173,916	(997,635)	176,280
Fixtures & Fittings	331,614	(321,670)	9,944
Internally generated system	7,807,986	(780,799)	5,075,191
Forge System (WIP)	3,697,937	0	3,697,937
	15,399,752	(3,551,684)	9,896,071
Current Assets			
Prepayments			706,169
Bank			3,297,339
Debtors			19,355
			4,022,862
Current Liabilities			
Accruals			(759,615)
Deferred Income			(1,843,271)
Payables			(2,020,631)
			(4,623,516)
Working Capital (Current Assets less Current Liabilities)			(600,654)
Non-Current Liabilities			
Short Term - PFI Finance Lease Liability Additions			(1,152,302)
Lease liability payments			393,450
Lease interest			(60,751)
Provisions			(177,586)
			(997,190)
Total Assets & Liabilities			8,298,228
Taxpayers equity			8,298,228

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Performance Report Q2 2024-25

Agenda Item 10

Paper Ref 08

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

Author

Andy Leverton, Head of Business Planning and Improvement

Date

25 October 2024

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

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1. Executive summary

This report presents our performance for Q2 of 24-25 against our business plan objectives and our key performance indicators (KPIs).

Key points

We are on track to deliver against 12 of our 15 business plan objectives, an improvement from 10 out of 15 in Q1. Changes in our fitness to practise teams have affected our capacity to progress as planned the related objectives, 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3. We anticipate being able to make progress against these objectives in Q3 and Q4

Progress against our business plan objectives is described in more detail in section 3.

We met 14 of our 17 targets in Q2, up from 12 out of 17 in Q1. We did not meet, or were not on track to achieve year-end targets, for the following: age of our triage caseload, age of the investigation caseload, time taken to complete the case examination process. We are now meeting our target for the time taken to conclude misuse of title cases and our sickness absence target.

Progress against our key performance indicators is set out and explained in more detail in section 4.

2. Overall assessment

Table 1: Overview of business plan objectives for 2024-25

Business plan objective for 2024 to 2025			RAG
Prevention and Impact	1.1	Further develop our engagement and communication with the social work profession, key stakeholders and the public, to build trust and confidence in social work.	
	2.1	Publish our research findings, thematic reviews and analysis of the data we have to increase openness and transparency, and support wider learning, as part of our ongoing communication and engagement	
	3.1	Inform, influence, and support the development of government reform for social care and social work.	
	3.2	Develop a model of regulating specialist and advanced practice, with the potential for annotations to a social worker's registration status.	
	3.3	Learn more about how social workers use continuing professional development (CPD) and review our related requirements for how social workers demonstrate that they meet our professional standards.	
	4.1	Develop our approach to inspections, reapprovals and quality assurance for education and training courses that prepare social workers for specialist practice, including approved mental health professionals and best interest assessors.	
	4.2	Review learning from our inspections of social work courses and conduct an initial review of our education and training standards in preparations for a public consultation in 2025 to 2026.	
	4.3	Launch our readiness for professional practice guidance, including knowledge, skills, and behaviour statements developed with the sector, in partnership with the Education and Training Advisory Forum.	
Regulation and Protection	5.1	Review our approach to registration renewal and consider whether existing arrangements offer the right balance between public protection, public confidence in the profession, and efficiency.	
	6.1	Review the options for bringing aspects of our fitness to practise advocacy in-house, to improve timeliness and reduce cost.	
	6.2	Explore alternative options for disposing of cases referred for a hearing and review the further use of options available in our legislation to support more efficient hearings processes.	
	6.3	Apply learning to improve the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of our triage, investigations, and case examiner processes, with a focus on early engagement with social workers.	
	7.1	Grow and develop our single points of contact network to cover all major employers of social workers in England and increase engagement with the network to support preventative responses to emerging regulatory concerns.	
Delivery & Improvement	9.1	Enhance our leadership and management development offer and review our behaviour framework to support this.	
	9.2	Review our ways of working to ensure they recognise and reinforce behaviours that support our organisational culture and values.	

For objectives 8 and 10 in our strategy for 2023 to 2026, we have no specific objectives in our business plan for 24-25. Work continues towards achieving these two strategic objectives.

Green: On track	Amber: Some issues, being managed and closely monitored	Red: Significant issues, action plan required
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Table 2: Overview of key performance indicators for 2024-25

ID	KPI Description	Target		Q2	Last quarter
EQA1	Percentage of course reapproval decisions made	100% by March 2025	Q2: 86%	88%	81%
REG1	Time taken to approve UK registration applications	≤ 10 working days (median)		3	2
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications	≤ 20 working days (median)		5	3
REG3	Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases	≤ 60 working days (median)		53	76
REG4	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days (median)		2	3
REG5	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 minutes (median)		4	3
FTP1	Age of triage caseload	≤ 14 weeks (median) by March 2025	Q2: ≤ 19 weeks	29	24
FTP2	Age of investigation caseload	≤ 54 weeks (median) by March 2025	Q2: ≤ 58 weeks	67	68
FTP3	Time taken to complete case examination process	≤ 12 weeks (median)		13	14
FTP4	Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome	Monitor (weeks)		108	128
FTP5	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤ 20 working days (median)		18	18
IG1	Time taken to complete FOI requests	≥ 90% within deadline		96%	100%
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	≥ 90% within deadline		100%	100%
C1	Corporate complaints response time	≥ 80% within 20 working days		91%	85%
P1	Retention rate	≥ 80%		87%	86%
P2	Sickness absence over last 12 months	≤ 8.1 days per person		8.0	8.9
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.5%		0.2%	0.0%
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≥ 99%		100%	99.9%

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3. Business plan objectives 01 July to 30 September 2024

Objective 1.1: Further develop our engagement and communication with the social work profession, key stakeholders and the public, to build trust and confidence in social work.

This objective encompasses our work to inform, educate and influence others across the breadth of Social Work England priorities. We use communication and engagement as two levers to advance our mission to enable positive change in social work.

Stakeholder activity

We continued to progress our stakeholder mapping work, outlining our current relationships with key stakeholders and making recommendations for managing relationships with them over the next 12 months. This feeds into our work to gather stakeholder insight via a short survey that we have emailed to stakeholders. The survey was launched in October and will enable us to establish a benchmark on perceptions and trust in our work to further maintain and sustain relationships across the social work eco system.

Media relations

We managed significant media activity during Q2, both proactively and reactively, identifying opportunities to reinforce our key messages, and responding to journalist enquiries to add context and clarity where necessary. During Q2 we saw over 50 articles reference Social Work England, with positive, neutral and negative coverage related to a range of topics including fitness to practise, hearings delays, and the registration renewal period, as well as BBC coverage on the role of coercive control training in social work courses.

Annual reports and accounts

We published our [annual report](#) and accounts for 2023 to 2024 on 30 July, prior to the summer parliamentary recess.

Social Work Week

We undertook a review of Social Work Week across the last 4 years to bring together some of the learning, success and challenges for operational delivery. This was valuable in establishing our vision for 2025 and beyond, highlights of which we will share at today’s board.

Inform and educate campaign

Following the launch of our perceptions research earlier this year and the ‘Change the Script’ campaign, we [published a podcast](#) to revisit key themes and the myths that persist about the profession. We also published an [animated video](#) explaining the role of social work. Both were produced in house. Our campaign was also featured in ‘Pick Me Up’ magazine, a national magazine with a print circulation of 51,000.

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Registration renewals communications

With the registration renewals window opening at the start of September, we began delivering a communications campaign to raise awareness of the actions that social workers need to take, between 1 September and 30 November, to apply to remain registered. This included an email to the full register, communications to employers and stakeholders, a range of social media content, and internal briefings. A further email was issued to social workers on the 30 September explaining our intent to review our approach registration renewals and CPD in the future.

Strategic engagement

Alongside our national activities we recorded 306 local engagement opportunities in Q2 across several settings including employers and education and training providers. This is an increase from 108 in Q1.

In November, we will lead a workshop at the National Children and Adult Services Conference to share our insight from hosting the workforce roundtable. This will reinforce our collective commitment, as a group of sector leaders, to developing a thriving, sufficient and sustainable workforce. We also have a presence at Community Care Live in Q3, which is the UK's largest free to attend social work event.

Social work survey

We are continuing to analyse the findings from the 2,120 responses to our social worker survey. We will share some of themes with the sector in a short publication later this year.

National Advisory Forum

In September, responsibility for co-production and the management of the National Advisory Forum moved from the strategic engagement team to the newly formed EDI and co-production team, to align these two core principles of our strategy. We initiated a review of our approach to co-production as part of this reconfiguration.

Objective 2.1: Publish our research findings, thematic reviews and analysis of the data we have to increase openness and transparency, and support wider learning, as part of

Policy research

Now that research staff are in place, we are moving forward with our plans for research for this year. This will include a bespoke piece of independent research that will explore the concept of seriousness and its application in fitness to practise proceedings, and several other research projects that will extend our research function beyond commissioning independent research. We will also focus on our longer-term research strategy.

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Our approach to data and insight

In Q2, we completed a review of data quality issues in Forge relating to fitness to practise and registration. These issues arise from limited controls on how data is entered by users into some data entry fields in Forge. This means we need to manually check and amend any inconsistencies or errors in how the data was entered. Our findings are informing the planning phase of digital projects which aim to address how data entry is constrained to improve consistency and reduce the need for manual intervention.

We have completed our analysis of timeliness for overseas registration, which explored the potential impact of different registration requirements on the time taken to conclude applications. These findings provide us with a benchmark to for ongoing monitoring, which will in turn inform future development work.

We published an [update article](#) detailing the work we have undertaken since we published our [initial analysis of diversity data in FtP](#), as well as what we plan to do next. We also published a set of updated data tables with this article.

Objective 3.1: Inform, influence and support the development of government reform for social care and social work.

Children’s social care reform

We have continued to explore the potential scope of professional regulation of the children’s residential care homes workforce. After a pause during the pre- and post-election period, we are now engaging with several key sector leaders through a new stakeholder advisory group, as well as working closely with bodies such as Ofsted and Ofqual. In Q2, we also visited the Scottish Social Services Council to explore their model of regulation for this workforce, alongside workshops with colleagues in Northern Ireland and Wales. In Q3, we will continue to refine our scoping with both internal and external stakeholders, to inform the final proposal by the end of this calendar year.

In September, we hosted an in-person national workforce roundtable at our Sheffield office. Through this forum, we worked with system leaders to consider priority workforce issues and identify collective actions to bring about positive and meaningful change in the longer term. In Q3, we will map out our next steps to support these agendas, drawing on the energy and enthusiasm for collaboration. We will also continue these vital discussions with the sector as part of a panel discussion at the upcoming National Children and Adult Services Conference in November.

Objective 3.2: Develop a model of regulating specialist and advanced practice, with the potential for annotations to a social worker’s registration status.

Following the publication of the education and training standards for approved mental professionals (AMHP) and best interest assessors (BIA), we continue to prepare to quality

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assure these courses from next summer (see objective 4.1). Over the next quarter, we will begin scoping work to inform our thinking on regulation of practice education.

Objective 3.3: Learn more about how social workers use continuing professional development (CPD) and review our related requirements for how social workers demonstrate that they meet our professional standards.

As part of our plan to engage with the sector on our review of CPD, we launched a public survey to understand how the sector feels about our CPD requirements, how social workers meet them, and what they would like us to consider in our review. In Q3, we will use our learning from the survey and analysis of our own data to inform workshops with social workers, people who use services, and other professionals, to further inform our thinking. We will continue to align this project with the review of our renewals process (objective 5.1).

Objective 4.1: Develop our approach to inspections, reapprovals and quality assurance for education and training courses that prepare social workers for specialist practice, including approved mental health professionals and best interest assessors.

We are developing a proportionate and robust approach to inspecting AMHP and BIA courses. We have recruited 24 inspectors with relevant expertise. We have also planned training to support these inspectors into role.

We have written to all course providers to notify them of our planned inspection schedule and have started to receive queries relating to this. We have begun consulting with inspectors and external stakeholders to consider our approach to AMHP and BIA inspections. This work is continuing.

Objective 4.2: Review learning from our inspections of social work courses and conduct an initial review of our education and training standards in preparation for a public consultation in 2025 to 2026.

We continue to consider the learning from our education quality assurance inspections, to help shape our strategic approach to education and training systems and structures going forward. We hope to share high level findings from this work with the sector in a report published in Q4.

We continue to prepare for a consultation on changes to our education and training standards. With internal scoping complete, we are preparing to hold workshops with external stakeholders to gather their feedback on both the standards and supporting guidance.

Objective 4.3: Launch our readiness for professional practice guidance, including knowledge, skills and behaviour statements developed with the sector, in partnership with the Education and Training Advisory Forum.

Following extensive engagement with our Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF), we are now preparing to publish our Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours statements (KSBs). These will be a core component of new curriculum guidance on “readiness for professional practice” as part of the education and training standards review.

We have also recently completed a very successful recruitment round for the Education and Training Advisory Forum, where we were overwhelmed with interest from the sector. Details of our new recruits will be promoted in due course.

Risks related to prevention and impact

CRR03: Education provision – *Our work in policy and standards does not lead to improvement in social work education*

We remain confident that our work to analyse and publish learning from our inspections, review the education and training standards, and assess the impact of our professional standard requirements for CPD, demonstrates an evidence-based approach that will enable to us make informed, robust decisions for our policy and approach to social work education.

This risk remains stable. We expect to see the risk score reduce to our desired level by June 2026, as activities undertaken as part of this strategy begin to take effect.

CRR06: External environment – *We fail to be ready to respond to strategic, political or workforce changes*

We continue to use our political monitoring tool and media monitoring to stay abreast of developing issues. Our expanded policy team has helped to build further capacity for systematic environmental scanning, through weekly policy briefings for internal use and for our Board.

We have also comprehensively reviewed our approach to risk CRR06 as part of a deep dive session at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

We are also reviewing our approach to regulatory risk. We are drawing best practice, as well as learning lessons, from other regulators in health and social care and beyond. In Q2, we agreed to establish a cross-organisation group to monitor the external regulatory landscape more systematically, and we will be progressing this further over Q3.

This risk remains stable and within our risk appetite.

