

**Social Work England**  
**Annual Report and Accounts**  
**2021 to 2022**

**2021**  
**2022**

**Social**  
**Work**  
**England**



# **Social Work England**

## **Annual Report and Accounts For the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022**

**A Non-Departmental Public Body**

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to paragraph 19, schedule 3 of the  
Children and Social Work Act 2017**

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# Overview from the chair and chief executive

A warm welcome to our annual report and accounts for the period of 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Within this report we share the highlights of our successes and challenges in our second year of being the regulator for social workers in England.

The past 12 months have continued to bring extraordinary challenges for everyone. Despite these challenges, social workers continued to work hard and adapt their practice throughout times of uncertainty to offer vital support to people, families, and communities. We thank social workers for their hard work. They have showcased their continuing professional development, embedding reflection into their practice. This shows a commitment to maintain professional standards and ensure safe, effective practice for the public.

During this year we consolidated our registration renewals process, with 97.2% of social workers renewing their registration and thousands of new social workers joining the register. We also launched new education and training standards which ensure that students who successfully complete a course can meet our professional standards, and we reviewed social workers' ongoing learning.

Fitness to practise was at the heart of our business decisions this year and following reviews of our processes and resource

we made good progress in reducing our investigations caseload and resolving legacy cases transferred to us from the previous regulator. New performance indicators ensured our focus on reducing caseloads was not at the expense of delivery. We are grateful of the grant from the Department of Education to support this work.

We published the second instalment of a significant publication into the profession we regulate in Social Work in England: Emerging Themes. Featuring the voices of people with lived and learned experience of social work, the report considers the key issues social workers are grappling with and aims to inform innovation and promote positive change.

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, we published our first equality, diversity and inclusion action plan during Race Equality Week. The plan set out our ambitions and how we are moving beyond conversations to achieve real, tangible steps and change.

We will work with government on the implications for social work regulation arising from People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform white paper and Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all. We have acknowledged key government reviews including the

Independent Review of Children’s Social Care<sup>1</sup> and the national review<sup>2</sup> into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. Our National Advisory Forum continued to hold us to account on our commitment to co-production. It was a significant moment to read their first evaluation, reflecting on how they work with us.

Alongside the National Advisory Forum and others with lived and learned experience of social work, while building on the learning from last year, we co-produced Social Work Week 2022. Consolidating national and local activities created a real moment for the profession, exploring its achievements and the improvements it still must make. Thank you again to everyone who joined us.

We want to express our appreciation and gratitude to our people for the way in which they have been able to flex and adapt to change, challenge and opportunity. Despite the ongoing pandemic, we delivered our statutory, regulatory duties while also focusing on improvement through the expertise of our talented people. They are always willing and ready to work in new and agile ways.

Looking ahead, our next 3-year corporate strategy will ensure that we deliver specialist regulation. Ambitious policy, communications and engagement will see us bring about truly transformational change in social work practice. The impact of this will be felt by the millions of people in England who count on its support.



Professor The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE  
Chair of the Board,  
Social Work England



Colum Conway  
Chief Executive, Registrar  
and Accounting Officer,  
Social Work England

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1 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/news/reflections-on-the-independent-review-of-childrens-social-care/>

2 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/news/our-response-to-the-child-protection-in-england-report/>

# Performance report





## Performance overview

The performance overview explains who we are, our purpose, how we are organised and our performance against our objectives. The last 12 months represent our second year of regulation, and our operation still in the shadow of a pandemic.

We've built on the solid foundations, systems and processes established in our first year. We've continued to talk to and listen to the sector. Together with our sector feedback, we have applied our business intelligence, learning and development to continually improve on our performance.

Each year we set out our objectives and the steps we will take to achieve our strategic aims in our annual business plan<sup>3</sup>. Overall, our performance for 2021 to 2022 was broadly in line with what we set out to achieve. Pages 11 to 47 provide a detailed analysis of our performance.

## Our purpose

Social Work England was established under The Children and Social Work Act 2017 (the Act) to be the new single-profession regulator for social workers in England. Our powers and obligations are set out in part 2 of the Act and The Social Workers Regulations 2018.

We operate as a non-departmental public body. Our framework document<sup>4</sup> has been agreed between the Department for Education, as sponsor department, in consultation with Department of Health and Social Care, and us. The Department for Education has responsibility for child and family social workers, and the Department of Health and Social Care has responsibility for adult social workers.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/business-plan-2021-to-2022/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/social-work-england-framework-document/>

As set out in the Act, and like the other health and care regulators, our overarching objective is the protection of the public.

Our strategic aims are set out in our corporate strategy 2020 to 2023<sup>5</sup>.

In pursuing our overarching objective, we aim to:

- protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public;
- promote and maintain public confidence in social workers in England; and
- promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

The Social Workers Regulations 2018 set out the detail of the regulatory framework within which we regulate social workers. We are responsible for delivering key regulatory functions in respect of social workers, as follows:

- setting profession-specific education and training standards and approving training courses;
- setting profession-specific standards for fitness to practise;
- maintaining a register of all social workers in England;
- running a fitness to practise system;
- monitoring and reporting on continuous professional development; and
- approving post qualifying courses and specialisms.

This year's annual report reflects what we've achieved in the second year of delivering our corporate strategy. We've focused on 5 key areas for activity and impact:

1. Our regulatory approach
2. Education and training
3. The social work profession
4. People we work with and for
5. Our organisation

In our delivery, we have managed risks concerning our regulatory role regarding: meeting demand for fitness to practise referrals and processing cases; data processing and information governance; responding to changes in the external environment; delivering effective regulatory functions and embedding our governance and assurance frameworks.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/corporate-strategy/>

## Our leadership

Chief Executive



Colum Conway

Strategy, Policy and  
Engagement



Sarah Blackmore  
Executive Director

Fitness to Practise



Jonathan Dillon  
Executive Director

Registration, Quality  
Assurance and Legal



Philip Hallam  
Executive Director

People and Business  
Support



Tracy Watterson  
Executive Director

## Our values

Our values shape and steer our interactions with each other and with everyone that we come into contact with. We're proud of our values and what they mean to us.

<b>Fearless</b> Influence and drive change where needed.	<b>Independent</b> Carry out our work without undue influence from anyone.	<b>Ambitious</b> Have high aspirations for the social work profession, for regulation and for ourselves.
<b>Integrity</b> Work with integrity in every aspect of our business.	<b>Collaborative</b> Work with experts in the social work profession.	<b>Transparent</b> Honest and open about what we're doing and how we're doing it. Seek and act on feedback.

## Measuring and reporting our progress

We measure progress against our objectives in several ways:

- The executive leadership team track performance and milestones on a monthly and quarterly basis, including against key performance indicators.
- Our board reviews our performance quarterly.
- Our regular audit, risk and assurance committee meetings support the board in their responsibilities by providing assurance in the areas of audit, risk management, governance and internal control.
- We regularly report to both the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, and our accounts are consolidated within the Department for Education's annual report and accounts.

### Professional Standards Authority

We are overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (the Authority). The Authority oversees our