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Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

Registration and Advice

Objective 5.1: Review our approach to registration renewal and consider whether existing arrangements offer the right balance between public protection, public confidence in the profession, and efficiency.

We are continuing to review our approach to registration renewal, alongside work related to our review of CPD as detailed in objective 3.3 (see above). A paper setting out how this objective will be taken forward was discussed with the executive leadership team in July. An update on this work, and work in relation to objective 3.3, will be shared with the Board in Q4.

Fitness to practise

Objective 6.1: Review the options for bringing aspects of our fitness to practise advocacy in-house, to improve timeliness and reduce cost.

In July, the executive leadership team (ELT) discussed an options paper setting out how this work could be taken forward. This paper discussed how aspects of advocacy could be brought in-house, including team structures and costs. Further activity to take forward this objective will commence once new members of the fitness to practise (FtP) leadership team take up their roles in Q3 and Q4.

Objective 6.2: Explore alternative options for disposing of cases referred for a hearing and review the further use of options available in our legislation to support more efficient hearings processes.

We have completed research on the approaches of other regulators for disposing of cases referred to hearing, and reviewed the learning to identify any possible approaches we might take.

We are continuing to pilot the use of two-member panels for final hearings and have extended this pilot into Q4. We will review the findings at the end of Q4 and consider next steps for this work.

Ongoing delivery of this objective has been delayed due to vacancies and capacity challenges in the FtP leadership team. As with objective 6.1, further work will commence once the new members of the FtP leadership team take up their roles in Q3 and Q4.

Objective 6.3: Apply learning to improve the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of our triage, investigations, and case examiner processes, with a focus on early engagement with social workers.

We continue to apply learning throughout the fitness to practise process to improve timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness.

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In Q2 we :

- Held 3 complex case meetings in the investigations team to identify actions in cases that are challenging to progress, to support the completion of investigations.
- Provided further training through our professional advisors to our FtP teams to support our interim orders processes, as well as our regular quarterly learning sessions.
- Recruited a paralegal and a lawyer to provide legal and case management support in triage and investigations. These new members of the team took up their roles within this quarter. Our external legal provider has also supported the investigation teams with case progression advice.
- Continued work on a project that aims to increase engagement from social workers subject to an FtP investigation and to produce enhanced guidance for social workers about engaging with us.

Our ability to take forward some development and improvement activities has been constrained this quarter due to the FtP leadership vacancies in investigations and triage. During Q3 and Q4, further activities will be undertaken once new members of the leadership team take up their roles.

Objective 7.1: Develop our single point of contact network and explore local resolution pathways

In September, we relaunched the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) forum; 75 SPOCs attended the online event. The meeting was an opportunity to share findings of our SPOC evaluation, build on discussions about our analysis of diversity data in our fitness to practise process and discuss our aspiration for the network to play a pivotal role in supporting proactive and preventative responses to resolve concerns locally where appropriate.

Regional engagement leads are now proactively seeking out opportunities with SPOCs and other stakeholders, including within the NHS, to share learning, data and insight about FtP. These sessions will initially focus on dishonesty, which has been identified as a key theme from our Decision Review Group. In Q2, we completed 34 engagement activities, and we expect this to increase. Regional engagement leads are capturing these engagements, which will help track numbers as well as the insights gained.

We have redesigned our national online FtP workshop which aims to provide an overview of our FtP process and what information we need to ensure the process goes smoothly as possible for those involved. It was originally aimed at employers and managers; we have now expanded the intended audience to all social workers. We delivered the workshop to 37 attendees in August. Further dates are planned across Q3.

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Risks related to regulation and protection

CRR07: Registration demand – *We are unable to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications to join the Register within reasonable timescales with existing resources*

This risk remains stable. Due to the lean nature of registration team resourcing, we continue to balance the various workstreams to ensure that our targets are met. The 2024 renewal cycle commenced on 1 September 2024, and all fixed term renewal officers were in post by that date. We have not seen any significant effect on our processing times due to increased volumes of calls and emails at this point. We continue to closely monitor the deployment of resources across all registration activities.

We anticipate that our review in 24-25 of our approach to registration renewal will contribute to a reduction in the score for this risk by the end of 25-26 once we have implemented our findings.

CRR10: Timeliness and quality within triage and investigations – *We cannot achieve quality and timeliness within triage and investigations*

In Q2, timeliness in triage has been further impacted by challenges in leadership resource capacity, and the ongoing effect of our careful management of concerns received where there is reference to family court proceedings. During Q3, further work will be undertaken to address both challenges, whilst continuing to deploy the additional triage resource, recruited in Q1, as effectively as possible.

We remain confident in the high quality of decision making in the triage service. To further bolster support to the triage team in Q3, our newly appointed FtP legal team members, as discussed under objective 6.3, will assist with triage case progression and decision making.

Timeliness in investigations remains stable, although not in line with our performance targets, as discussed in the below section on our key performance indicators. We continue to provide learning and support to the investigations team to assist with the efficient progress of cases and the quality of investigations. This work will continue throughout the year, as new members of the leadership team take up their roles.

We anticipate this risk being within appetite by March 2025. We will keep this under review during Q3 and Q4, ahead of a deep dive review of the risk with ARAC in March 2025.

CRR30: Financial resources – *We are unable to secure the uplift in financial resources that we need to achieve efficient and timely delivery of all our regulatory functions (notably hearings)*

As set out in our Q1 performance report, securing efficiencies in our fitness to practise function is one of the key mitigations for this risk. Ongoing challenges in delivering objectives 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 as mentioned above, continue to affect the effectiveness of this mitigation in

the short term. Other mitigations continue to be progressed, including budget planning for future years in consultation with the Department for Education.

The risk score remains stable but is not yet within risk appetite.

CRR20: Misjudged decisions – *We seriously misjudge a decision we make in exercising our regulatory responsibilities*

This risk remains stable and is within risk appetite. We continue to undertake activities across our regulatory services, and through our quality assurance activities, to mitigate against misjudged decisions where possible and consolidate our position.

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Strategic theme: Delivery and improvement

For objectives 8 and 10 in our strategy for 2023 to 2026, we have no specific objectives in our business plan for 24-25. Below is a summary of our activity in Q2 towards achieving these 2 strategic objectives.

Progress continues to be made across our portfolio of digital projects. We have delivered new functionality to enable our regulatory teams to create and manage contact details within the case management system, Forge. We have developed an application programming interface (API) with funding provided by the Department for Education, to enable a ‘bulk search’ of our register, and have implemented a cookies manager on our public-facing website to improve usability while ensuring long term compliance with the relevant standards. We have completed the first phase of our project to resolve identified accessibility issues on our public-facing website, and accelerated phase 2 of this project for completion by the end of 2024/25. Over the summer, we also completed a small package of improvements to the renewals experience and upgraded the version of MySQL used in our case management system Forge, as the version we utilised was due to be removed in September 2024. The new database went live on 10 August.

In Q2, we took a difficult decision to pause our work to develop a data lake house, pending a wider review of our digital, data and technology (DDaT) strategy and our needs. This review has been scoped and procurement of a suitable supplier commenced earlier this month. The contract will be awarded at the end of November, and the review will take place during Q4.

We are developing plans, with the support of our digital development partner Cognizant, to undertake some focused research to explore ‘The Potential and the Pitfalls of Generative AI for Professional Regulators in UK Health and Social Care’.

We recently completed our value for money evaluation report and have shared an executive summary with the Board. Our quality and assurance plan is generally on track, including the review of our decision review group and further roll out of our assurance framework. Our year 2 assurance framework report was discussed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) in October; the key findings are summarised in the committee chair’s report to this meeting.

Objective 9.1: Enhance our leadership and management development offer and review our behaviour framework to support this.

We have continued to roll out our management development workshops as planned, with further workshops planned for the remainder of the financial year. We will be scheduling additional dates for a new cohort of managers, following recent recruitment activity.

Attendance has been high, and managers have given positive feedback on the sessions. Feedback indicates that managers particularly appreciate the opportunity to connect with

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other managers and that they feel more confident in key areas, such as their understanding of policies and procedures and their ability to prepare for difficult conversations.

Following a procurement and tender process, we have selected ‘The Employee Experience Project’ to work alongside us to undertake a review of our organisational culture and develop our new behaviours framework. A further outcome of this project will be a recommended package of leadership development to help embed the behaviours framework. This work will take place between October 2024 and March 2025 and will involve wide engagement at all levels across the organisation. .

Objective 9.2: Review our ways of working to ensure they recognise and reinforce behaviours that support our organisational culture and values.

We are mostly on track to deliver this objective. The culture and behaviour review is linked to objective 9.1 and will form part of our programme of work with our external delivery partner.

In Q2 we launched our hybrid working hub on the staff intranet, which sets out our principles and approach to hybrid working and provides access to guidance and resources.

We have received the Employer Network for Equality and Inclusion (ENEI) Talent and Inclusion Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) silver award. This is the second time we have received this award, and it recognises our continued progress in building an inclusive workplace. The latest TIDE questionnaire has been updated for the 2025 cycle and we have started to review our progress against this in preparation for our submission next year.

Risks related to Delivery and Improvement

CRR11: Our people capability and capacity – *We do not have the capacity and resources, skills sets, talent development and sustainable people strategy that we need to effectively deliver our business and strategic objectives*

CRR12: Cultural shift – *As we continue to evolve and develop as an organisation, we inadvertently lose aspects of our culture that we consider to be positive and important*

Objectives 9.1 and 9.2 in our business plan are intended to mitigate these risks, and the Board can see from the narrative in earlier sections of this report that the activity is progressing and is largely on track. At organisational level, our retention rate has improved during Q2 and is above the target level of 80%, although as expected there is some variability at team level. Rolling 12-month sickness absence rates have started to fall and we continue to be reasonably successful in recruitment. Based on our overall people picture, these risks are stable. The Remuneration committee undertook a ‘deep dive’ to explore risk CRR11 (people capability and capacity) at its last meeting on 18 October.

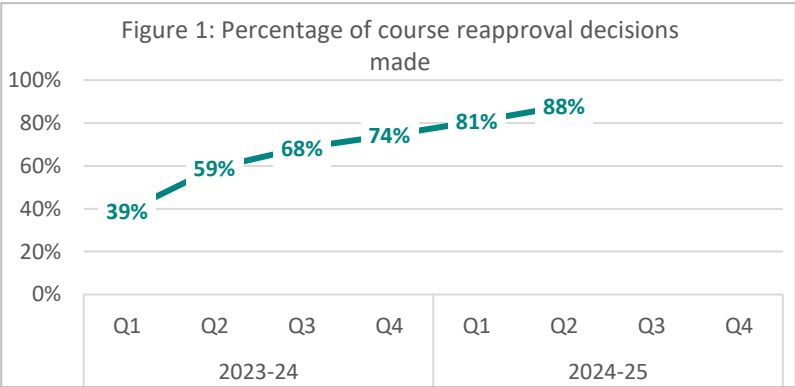
4. Performance data 01 July to 30 September 2024

Strategic theme: Prevention and impact

KPI: Percentage of course reapproval decisions made

Table 3: Education and training key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2 target	Q2
EQA1	Percentage of course reapproval decisions made	100% by March 2025	86%	88%



We exceeded our Q2 target and have made 88% of reapproval decisions to date. During the quarter, we commenced 7 inspections, in which 16 courses were considered for reapproval and 8 for approval. We made reapproval decisions for 18 courses in Q2, which was the expected number for the quarter.

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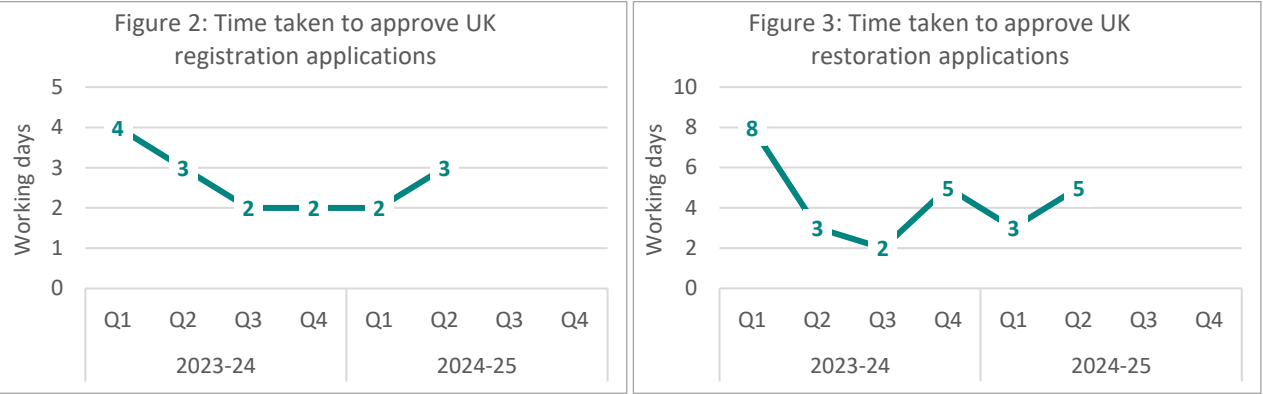
Strategic theme: Regulation and protection

Registration and Advice

Time taken to approve registration and restoration applications

Table 4: Registration and restoration applications

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
REG1	Time taken to approve UK registration applications	≤ 10 working days	3	3
REG2	Time taken to approve restoration applications	≤ 20 working days	5	4



We met our Q2 targets for approving UK registration applications and restoration applications. During the quarter, we received 3,521 applications from people who qualified in the UK, compared to 3,399 applications received in Q2 23-24. Applications peaked in September; we continue to work with education providers to understand demand.

We have maintained our focus on timeliness for assessing applications from people who qualified overseas. The median time to assess applications has continued to decrease and stabilise: 26 working days in July, 21 working days in August, and 23 working days in September. This reflects improved operational effectiveness, but also that we received fewer applications in Q2 (380) compared to Q2 23-24 (485).

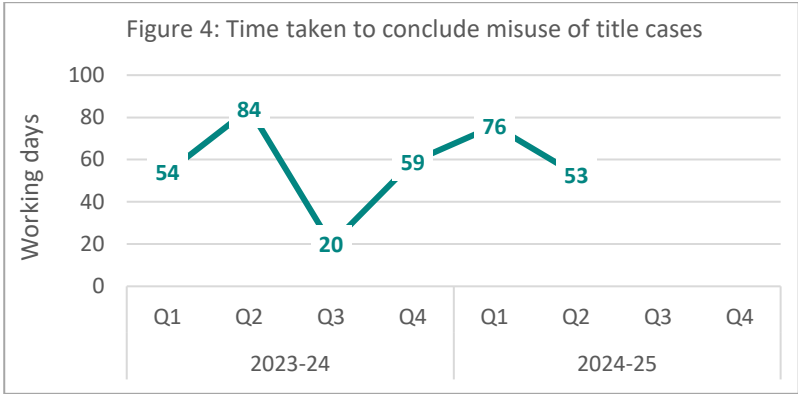
2024 Renewal cycle

The work above is also balanced alongside supporting the annual renewal of social workers which opened on 1 September and closes on 30 November. Of the 104,342 social workers who needed to complete 3 actions to renew (complete the application form, pay their registration fee and meet the CPD requirements) 14,995 91 (14.4%) have submitted their renewal form and 11,732 (11.2%) have met all CPD requirements. An update on renewal progress is available on our [website](#).

Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases

Table 5: Misuse of title key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
REG3	Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases	≤ 60 working days	53	66



This is the first year that we have had a target for the time taken to conclude misuse of title cases. The median time to concluded cases was 53 working days in July, 62 working days in August and 64 working days in September, compared to 69, 61 and 114 working days in the same period last year.

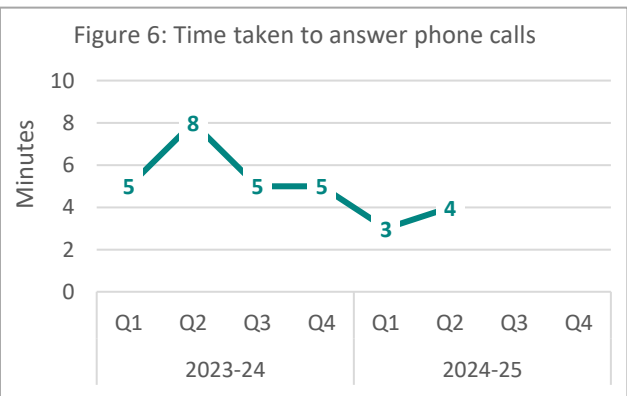
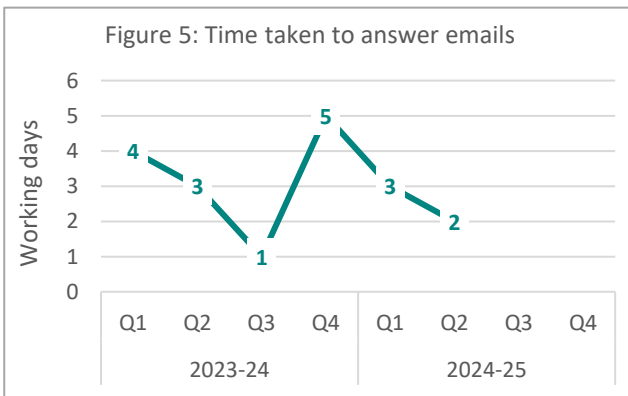
Proportionally, we see fewer misuse of title cases from individuals who continued to practise because they were unaware that their registration had lapsed. Cases raised by members of the public tend to be more complex to investigate and take longer to conclude.

We have discussed with the Board what may be an effective measurement of performance for this small number of complex cases for the next business year.

Time taken to answer emails and phone calls

Table 6: Phone call and email key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
REG4	Time taken to answer emails	≤ 5 working days	2	3
REG5	Time taken to answer phone calls	≤ 8 minutes	4	4



We continue to meet our targets for answering emails and phone calls. We received 6,245 phone calls during Q2 compared to 9,168 in the equivalent period last year

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We received 10,069 emails during Q2 compared to 8,990 emails received in Q2 23-24. In part this increase is linked to the implementation of new system for managing emails, which was installed in September 2023 and gives us more accurate reporting.

Fitness to practise

Overview of the fitness to practise FtP process

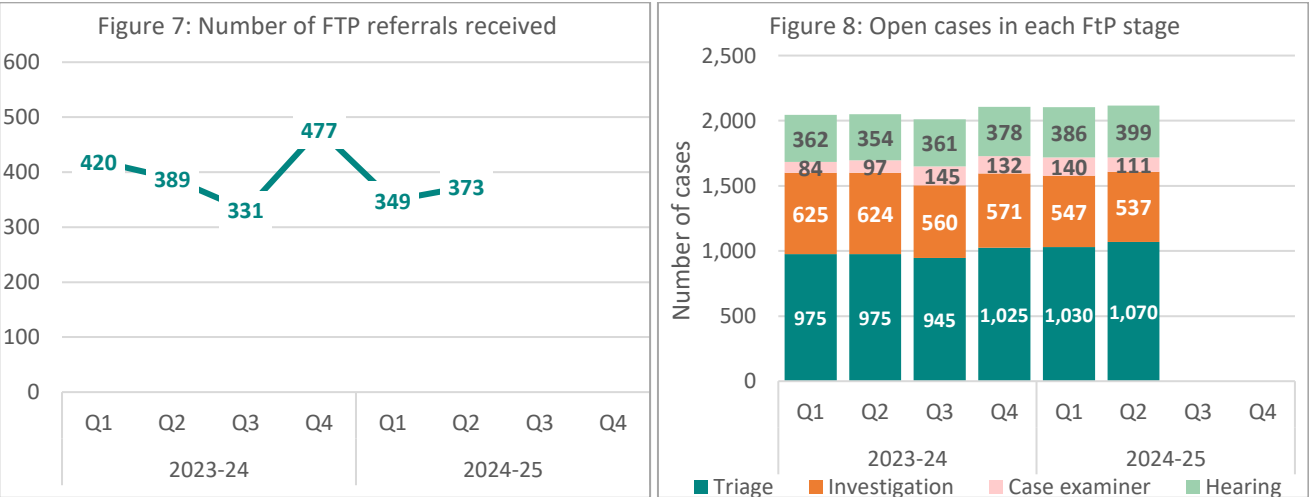
Performance across all parts of FtP remains challenging. The performance of our triage and investigations service is discussed in more detail under objective 6.3, risk CRR10 and alongside the relevant key performance indicators below.

The caseload in our triage service has steadily increased from 945 in Q3 23-24, to 1,070 in Q2 24-25 (see figure 8). We have seen a slight reduction in the caseload in our investigations service, from 571 in Q4 23-24 to 537 in Q2 24-25 (see figure 8). We have developed a plan to address the high caseload over Q3 and Q4, which will utilise the additional triage officers recruited in Q1 and the additional legal resource in FtP that was recruited in Q2. We continue to risk assess all cases received on receipt, and throughout the triage and investigation process.

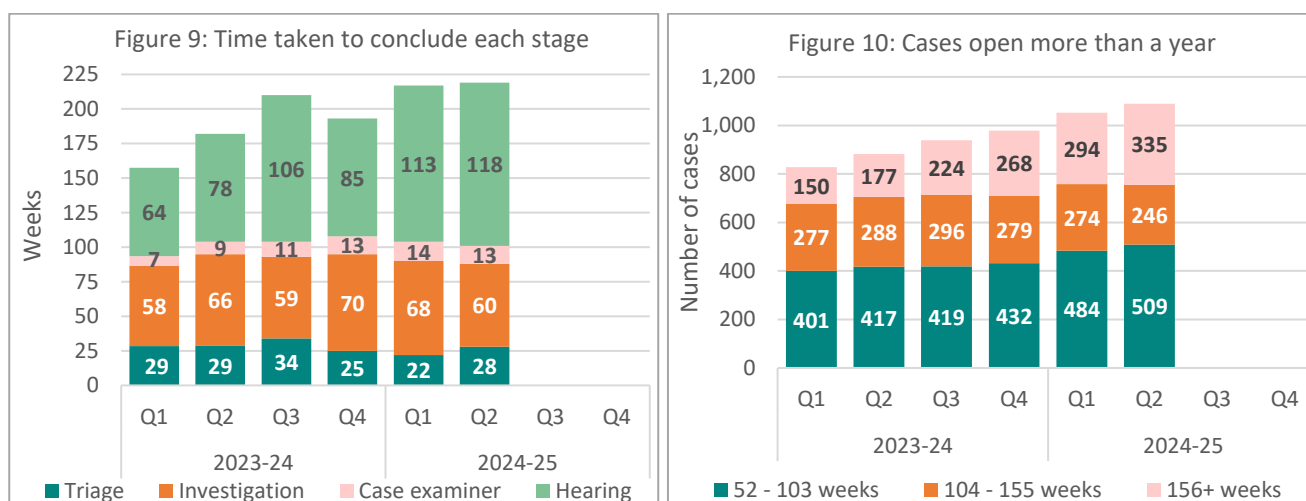
We anticipate that this plan, as well as the return to full leadership capacity over Q3 and 4, will help address the factors within our control that our affecting the progression of cases in this part of the FtP process.

The number of cases at case examiner stage has decreased from 140 in Q1 to 111 in Q2 (see figure 8), and throughput has improved as staffing levels return to full establishment.

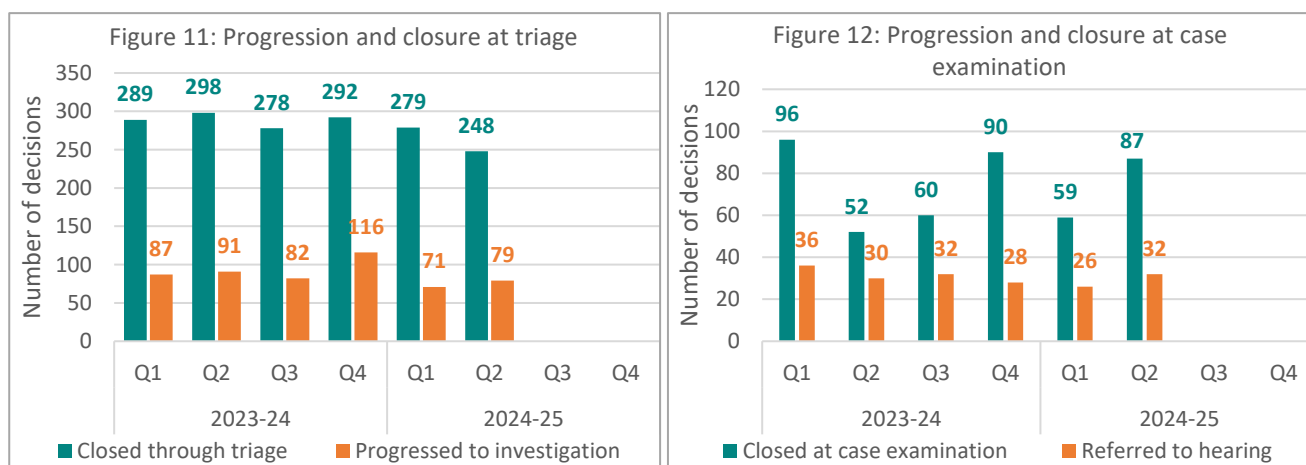
The hearings caseload will continue to rise as budget constraints affect the number of hearings we are able to afford. We have identified up to a further 47 cases we would like to progress to hearing in Q4, following the mid-year budget forecast, and these cases are being taken forward with our external legal provider.



The time taken to conclude cases at the triage stage in Q2 was 28 days, compared to 22 days in Q1 (see figure 9). The additional staff in triage recruited in Q1 have now been trained and we anticipate seeing improvements in timeliness in Q3 and Q4. A growing number of cases are on hold as we seek legal advice, particularly where we have received information where family court proceedings are referenced. We continue to target the progression of the oldest cases at both triage and investigations stages.



The volume of cases progressed from triage to investigation stage remains steady and we continue to monitor this closely. Although the number of referrals to a hearing from case examiners was slightly higher in Q2 (32 cases) than in Q1 (26 cases), the referral rate in Q2 was lower, at 27% compared to 31% in Q1. Progression rates and volume of cases referred to a hearing remain within expected levels.



FTP internal quality standards

In Q2, we undertook an audit on our risk assessment and interim order processes and decisions. We also completed the quality assurance audit focused on the effectiveness of case

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progression with triage, investigation and case examination. Our decision review group met twice in the quarter and the overall quality score was 88%.

To gain a deeper understanding of what causes overrepresentation in our FtP processes, and understand potential actions to address this, we initiated work to examine a sample of cases in more detail. We will do this alongside our ongoing numerical analysis. The sample will include social workers with characteristics that appear to be overrepresented at each stage of our process, and a comparator group.

We have not dealt with any appeals by registrants either in relation to final hearings or interim order decisions during Q2. We have dealt with 1 application for judicial review. Alongside this, we continue to receive learning points from the Professional Standards Authority (‘the PSA’) relating to cases they have considered through their section 29 process. This process allows for the PSA to review final FtP panel decisions and disseminate any learning identified. We have reviewed these learning points and shared internally and with our partners.

In Q2 our legal team received 6 new applications to review a case examiner decision using the powers given to us in our revised legal framework, and had 2 applications ongoing. Of these applications:

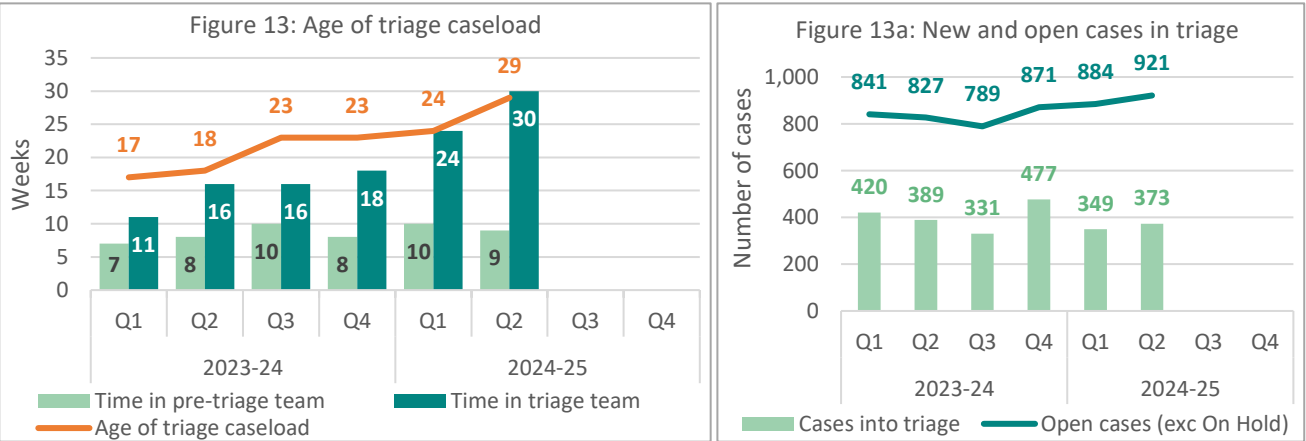
- 2 were determined ineligible for review.
- 3 were considered at stage 1 of the process, where 2 were closed and 1 progressed to stage 2 (and awaits a stage 2 decision).
- 3 await a stage 1 decision.
- 0 applications were referred back to the case examiners for a fresh decision.

4 applications remain ongoing.

Age of triage caseload

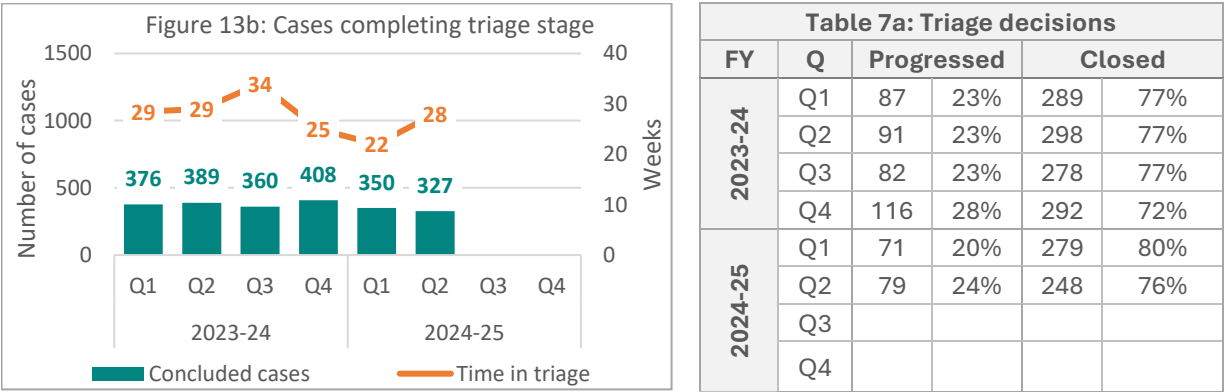
Table 7: Triage and investigations key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2 target	Q2
FTP1	Age of triage caseload	≤ 14 weeks by March 2025	19	29



As has been noted above, the age of the triage caseload has increased during Q2. We continue to focus on making changes and improvements that support efficient case progression in the triage and investigation services, as detailed under objective 6.3 and in the overview of FtP processes.

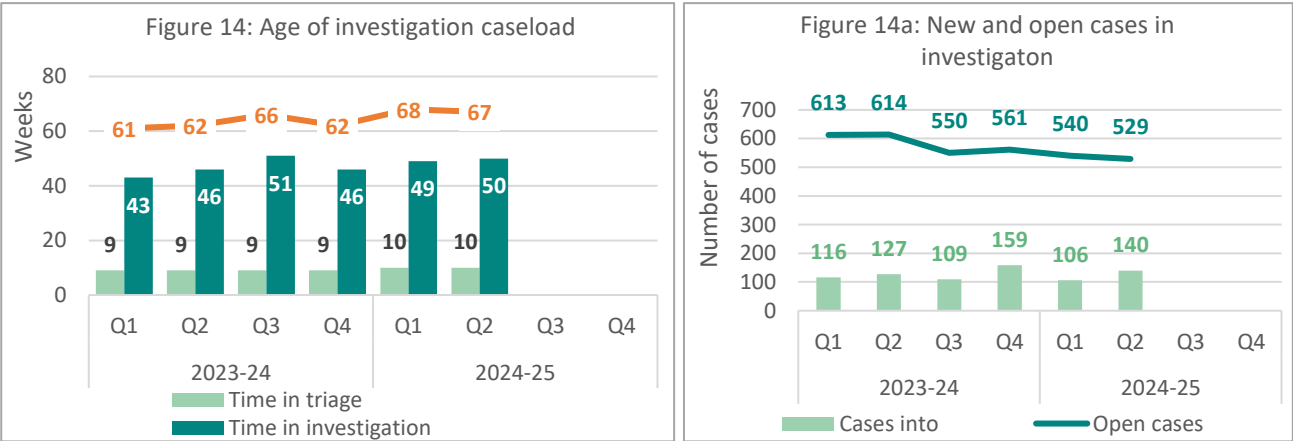
In Q2, we concluded 327 cases in triage (see figure 13b), 24% of which were progressed for investigation. We continue to close most of our cases at the triage stage (76%), as they do not meet the threshold for investigation (see table 7a for progression rates).

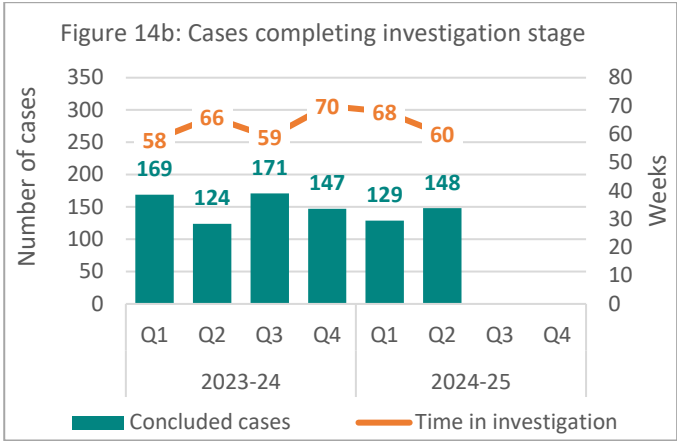


Age of investigation caseload

Table 8: Triage and investigations key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2 target	Q2
FTP2	Age of investigation caseload	≤ 54 weeks by March 2025	58	67





Performance in the investigations service remains stable, despite timeliness remaining higher than we had forecast in our targets this year.

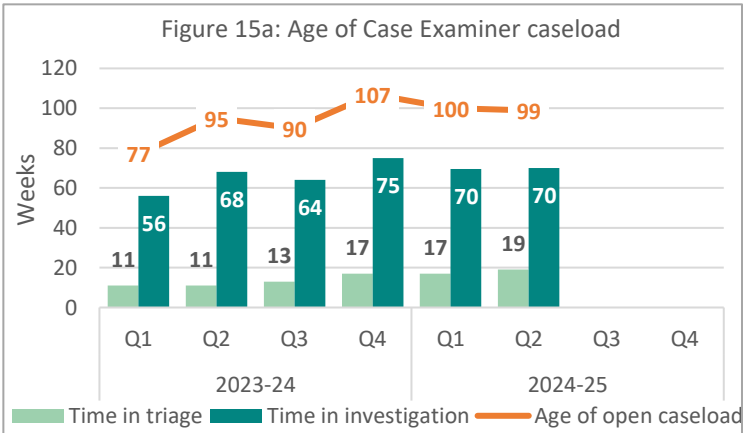
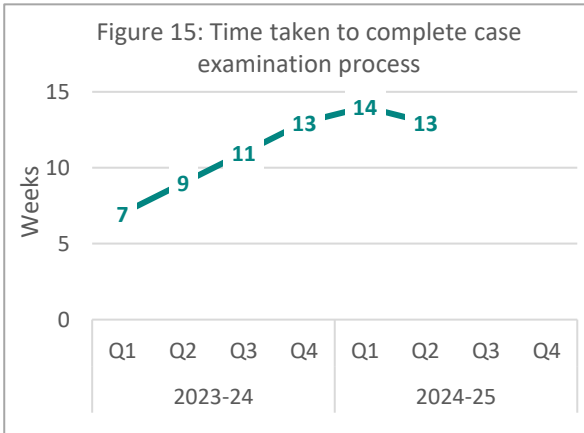
We are continuing work to ensure the effective management and the efficient progression of cases, whilst prioritising the completion of older cases through a specific project. This work will help meet our quarterly targets.

The age of the caseload reduced slightly from 68 weeks in Q1 to 67 weeks in Q2 (see figure 14), and the median time taken to conclude cases in the investigation service reduced from 68 weeks in Q1 to 60 weeks in Q2 (see figure 14b). More cases were also completed at investigations stage this quarter; 148 cases in Q2 compared to 129 cases in Q1 (see figure 14b).

Time taken to complete case examination process

Table 9: Case examination key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
FTP3	Time taken to complete case examination process	≤ 12 weeks	13	13



In Q2, the time taken to complete the case examination process reduced for the first time since Q1 23-24 (see figure 15). This is despite our performance being impacted by several

cases (approximately 15%) awaiting support from our legal team. This is mainly associated with the use of information relating to the family court.

We continue to share learning on cases that are adjourned back to investigations from case examiners. We will continue to prioritise these cases for a decision once they are returned to the case examiners from investigations.

We have been working on a revised submission form for social workers to complete prior to the case being referred to the case examiners, which will assist case examiners to make more effective and efficient decisions.

Table 9a: Number of open cases at case examination stage	2023-24				2023-24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	84	97	145	132	140	111		

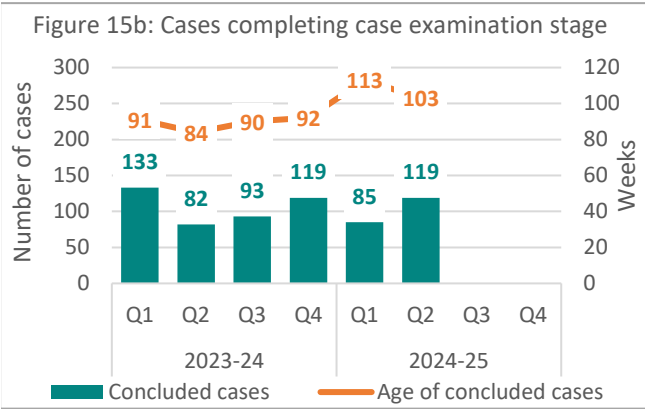


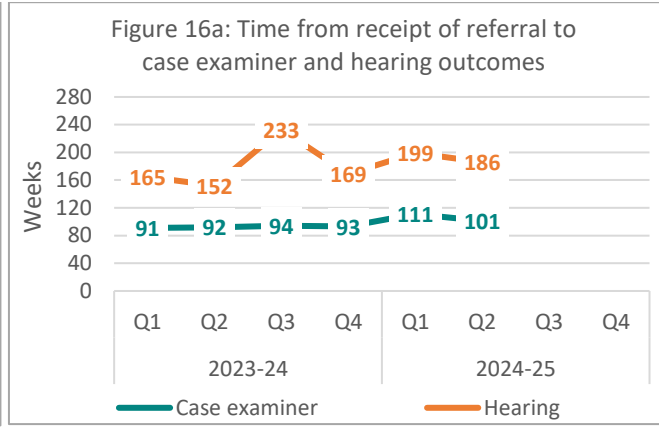
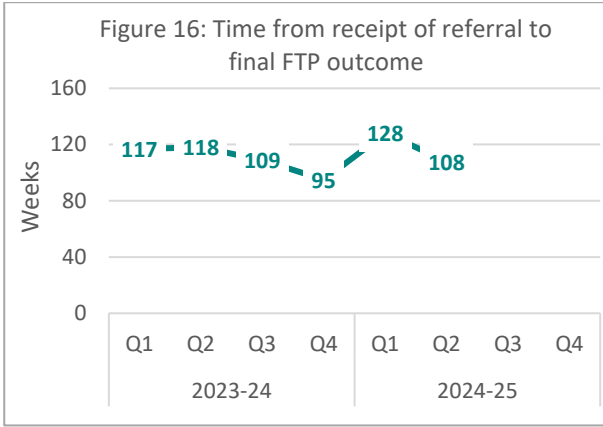
Table 9b: Case examiner decisions							
FY	Q	Closed		Accepted Disposal		Referred to hearing	
2023-24	Q1	75	56%	21	16%	36	27%
	Q2	30	37%	22	27%	30	37%
	Q3	49	53%	11	12%	32	35%
	Q4	55	47%	35	30%	28	24%
2024-25	Q1	34	40%	25	29%	26	31%
	Q2	53	45%	34	29%	32	27%
	Q3						
	Q4						

During Q2, 45% of cases that were considered by the case examiners were closed with no impairment, 29% were closed through accepted disposal and 27% were referred to a hearing (see table 9b). We continue to look at ways that enable us to optimise accepted disposal.

Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome

Table 10: Final FtP outcome key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
FTP4	Time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome	Monitor (weeks)	108	116



Overall, the time from receipt of referral to final FTP outcome has reduced since Q1 (see figure 16), this is true for both case examiner outcomes and hearing outcomes (see figure 16a). Nevertheless, our ability to conclude only a small number of final hearings within the budget available continues to affect the time taken to conclude cases at the hearing stage, which has increased from 84 weeks in Q1 to 118 weeks in Q2 (see figure 16c).

Table 10a: Number of open cases at hearing stage	2023-24				2023-24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	362	354	361	378	386	399		

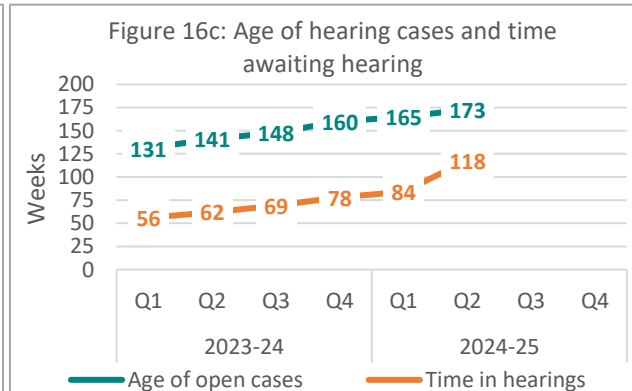
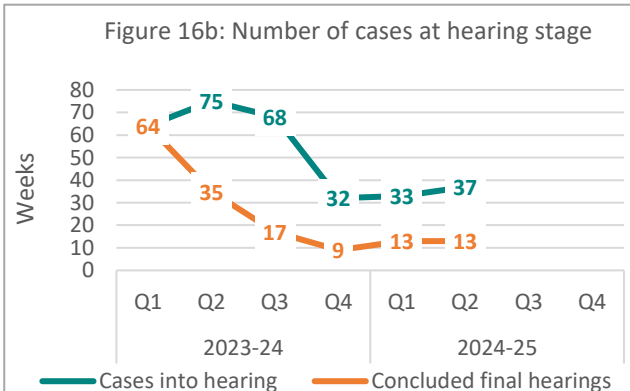


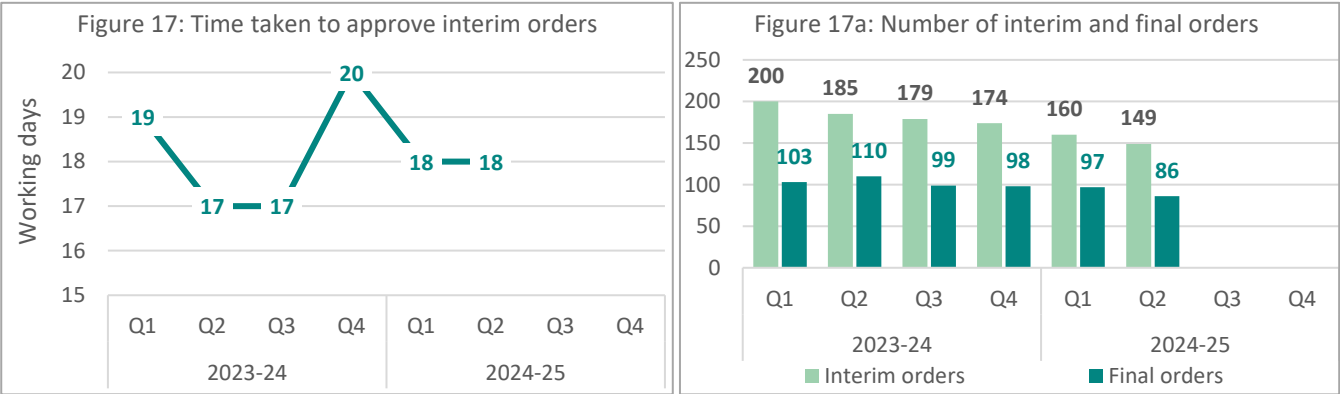
Table 10b: Hearing outcomes	2023-24				2023-24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
No impairment, no further action	13	13	4	0	4	1		
No impairment, advice	0	0	0	0	0	0		
No impairment, warning	6	2	3	0	2	0		
Impaired, no further action	2	0	0	0	0	0		
Impaired, advice	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Impaired, warning order	7	3	0	1	0	0		
Impaired, conditions of practice order	2	3	1	1	2	1		
Impaired, suspension order	20	10	3	4	3	3		
Impaired, removal order	14	4	6	3	2	8		

We held 13 final hearings during Q2, as well as undertaking 24 reviews of final orders. There are currently 399 cases awaiting a hearing (see table 10a above). As noted above, we plan to hold up to 47 additional hearings in Q3 and Q4, following the mid-year budget review. We continue to update parties about the status of their case, as well as providing periodic updates to stakeholders.

Time taken to approve interim orders

Table 11: Interim orders key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
FTP5	Time taken to approve interim orders	≤ 20 working days	18	18



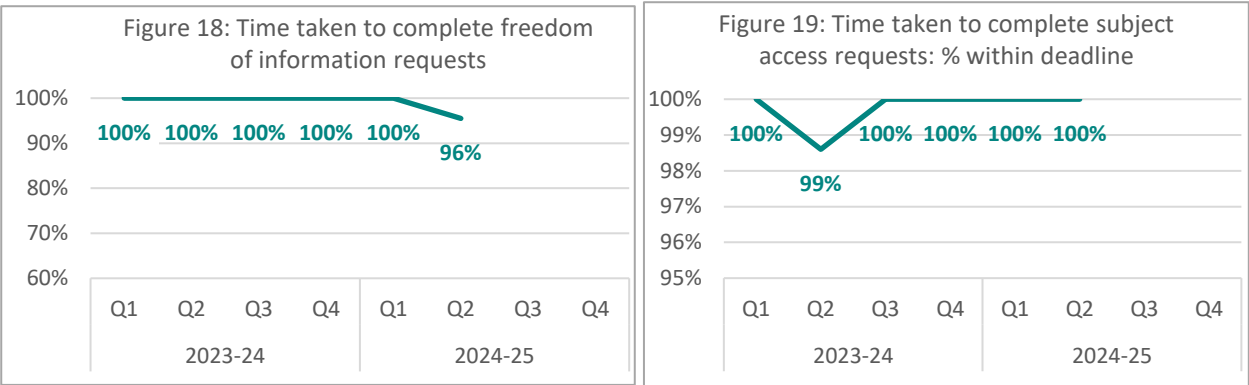
We met our target for time taken to approve interim orders. In Q2, we held 114 mandatory hearings (6 interim order applications, 84 interim order reviews, and 24 final order reviews). All statutory review timescales were met.

Strategic theme: Delivery and improvement

Information governance

Table 12: Information governance key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
IG1	Time taken to complete FOI requests	≥ 90% within deadline	96%	98%
IG2	Time taken to complete subject access requests	≥ 90% within deadline	100%	100%

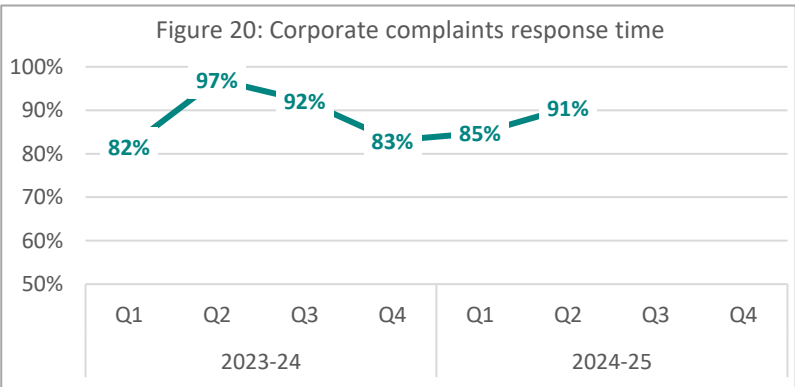


We missed one deadline when responding to freedom of information (FOI) requests. This was due to a request not being identified as an FOI request to Social Work England until after the deadline had passed. All deadlines were met for subject access requests.

Corporate complaints response time

Table 13: Corporate complaints key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
C1	Corporate complaints response time	≥ 80% within 20 working days	91%	88%

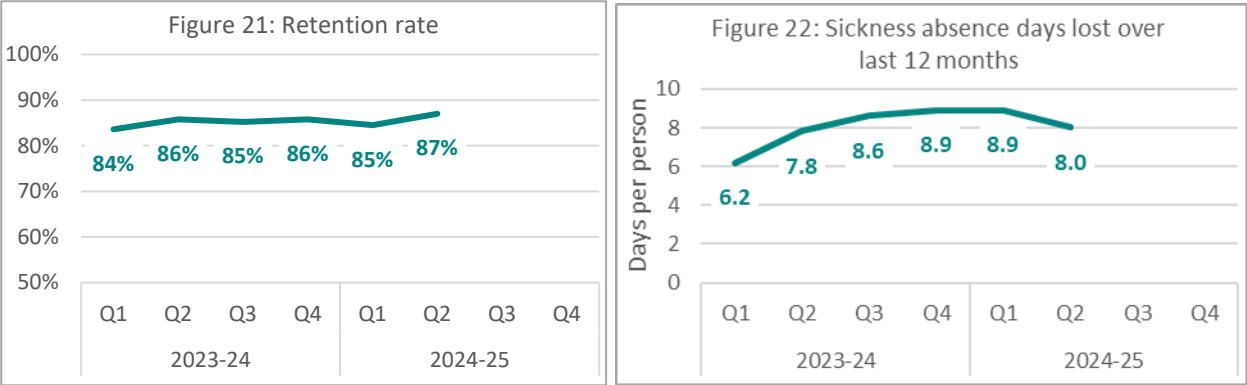


We increased our target for corporate complaints response time from 70% in 23-24 to 80% in 24-25. We continue to meet this target in Q2.

People

Table 14: People key performance indicators

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2
P1	Retention rate	≥ 80%	87%
P2	Sickness absence over last 12 months	8.1 days	8.0



Our retention rate increased from 85% in Q1 to 87% in Q2, which is above our target of 80%. In Q3 we will continue to focus on length of service and mitigating risk, including in areas of likely turnover. The most common reason for leaving cited in Q1 and Q2 was higher pay, although only 26% of leavers gave feedback as part of the exit process.

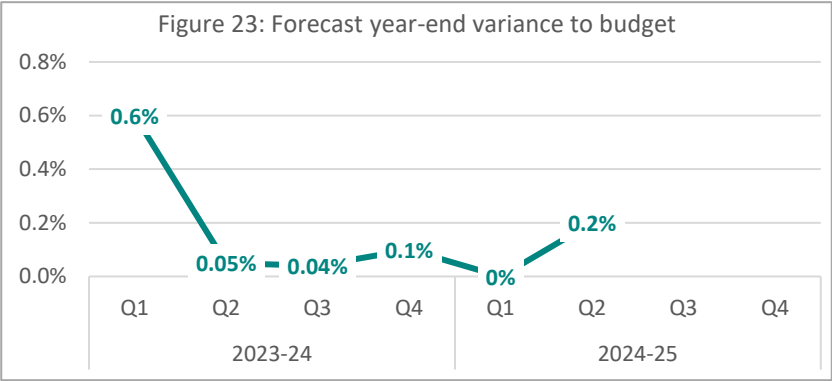
The number of sickness absence days lost over the previous 12 months dropped from 8.9 to 8.0 since last quarter (see figure 22).

There are a small number of long-term sickness cases. The reasons for these absences are understood, and we are working closely with the individuals and their managers to work towards a sustained return to work. Three of the cases are related to mental health, none are work-related. We have agreed the scope of a comprehensive review of our absence position and work on this will progress during Q3.

Forecast year-end variance to budget

Table 15: Finance key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2
FIN1	Forecast year-end variance to budget	+/- 1.5%	0.2%

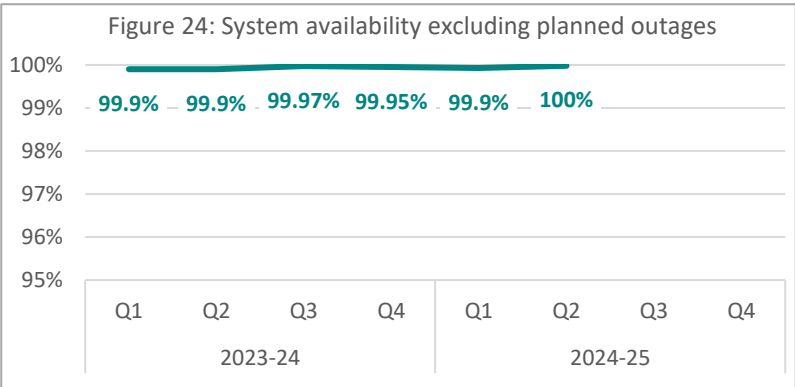


Our year-to-date expenditure is £1.5m below our budget, predominantly due to the change in accounting policy for legal fees and a higher-than-expected staff vacancy rate, which has led to an underspend in our payroll budget. To mitigate this underspend, we have identified additional cases to progress to hearing in Q4. We anticipate progressing up to 47 additional cases, with an estimated cost of £1.3m. We are also utilising some of the underspend on our payroll budget to fund the review of our digital, data and technology architecture, resourcing and strategy.

System availability

Table 16: IT key performance indicator

ID	KPI Description	Target	Q2	YTD
IT1	System availability excluding planned outages	≥ 99%	100%	100%



We exceeded our target for system availability in Q2.

During Q3, the renewals process will place further demands on our public facing digital services. To ensure our systems remain stable and performant, we undertake regular monitoring and use alerts to trigger infrastructure expansion.

Annex A

Statistical data 2024-25

Education and training			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of concerns received		2024-25	0	0	0	0	0	0						
		2023-24	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of re-approval inspections started		2024-25	5	7	5	13	3	0						
		2023-24	11	16	13	11	0	0	6	7	6	5	2	10
Re-approval decisions	Number completed	2024-25	6	5	6	7	2	9						
		2023-24	3	2	12	21	7	21	8	6	10	0	11	5
	Number re-approved	2024-25	0	4	0	2	1	0						
		2023-24	1	0	0	1	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Number re-approved with conditions	2024-25	6	1	6	5	0	9						
		2023-24	2	2	12	20	4	14	8	6	10	0	11	2
	Number not re-approved	2024-25	0	0	0	0	1	0						
		2023-24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Approval decisions	Number completed	2024-25	4	3	3	6	2	2						
		2023-24	3	0	6	10	3	2	0	1	6	0	1	3
	Number approved	2024-25	1	3	0	1	1	0						
		2023-24	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Number approved with conditions	2024-25	3	0	3	5	1	2						
		2023-24	3	0	6	9	2	1	0	1	6	0	1	3
	Number not approved	2024-25	0	0	0	0	0	0						
		2023-24	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Registration			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of registered social workers	2024-25	2023-24	103,000	103,133	103,353	104,270	105,025	105,814						
	2023-24		99,893	100,316	100,677	101,460	102,388	103,284	104,138	103,324	101,779	102,179	102,475	102,861
Number of social workers joining the register	2024-25	2023-24	245	198	332	966	812	945						
	2023-24		437	468	504	822	989	985	1,130	368	726	414	312	400
Number of social workers leaving the register	2024-25	2023-24	103	65	109	48	55	155						
	2023-24		112	43	124	37	58	85	273	1,185	2,286	7	12	14
Number of new registration applications received	All applications	2024-25	298	255	580	1,356	976	1,569						
		2023-24	535	725	694	1,333	1,230	1,321	999	648	337	442	367	468
	UK graduates	2024-25	139	122	451	1,221	858	1,442						
		2023-24	394	536	519	1,151	1064	1,184	863	517	222	335	246	325
	Overseas graduates	2024-25	159	133	129	135	118	127						
		2023-24	141	189	175	182	166	137	136	131	115	107	121	143
Median time taken to approve registration applications (working days)	All applications	2024-25	8	12	2	3	3	4						
		2023-24	4	6	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	5	3
	UK graduates	2024-25	2	2	1	2	2	4						
		2023-24	4	5	3	3	4	3	2	1	2	3	2	2
	Overseas graduates	2024-25	65	48	35	26	21	23						
		2023-24	52	55	55	56	54	54	51	58	56	62	74	75
Number of restoration applications received	2024-25	2023-24	59	61	72	60	49	71						
	2023-24		79	85	95	81	65	76	82	129	495	119	76	88
Median time taken to approve restoration applications (working days)	2024-25	2023-24	3	3	2	3	7	5						
	2023-24		14	7	3	1	9	2	2	1	2	4	8	5
Number of misuse of title cases opened	2024-25	2023-24	9	4	10	4	3	6						
	2023-24		18	13	13	8	9	5	15	19	25	11	6	6

Registration		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of misuse of title cases closed	2024-25	14	7	5	12	8	8						
	2023-24	15	17	17	13	6	18	8	10	19	11	8	13
Median time taken to conclude misuse of title cases (working days)	2024-25	88	32	54	53	62	64						
	2023-24	59	64	42	69	61	114	53	47	0	49	44	74
Number of phone calls received	2024-25	1,455	1,400	1,473	1,782	1,793	2,670						
	2023-24	1,770	1,843	2,171	2,627	2,696	3,845	4,243	6,775	3,627	2,328	1,774	1,592
Median time taken to answer phone calls (minutes)	2024-25	3	3	3	3	3	6						
	2023-24	6	5	6	6	5	12	9	3	6	7	4	4
Number of emails received	2024-25	3,387	2,793	2,473	2,973	3,022	4,074						
	2023-24	1,643	1,850	1,977	2,057	2,557	4,376	4,481	6,109	3,488	3,474	3,297	5,695
Median time taken to answer emails (working days)	2024-25	4	1	5	3	4	2						
	2023-24	3	4	3	5	2	5	4	1	1	5	5	4

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	2024-25	4%	5%	6%	7%	10%	17%						
	2023-24	4%	5%	7%	10%	13%	20%	35%	96%	0.3%	1%	2%	3%
Percentage of social workers meeting all CPD requirements	2024-25	1%	2%	2%	3%	5%	11%						
	2023-24	1%	2%	3%	4%	7%	14%	27%	96%	0.06%	0.2%	0.5%	1%
Total number of valid CPD items recorded (cumulative)	2024-25	6,406	8,272	10,146	13,337	20,066	36,212						
	2023-24	7,414	9,004	13,406	18,451	26,328	43,756	77,756	222,148	441	1,709	3,077	4,872

Fitness to practise		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Number of concerns received	2024-25	128	158	151	158	140	156						
	2023-24	141	142	155	146	156	146	170	202	147	222	147	123
Triage	Median age of pre-triage and triage caseload (weeks)	2024-25	22	22	24	27	28	29					
		2023-24	17	17	17	19	19	18	20	19	23	22	23

Fitness to practise			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Triage	Number of new pre-triage cases	2024-25	131	119	99	92	132	149						
		2023-24	123	151	146	138	144	107	101	136	94	214	154	109
	Number of open pre-triage cases	2024-25	269	283	290	272	299	343						
		2023-24	307	294	305	263	272	316	282	272	195	252	254	262
Triage	Percentage of cases closed at the pre-triage stage	2024-25	24%	25%	33%	15%	34%	31%						
		2023-24	13%	21%	12%	22%	30%	16%	22%	17%	16%	20%	23%	22%
	Median time taken to complete pre-triage stage (weeks)	2024-25	6	6	5	11	6	7						
		2023-24	6	7	8	6	4	4	9	7	8	4	4	5
	Number of cases that progressed to triage	2024-25	96	82	63	93	71	72						
		2023-24	120	130	120	140	95	53	105	122	144	125	119	80
	Number open triage cases (excluding on hold cases)	2024-25	592	590	594	590	585	578						
		2023-24	490	527	536	590	583	511	531	511	594	566	598	609
	Percentage of cases closed at the triage stage	2024-25	71%	76%	70%	71%	69%	58%						
		2023-24	70%	69%	74%	62%	66%	77%	82%	69%	53%	70%	58%	58%
	Median time taken to complete triage stage (weeks)	2024-25	21	26	27	32	20	31						
		2023-24	13	19	22	18	25	27	24	29	17	25	16	17
Investigation	Number of cases that progressed to investigation	2024-25	32	22	19	28	25	27						
		2023-24	26	32	31	31	35	27	17	42	24	42	43	32
	Number open investigation cases (excluding on hold cases)	2024-25	557	547	540	545	527	529						
		2023-24	667	648	613	606	612	614	574	561	550	562	569	561
	Median age of investigation caseload (weeks)	2024-25	62	64	68	66	66	67						
		2023-24	63	64	61	63	61	62	64	63	66	64	62	62
	Median time taken to complete investigation stage (weeks)	2024-25	70	76	49	70	72	40						
		2023-24	33	51	70	59	70	68	66	53	58	66	70	73
Case examiner	Number of open case examiner cases	2024-25	133	142	140	122	123	111						
		2023-24	77	82	84	101	96	97	111	134	145	148	151	132

Fitness to practise			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Case examiner	Percentage of cases closed at the case examiner stage	2024-25	45%	91%	80%	78%	69%	72%						
		2023-24	72%	80%	67%	70%	44%	84%	63%	79%	54%	79%	74%	78%
	Median time taken to complete case examiner stage (weeks)	2024-25	15	13	14	11	14	14						
		2023-24	7	8	6	6	9	11	12	11	11	13	13	12
	Number of accepted disposals offered	2024-25	14	7	11	21	20	11						
		2023-24	2	14	13	9	8	8	8	10	9	15	13	14
Hearings	Number of cases that progressed to hearings	2024-25	18	2	6	9	12	11						
		2023-24	8	9	19	7	19	4	15	6	11	6	11	11
	Number of open cases in hearings (excluding post-hearing cases)	2024-25	392	391	386	386	393	399						
		2023-24	386	378	362	356	366	354	362	361	361	365	373	378
	Number of concluded final hearings	2024-25	5	6	2	6	4	3						
		2023-24	17	19	28	14	7	14	4	6	7	3	3	3
Interim orders	Median time take to approve interim orders (working days)	2024-25	17	18	26	N/A	18	18						
		2023-24	19	20	19	18	18	17	20	N/A	17	28	19	18
	Number of interim order application hearings held	2024-25	1	3	1	0	3	3						
		2023-24	6	4	7	4	7	4	4	1	4	5	2	4
	Number of interim orders imposed	2024-25	1	3	1	0	3	3						
		2023-24	6	3	6	4	6	4	4	0	4	5	1	3
Number of final order reviews held		2024-25	11	8	11	7	7	10						
		2023-24	10	14	11	8	14	11	10	15	7	10	7	6
Median time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome (weeks) - Including on hold cases		2024-25	125	126	140	108	97	110						
		2023-24	99	127	118	113	128	129	86	119	126	112	93	85
Median time from receipt of referral to final FtP outcome (weeks) - Excluding on hold cases		2024-25	125	126	138	95	85	107						
		2023-24	99	118	118	113	128	120	66	107	126	112	78	72
FTP Internal quality score		2024-25	97%	88%	94%	87%	90%	88%						
		2023-24	93%	93%	92%	93%	85%	85%	92%	94%	100%	86%	89%	97%

People		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Retention rate	2024-25	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	87%						
	2023-24	83%	85%	84%	86%	87%	86%	86%	86%	85%	86%	86%	86%
Headcount of staff	2024-25	233	232	234	237	241	247						
	2023-24	249	247	245	240	237	238	242	242	241	238	238	236
Days lost to sickness per employee over previous 12 months	2024-25	8.9	8.8	8.9	8.9	8.5	8.0						
	2023-24	5.7	6.0	6.2	6.5	7.1	7.8	8.1	8.4	8.6	9.2	9.4	8.9

Corporate complaints		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Corporate complaints responded to within timescales	2024-25	74%	94%	91%	85%	100%	92%						
	2023-24	87%	86%	77%	97%	100%	91%	96%	88%	94%	89%	81%	75%
Number of corporate complaints received (stage 1 only)	2024-25	17	12	6	9	7	16						
	2023-24	23	20	27	37	33	24	26	15	23	24	9	13
Number of corporate complaints that missed 20-day timescale	2024-25	5	1	1	2	0	1						
	2023-24	2	3	8	1	0	2	1	4	1	3	3	4
Median response time over previous 12 months (working days)	2024-25	15	15	15	15	16	16						
	2023-24	18	18	18	18	18	16	15	16	15	15	15	15

Annex B

Course reapproval decisions Q2 2024-25

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
University of Warwick	BA (Hons) Social Work Integrated Degree Apprenticeship	Midlands	06 February 2024	09 February 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/qr3azdew/20240708_uwr1_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
Northumbria University at Newcastle	MA Social Work	North East	19 March 2024	22 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/2mwlx3v5/nunr1_final_report.pdf	Approved with conditions
	BSc (Hons) Social Work	North East	19 March 2024	22 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/2mwlx3v5/nunr1_final_report.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Chichester	BA (Hons) Social Work	South East	25 March 2024	28 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/c1hhklnq/20240722_uchir2_final.pdf	Approved
	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	South East	25 March 2024	28 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/c1hhklnq/20240722_uchir2_final.pdf	Approved
Bradford College	BA (Hons) Social Work	Yorkshire & Humber	16 April 2024	19 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/tlxbifbs/bcr1_inspection-report_23072024.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Bolton	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	North West	30 April 2024	03 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/xqufn0b3/20240509_reapproval_inspection_report_ubor2_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Worcester	MA Social Work	Midlands	25 June 2024	27 June 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/m32hjodq/20240701_reapproval_inspection_final_report_uwor2.pdf	Approved
University of West London	B Social Work	London	08 May 2024	10 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/rybh0fjj/20240717_uwlr1_bsocialwork_final.pdf	Non-approval

University of Bolton	BA (Hons) Social Work	North West	30 April 2024	03 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/3fnmgvdr/20240904_ba_ma_reapproval_inspection_final_report_u_bor1.pdf	Approved with conditions
	MA Social Work	North West	30 April 2024	03 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/3fnmgvdr/20240904_ba_ma_reapproval_inspection_final_report_u_bor1.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Huddersfield	MSc Integrated Social Work	Yorkshire & Humber	21 May 2024	24 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/rawhd4ss/uhur1_inspection-report_18092024.pdf	Approved with conditions
	MSc Social Work	Yorkshire & Humber	21 May 2024	24 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/rawhd4ss/uhur1_inspection-report_18092024.pdf	Approved with conditions
Bournemouth University	Pg Dip Social Work (Children & Families) Step Up	South West	28 May 2024	31 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/ox3juhj5/20240924_bur2_pdf_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of West of England, Bristol	PG Dip Step Up	South West	11 June 2024	13 June 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/b5qbzl2l/20240910_stepup_reapproval_final_inspection_report_u_webr2.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Suffolk	BA (Hons) Social Work FT	East	17 June 2024	20 June 2024	Link to follow, not yet published	Approved with conditions
	BA (Hons) Social Work PT	East	17 June 2024	20 June 2024	Link to follow, not yet published	Approved with conditions
	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	East	17 June 2024	20 June 2024	Link to follow, not yet published	Approved with conditions

Course approval decisions Q2 2024-25

Provider	Course	Region	Inspection dates		Link to inspection report	Decision
			From	to		
Northumbria University at Newcastle	BSc (Hons) Social Work	North East	19 March 2024	22 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/2mwlx3v5/nunr1_final_report.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Chichester	BA (Hons) Social Work	South East	25 March 2024	28 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/c1hhklnq/20240722_uchir2_final.pdf	Approved
	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	South East	25 March 2024	28 March 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/c1hhklnq/20240722_uchir2_final.pdf	Approved
University of East Anglia	MA Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	East	02 April 2024	04 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/0xyi4kse/20240712_ma_apprenticeship_uea-cpp450_final_approval_report_v2.pdf	Approved
University of Worcester	BA (Hons) Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	Midlands	09 April 2024	11 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/tw2h4mzw/250724_uwor_cpp372-final-report_ba-swda_rd.pdf	Approved with conditions
Bradford College	BA (Hons) Social Work	Yorkshire & Humber	16 April 2024	19 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/tlxibifs/bc_r1_inspection-report_23072024.pdf	Approved with conditions
University of Worcester	MA Social Work	Midlands	25 June 2024	27 June 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/m32hjodq/20240701_reapproval_inspection_final_report_uwor2.pdf	Approved
University of Brighton	MSc. Social Work Degree Apprenticeship	South East	23 April 2024	25 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/2t3liclg/20240828_ubri1_cpp456_pdf1.pdf	Approved with conditions
Manchester Metropolitan University	PG Dip Social Work Apprenticeship	North West	16 April 2024	18 April 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/3izp1xa4/20240612_mmu_cpp460_final_report.pdf	Approved with conditions

Canterbury Christchurch University with London South East Colleges	BA (Hons) Social Work	South East	14 May 2024	25 May 2024	https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/borpne1r/20240524_approval_report_cccubc_cpp471_final.pdf	Approved with conditions
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Social Work Week Review

Agenda Item 12 Paper Ref 10

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director, Professional Practice and External Engagement

Author s

Matthew Devlin

Katie Florence

Date

25 October 2024

Reviewed by

Katie Florence, Assistant Director, Communication, Engagement and Insight

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

Reputation and Credibility - Cautious

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

In progress

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1. Introduction

Social Work Week (SWW) was born out of a desire to bring together a complex and often fragmented social work sector to learn, connect and engage on effective practice. Since its inception in 2021, It has formed part of our long term mission as the specialist social work regulator to enable positive change in social work. It is part of our core business. The week itself contributes to meeting several of our strategic objectives and forms part of a broader engagement led approach to inform, educate and actively influence others on the future of social work in England.

A fundamental principle of SWW is its accessibility. The event remains free of charge to anyone with an interest in social work, including those with lived experience. There has been much to learn from the past four years which has cemented the week as an annual moment for the profession to coincide with World Social Work Day (typically celebrated on the third Tuesday of March). We have been fearless and experimental with both the format and content of the week over the years, continually testing and learning from different approaches to engage our audiences. This has included many conversations on the parameters of our role as a specialist regulator, how we work in partnership with others to facilitate both national and local conversations, how we represent the diversity of one social work profession, and how the week supports our commitment to build confidence in our role and the profession.

Before we began planning for the fifth SWW, we paused to review what the week had delivered to date and our vision for its future. To inform this we conducted desk top research and used evaluation from all four previous weeks. This included feedback from the sector, people who hosted sessions and from the operational delivery group which includes our National Advisory Forum as part of our commitment to co-production. We looked at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that surround the week in its current form and also gathered perspectives from members of our executive leadership team, the board and relevant operational leads.

This paper is a snapshot of the findings for noting and board assurance. A deeper dive into the draft programme for 2025 is planned for January's policy committee. Ahead of that we will shortly launch marketing activity for the week and an expression of interest process for participants.

2. A brief history of Social Work Week

2021

SWW 2021 aimed to create a moment for social workers across one profession. This had never existed before in a complex eco-system of organisations, employers and providers. The initial idea of a national conference grew into embedding a nationwide co-produced week dedicated entirely to social work. This built on our approach during startup phase to focus on engagement and collaborate with all those with an interest in social work. Working with National Advisory Forum members, SWW 2021 allowed us to introduce ourselves to the sector as a new specialist regulator on the back of a successful first annual registration renewals period. The event featured 73 sessions all facilitated by the

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engagement team, co-produced with the national advisory forum and drawing on a cross-organisational working group. Key events included "Welcome to Social Work Week," "Women in Leadership," "Speakers Corner," "Reflecting for Action," and several focused workshops on topics such as domestic abuse, neurodiversity, and music therapy. SWW 2021 attracted a total attendance of 10,244. 58% of those who signed up went on to attend. It is worth also noting that the week was originally intended to be in person. The covid pandemic meant a radical re-think of how we delivered and engaged.

2022

In 2022, a firm focus was placed on those who use social work services. Content was arranged around the key themes including "Social work and me," professional Identity and post pandemic reflections. These themes featured voices of lived experience, facilitating conversations on raising standards, and encouraging sector participation. The format of SWW 2022 differed from 2021 as the sector was invited to submit independent events which ran alongside the 'main programme'. These events were selected following a panel review which included members of our National Advisory Forum. This was a very intentional decision to encourage local reflections and communities to get involved with the week according to the context and environment that suited them.

The week saw the inclusion of 13 sessions delivered by Social Work England, 32 sessions delivered independently, and seven regional events. These were all co-produced with members of our National Advisory Forum and external partners. The week engaged 3,220 individuals, representing a 58% attendance rate, the same as the previous year.

2023

SWW 2023 continued to build on previous successes with themes centred around learning, connecting, and influencing. The programme included 19 sessions delivered by Social Work England and 37 independently delivered sessions, engaging 6,908 attendees across the week equating to an average of 363 attendees per session compared to 247 in 2022. There was a 52% attendance rate from 13,107 tickets issued. Key sessions addressed significant topics such as "The Power of Words in Social Work" and "Liberty and Human Rights for Adults with Disabilities." Feedback indicated continued high level of engagement, with a notable increase in average sessions attended.

2024

Social Work Week 2024 was conducted in a format similar to that of 2023, featuring 60 free events. Among these, 21 sessions were delivered and co-produced by Social Work England and 40 delivered independently by the sector. The event successfully integrated World Social Work Day, focusing on the core themes of learning, connecting, and influencing. SWW 2024 attracted 6,549 attendees, averaging 312 attendees per session, compared to an average of 363 in 2023. This represents a 49% attendance rate from a total of 13,362 tickets issued. Noteworthy additions to the Social Work England programme included the introduction of 30-minute 'bite-size' sessions throughout the week. An in-person staff event was held at Social Work England's Sheffield office to

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commemorate World Social Work Day, this session included international speakers from Sweden and India, to mark international perspectives.

To support the sector in independently leading and promoting their own local sessions we developed a toolkit. This generated significant interest, with 82 requests for the SWW toolkit across a breadth of social work organisations. Another vital addition to the week was our #ChangeTheScript campaign. For the first time ever we now had public facing engagement campaign as part of the week with radio, press, video and case studies calling on the entertainment industry to reconsider how the profession is represented in TV and film.

3. 2025 and beyond

Purpose

As a national organisation we continue to hold a unique view across the breadth of the profession. SWW allows us to hold a mirror up to the sector and encourage two-way commentary on the reflection. We believe there is still a role for us to enable and facilitate quality conversations, while encouraging close collaboration with our stakeholders, the profession and people with lived experience to find solutions to common challenges.

Resource

Delivering SWW has been challenging for a small in house team. It is a significant in terms of operational delivery. Although the blueprint for the week is owned by the Professional Practice and External Engagement directorate, delivery would not be possible without support and input from the wider organisation, our National Advisory Forum and willing collaborators from across the breadth of the sector. We will continue to consider creatively how we deliver and engage people in a way that is proportionate alongside our business priorities with a focus on quality over quantity of sessions. This does not diminish our ambition for the week and associated content.

Co-production

SWW gives us the opportunity to role model our commitment to co-production. Through the planning and delivery of the week with the National Advisory Forum and others, to the delivery of the content, the opportunities to co-produce are extensive. We will continue to provide a national platform to amplify diverse voices that offer local, national and international perspectives. We will ensure that lived and learnt experience is represented on every proposed session.

What does regulation do for me?

SWW furthers our ambition to explain why regulation matters whether to the public or a professional. Regulation helps emphasise the importance of the work of social workers. It provides them with specialist standards to meet so the public can see how they will act and gives everyone confidence that those on the register maintain their skills and knowledge. We will continue to use the week to myth bust and better explain our work and role.

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Reaching the public

SWW provides an opportunity to build on the success of our #ChangeTheScript campaign. It can create a focal point to increase understanding and recognition of social work as a regulated profession among the public, facilitate government appreciation, stimulate interest in social work as a career, and lay the foundation for longer-term recruitment and retention activities. We are exploring the next phase of this public engagement strand for 2025.

National and local context

It has always been our intent that SWW galvanises local communities, employers and social workers themselves to celebrate the week in ways that best fit their context and need. We have pleasingly watched this take hold in recent years across the length and breadth of the country, and even internationally. We will continue to support this through a specific, local communication campaign, while offering a streamlined expression of interest process for the national programme of sessions.

4. Conclusions

The board is asked to note the review and support our delivery approach into 2025. A deeper dive into the draft programme for 2025 is planned for January’s policy committee.

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Co-opted Membership of Board Committees

Agenda Item 14 Paper Ref 12

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

Author

Elizabeth Frier, Corporate Governance Manager

Date

25 October 2024

Reviewed by

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

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 - Minimalist

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

N/A

1. Summary

Following discussion at the Board strategy awayday on 27 September 2024, this report proposes an approach to co-opting advisory members to Board committees on a temporary basis. The Board is operating with fewer non-executive directors than usual, due to the recent pause in the public appointments process, and this will continue to be the case for some time. This is stretching members' capacity and there is a particular support need within Policy committee, which currently has only one non-executive director who is the committee chair.

Co-option has always been an option available to the Board, however, to exercise this option we need to ensure that there is clear governance in place and a process to follow.

2. Action required

The Board is asked to consider and, if content:

- i) agree the proposed approach to co-opting members to Board committees;
- ii) approve the proposed amendments to terms of reference for the Board and Board committees (Appendix 1 and 2) to enable co-option to start to take place to these committees.

3. Commentary

Co-option

The role of the co-opted member would be to bring an external perspective to the work of Social Work England and to contribute specific professional expertise or lived experience to the committee to which they are appointed. The appointment of a co-opted member would take place to resolve an identified knowledge or experience gap in that committee's membership.

Process

It is proposed that the need for, and potential co-opted members, are discussed by the relevant committee and nominated by the Chair of the committee to the Board for approval.

Selection of co-opted members would be at the discretion of the Chair of the relevant committee and confirmed by the Board, based on the following principles:

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- The individual would bring unique knowledge and experience that is needed by the committee at that time, and would support the committee to achieve the balance and diversity of thought and experience it requires to be effective.
- There is confidence regarding the ability of the individual to:
 - declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest
 - build strong working relationships with the committee members and executive officers
 - understand and apply the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion when advising the committee
 - demonstrate the seven principles of public life and Social Work England values
 - contribute to the effective governance of the organisation.

The Board would consider the nomination and make a decision on the appointment.

Requirements

Any co-opted member appointed by the Board would:

- be required to sign a Social Work England Confidentiality Agreement prior to commencing their appointment
- be required to abide by the Board Code of Conduct
- act in an advisory capacity, on a temporary basis only, to fill a gap in the committee's knowledge or experience
- be a non-voting member
- receive no remuneration for the role, but reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence would be covered in accordance with Social Work England's travel and expenses policy
- be appointed for a term of 12 months, subject to any early resignation, suspension, termination or extension
- be able to resign on 3 months' notice to the Board

Suspension, early termination and extension

- suspension and early termination of the appointment would be at the discretion of the Board and must be communicated in writing to the co-opted member
- there would be no right of appeal
- the effect of suspension or early termination would be that the co-opted member shall not attend meetings or give advice to the committee and should return any confidential information or personal data shared with them. extension of the appointment would be at the discretion of the Board.

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4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

The Board is invited to consider, and if content approve, the proposed process for co-option of advisory members to Board committees.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1– proposed amendments to Board terms of reference

Appendix 2 – proposed amendments to Board committee terms of reference

Social Work England Board

Terms of Reference

Social Work England was established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 (“the Act”) to be a new single-profession regulator for social workers in England. It is a separate legal entity, administratively classified by the Cabinet Office as a non-departmental public body (“NDPB”) and operates at arm’s length from Government.

Social Work England was established on 1 April 2018. It took on its regulatory functions on 2 December 2019.

Social Work England regulates all social workers in England.

The Board is the governing body for Social Work England.

Purpose

The Board provides leadership, direction and a steer on the overall strategy for the organisation. It is responsible for overseeing the full range of Social Work England’s regulatory functions, including setting professional standards and standards for education and training for all social workers; establishing and running a fitness to practise system; and holding a register of social workers in England. The Board ensures effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control.

Responsibilities

The Board’s specific responsibilities include:

- establishing and taking forward the strategic aims and objectives of Social Work England consistent with its overall strategic direction in its corporate plan
- providing effective leadership of Social Work England within a framework of prudent and effective controls which enables risk to be assessed and managed
- ensuring the financial and human resources are in place for Social Work England to meet its objectives
- reviewing management performance against Key Performance Indicators and other deliverables
- ensuring that the Board receives and reviews regular financial and management information concerning the management of Social Work England
- ensuring that the Board is kept informed of any changes which are likely to impact on the strategic direction of Social Work England’s Board or on the attainability of its targets, and determining the steps needed to deal with such changes and where appropriate bringing such matters to the attention of the Secretary of State and Principal Accounting Officer via the executive leadership team, sponsor team (DfE) or directly

- ensuring that any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds are complied with; that the Board operates within the limits of its statutory authority and any delegated authority agreed with the DfE, and in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public funds (Annex A); and that, in reaching decisions, the Board takes into account guidance issued by the DfE
- supporting the executive leadership team in the development and effective use of a data and insights strategy as part of our business plan objectives
- ensuring that as part of the above compliance it is familiar with:
 - the Framework Document,
 - any delegation letter issued to Social Work England
 - any elements of any settlement letter issued to the DfE that is relevant to the operation of Social Work England
 - any separate settlement letter that is issued to Social Work England from the DfE, and
 - that it has appropriate internal mechanisms for the monitoring, governance and external reporting regarding any conditions arising from the above documents and ensure that the Chief Executive and Social Work England as a whole act in accordance with their obligations under the above documents
- demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times, including by using the independent Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to help the Board to address key financial and other risks
- assessing and approving risk appetite annually
- advising the Secretary of State annually on the remuneration of the Chief Executive giving due weight to the proper management and use and utilisation of public resources.
- appointing, with the Secretary of State's approval, subsequent Chief Executives
- contributing to the annual evaluation of the performance of the Chair, to be led by the DfE
- determining all such other things which the Board considers ancillary or conducive to the attainment or fulfilment by Social Work England of its objectives, and
- establishing and maintaining a publicly accessible register to list all the interests of its Board members.

Therefore, the Board will ensure effective arrangements are in place to:

- Provide strategic direction and challenge to the Chief Executive, and through the executive leadership team, in running the organisation.
- Ensure Social Work England's strategic direction and corporate objectives are in line with our overarching objective, the protection of the public.
- Provide assurance and ensure effective systems are in place for managing performance, risk, governance and internal control.

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- Maintain probity in, and public accountability for, the exercise of Social Work England's functions and the use of public funds.

Membership

The Chair and non-executive members are appointed by the Secretary of State under paragraph 2, Schedule 3 of the Act. These appointments are subject to the [Public Appointments Order in Council 2019](#) and as such must comply with the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). All such appointments should have regard to the principle that appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live, and appointments should be made taking account of the need to appoint boards which include a balance of skills and backgrounds.

The Secretary of State may remove a member, by notice in writing. Appointment processes will be carried out in line with the [Governance Code for Public Appointments](#). The Board operates in accordance with the [Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance](#).

The membership of the Board consists of:

- The Chair
- The Deputy Chair
- Non-Executive Directors, one of whom will be an appropriately qualified finance director as described in Annex 4.1 of [Managing Public Money](#) and one of whom will be appointed by the Chair to undertake the role of Senior Independent Director (SID), with the specific responsibilities detailed at Annex B.
- The Chief Executive

There are three sub-committees made up from the members of the Board: the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the Remuneration Committee and the Policy Committee. Social Work England will comply with all the requirements for an NDPB and the principles of good governance for public bodies in ensuring that non-executive members will always be in the majority on the Board. This is to ensure that the organisation's executive is supported and constructively challenged in their roles.

Sub-Committees

The Chair will ensure Board committees are properly structured with appropriate terms of reference. The terms of each committee will set out its responsibilities and the authority delegated to it by the Board.

The Chair will ensure that committee membership is periodically refreshed and that individual independent non-executive directors are not over-burdened when deciding the chairs and membership of committees. Subject to each sub-committee's Terms of Reference, sub-committee members may include Social Work England's Chief Executive and executive directors, National Advisory Forum members and co-opted members.

Co-opted Members

The Board will decide the appointment of any co-opted members to sub-committees, following the process in Annex C.

Decision-making

Decisions by the Board are normally [to be made by consensus and in accordance with the Social Work England Board Code of Conduct](#). Sub-committee members are also expected to abide by this Code.

The decisions made by the majority of Board members will be considered as if made by the whole group. Decisions and actions will be recorded within the minutes of the meeting. While the Board may make use of committees to assist its consideration of appointments, succession, audit, risk and remuneration it retains responsibility for, and endorses, final decisions in all of these areas.

Where there is disagreement between the relevant committee and the Board, adequate time should be made available for discussion of the issue with a view to resolving the disagreement. Where any such disagreement cannot be resolved, the committee concerned should have the right to report the issue to the sponsor team, Principal Accounting Officer, and Secretary of State. They may also seek to ensure the disagreement or concern is reflected as part of the report on its activities in the annual report.

Meetings

Meeting arrangement are as follows:

- the frequency of Board meetings is aligned with the requirement to review performance, strategy and work on board development
- the Chair, or Chief Executive, may convene additional meetings, including strategy meetings, as they deem necessary
- the minimum number of non-executive members for the Board to be quorate is 3 plus the Chair, or if delegated, the Deputy Chair
- Board meetings will normally be attended by the executive leadership team and the sponsor team (DfE)
- other members of Social Work England's staff may be invited to attend the Board meetings as and when required
- as part of our commitment to openness and transparency, members of the public are welcome to attend and observe Board meetings held in public. Places for members of the public to attend Board meetings as a guest will be allocated on a first come first served basis and will be limited according to capacity.

Reporting and Administration

The Executive Office will provide the secretariat function for the Board. Papers for all Board meetings will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. The

minutes of all Board meetings will be recorded including the recording of decisions made by the Board.

The minutes of the meetings and papers, as appropriate, will be published on the Social Work England website.

The minutes shall be made available within 10 working days to the Chair and Deputy Chair. The Chair, or if delegated, the Deputy Chair, is asked to agree the minutes before they are presented to the Board for approval at the following meeting.

Access

The internal auditors, external auditors or their representative and the Sponsor Team will have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Board.

Information requirements

After the end of each financial year, the Board must prepare and publish an Annual Report and Accounts. This sets out its activities together with an account of corporate governance in its annual governance statement, including the Board's assessment of its compliance with the Corporate Governance in [Central Government Departments Code of Good Practice](#); and its audited accounts.

Review and Evaluation

The Chair will review the effective working of the Board and its members on an annual basis as set out in the [Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance](#). The Chair will usually do this annually, with an externally facilitated board evaluation conducted at least every three years, in line with the [UK Corporate Governance Code](#) (Provision 21).

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

Annex A

Matrix A – Purchases	
Maximum authority levels (including VAT)	Role of authoriser
£10,000	Budget Holder
£25,000	Head of Function
£100,000	ELT Director
£500,000	Chief Executive
£500,000+	Board
Unbudgeted expenditure within agreed DfE budget allocations	Chief Executive
Unbudgeted expenditure out with agreed DfE budget allocations	Board and DfE together
Notes: 1 Authority levels represent the gross value of an order (including VAT) or contract rather than	

value of individual invoices.
2 Business cases are required for amounts of £25,000 and above.

Annex B

Senior Independent Director (SID): Role and responsibilities

- To work closely with the Chair, acting as a sounding board and providing support
- To act as an intermediary for other non-executive directors on the Board as and when necessary
- To be available to key stakeholders and other non-executives to address any concerns or issues they feel have not been adequately dealt with through the usual channels of communication (i.e. through Board meetings, or through the Chair or chief executive officer)
- Dealing with any complaints about the Chair, or dealing with any matters where the Chair has a conflict of interest and has recused him/herself
- To act as decision maker for complaints or other matters, as may be requested to support the Chair and/or maintain their independence to hear an appeal
- To support with succession planning, recruitment, and induction for the Chair's role and for other non-executive directors as may be required
- To contribute to the Chair's annual appraisal if this is requested by DfE

Annex C

Co-opted members may be appointed to sub-committees in an advisory, unremunerated, non-voting capacity to resolve knowledge or experience gaps in the membership of that committee. They shall not be an employee or member of Social Work England.

The process for deciding when and who to co-opt is as follows:

1. A gap is identified in the knowledge or experience of the members of a committee of the Board which needs filling on a restricted timetable.
2. The reasons for the restricted timetable and the options for filling the gap are considered by the Board and (if applicable) it is decided that the most suitable option is to co-opt a member.
3. Potential co-opted members will be discussed by the relevant committee and nominated by the Chair of the relevant committee to the Board for approval.
4. Selection of co-opted members is at discretion of the Chair of the relevant committee and is based on the following principles:
 - a. Unique knowledge and experience that would support the committee to achieve the balance and diversity of thought and experience it requires to be effective.
 - b. There is confidence that the co-opted member(s) have the ability to:

- declare and manage potential conflicts of interest
 - build strong working relationships with committee members and executive officers
 - understand and apply the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion when advising the committee.
 - demonstrate the seven principles of public life and Social Work England values
 - contribute to the effective governance of the organisation.
5. With the consent of the proposed co-opted member, the Board considers the relevant committee Chair's nomination and makes the final decision on the appointment based on the terms set out in these Board terms of reference and the Committee terms of reference, subject to the co-optee signing a confidentiality agreement and agreeing to abide by the Board Code of Conduct.
 6. The co-opted member is informed in writing of their appointment to the relevant committee and asked to agree to abide by the Board Code of Conduct (covering expectations to avoid conflicts of interest, declare gifts and hospitality and declare and register interests), to sign a confidentiality agreement, and to note the Board and Committee terms of reference.
 7. Once the agreement to abide by the Board Code of Conduct and signed confidentiality agreement are received, the appointment can commence.

Last reviewed: [October 2024](#)

Next review date: February 2025

Signed off Board:

Policy Owner: Executive Director – People and Business Support

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Board has established an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee as a sub-committee to support them in their responsibilities for providing assurance in the areas of audit, risk management, governance and internal control.

Responsibilities

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee provides assurance to the Board and Accounting Officer on:

- the strategic processes for risk management, governance, levels of assurance activity and the annual Governance Statement
- the accounting policies, the accounts, and the annual report of the organisation
- the Scheme of Delegation and in line with this, proposed expenditure over £500,000
- management's letter of representation to the external auditors
- planned audit activity and results of both internal and external audit
- adequacy of management response to issues identified by audit activity, including external audit's management letter
- assurances relating to the management of risk including data protection risks and compliance with data protection obligations, and corporate governance requirements for the organisation
- our approach to managing sustainability risks, and making appropriate disclosures, in line with relevant standards such as the Greening Government Commitments and the [Government Financial Reporting Manual's Sustainability Reporting Guidance](#).
- the proposals for tendering and appointment of internal auditors or for purchase of non-audit services from contractors who provide audit services
- the strategy, remuneration and the work of the National Audit Office for the audit work undertaken on the annual accounts
- compliance with [Government Financial Reporting Manual](#) and [HMT Managing Public Money](#), anti-fraud policies, whistle-blowing processes, and arrangements for special investigations.

Membership

The Chair of the Board is responsible for appointing the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The membership consists of:

- The Chair (a Non-Executive Director who is neither the Chair of the Board nor the Chair of the Remuneration Committee); and

- Non-Executive Directors who are not existing members of the Remuneration Committee.
- Optionally, one or two co-opted members.

Co-opted Members

Any co-opted member appointed by the Board shall:

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

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

- Suspension and early termination of the appointment are at the discretion of the Board and must be communicated in writing to the co-opted member.
- There is no right of appeal.
- The effect of suspension and early termination is that the co-opted member shall not attend meetings or give advice to the committee and should return any confidential information or personal data shared with them.
- Extension of the appointment is at the discretion of the Board.

The Chief Executive (Accounting Officer) also attends Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may also:

- procure specialist ad-hoc advice at the expense of the organisation, subject to budgets agreed by the Board.

Meetings

Meeting arrangements for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be as follows:

- the frequency of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings is aligned with requirement to review audit, risk management, governance and internal control. The Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may convene additional meetings, as they deem necessary

- a minimum of 2 Non-Executive Director members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be present for the meeting to be deemed quorate, including the Committee Chair (or a Non-Executive Director committee member to whom the Committee Chair has delegated the chair role).
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings will normally be attended by the:
 - Internal auditors
 - National Audit Office (External Audit) and / or their representatives
 - Sponsor Team (DfE)
- the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any other members of staff within Social Work England to attend to assist it with its discussions on any particular matter
- as part of our commitment to continuing professional development, members of staff are welcome to attend and observe Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis and will be limited according to capacity
- the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee may ask any or all of those who normally attend but who are not members to withdraw from a meeting to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters
- the Board or the Accounting Officer may ask the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues on which they want the Committee's advice.
- if the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee is absent for a meeting, the role of chairing the meeting will be delegated to a Non-Executive Director Committee member.

Decision-making

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

Reporting and Administration

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will report to the Board through the Chair of the Committee. The Executive Office will provide secretariat facilities to the Committee.

Papers for all Board and Committee meetings will be circulated at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. The minutes of meetings will be confidential and will not be reported at the public element of any full Board meeting. The minutes shall be made available within 10 working days to the Chair of the committee.

Access

The internal auditors, external auditors or their representative and the sponsor team (DfE) will have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Draft amendments for approval – 25/10/24

Social Work England’s Data Protection Officer will have free and confidential access to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and / or any Non-Executive Director of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Review and Evaluation

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will also review its own effectiveness annually and report the results of that review to the Board.

The terms of reference of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee shall be reviewed and reapproved annually.

Last reviewed: October 2024

Next review date: February 2025

Signed off Board:

Policy Owner: Executive Director – People and Business Support

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Policy Committee

Terms of Reference

Purpose

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

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

Responsibilities

The Policy Committee

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

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

Decision-making

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

Membership

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

The membership of the Committee is comprised of:

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

Co-opted Members

Any co-opted member appointed by the Board shall:

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

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

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

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

Meetings

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

Reporting and Administration

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

The Executive Office will provide secretariat facilities to the Committee.

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

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

Access

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

Review and Evaluation

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

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

Last reviewed: October 2024

Signed off by the Board:

Next review date: February 2025

Policy Owner: Executive Director – People and Business Support

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Travel Subsistence and Expenses Policy

Agenda Item 15 Paper Ref 13

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

Author

Elizabeth Frier, Corporate Governance Manager

Date

25 October 2024

Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

This paper is for

Information

Associated Strategic Objective

N/A

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Governance and compliance - Minimalist

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 and also to non-executive directors and partners.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

n/a

5. Annexes

Annex 1 – Travel, Subsistence and Expenses Policy

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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 and also to non-executive directors and partners.

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.

Travel

We will reimburse the cost of all travel expenses incurred. A receipt or statement of these journeys will be required when making an expense claim.

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.

All expense claims for employees must be submitted via the corporate system “Enable” and receipts must be included.

Partners should recover expenses by including the amount to be reimbursed on an invoice, receipts must be included.

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 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)

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) ¹	+5 pence	+5 pence

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

- 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.

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

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 advanced. 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 allowance is the money given to employees to cover any expenses incurred whilst travelling for business. This includes (but is not limited to):

- meals and drinks
- accommodation

Day Subsistence

All day subsistence expenses will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis, receipts must be provided. The following limits apply.

Criteria	Allowance	Max Allowance (8pm)
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 paid 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 claimed in order 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)	£75

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 or director prior to booking.

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 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, the individual may keep the reimbursement to compensate them for their lost time. Otherwise, this amount must be offset against your next rail journey.

Line manager / budget holder / director

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.

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: October 2024

Next review date: October 2025

Policy Owner: Executive Director – People and Business Support



Whistleblowing (Prescribed Person) and the role of the Board

Agenda Item 15 Paper Ref 14

Paper for the

Social Work England Board

Sponsor

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

Author

Ellis Christie, Head of Internal Quality and Customer Experience

Date

25 October 2024

Reviewed by

Linda Dale, Executive Director, People and Business Support

This paper is for

Information

Associated Strategic Objective

N/A

Impact: Risk Type and Appetite

Reputation and credibility - Cautious

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Completed

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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. It provides information on what Board members they should do if they are contacted by someone wishing to make a whistleblowing disclosure.

2. Action required

Board members are asked to note the content of this report and re-read the [whistleblowing policy](#).

3. Commentary

Social Work England is ‘prescribed person’ for the purposes of the Employment Rights Act 1996 (“ERA”)¹, as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (“PIDA”)². As a prescribed person, a worker may make a disclosure to report suspected or known wrongdoing us. In order to qualify for protection from being subject to a detriment by an employer, a whistleblower needs to meet several criteria, including the disclosure being made (normally) to either an employer or a prescribed person.

Being a prescribed person does not give us any new powers to deal with the disclosure made to us and we can only take action insofar as it relates to our statutory functions.

All potential qualifying disclosure are considered in line with our [whistleblowing policy](#).

As members of the Board any disclosures made to you would not be considered to have been made to Social Work England as a ‘prescribed person’.

Should you be contacted by someone wishing to make a whistleblowing disclosure, you should direct them to our website ([Whistleblowing policy - Social Work England](#)) or our general enquiries line.

4. Conclusions and/or Recommendations

n/a

5. Annexes

none

¹ [Employment Rights Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

² [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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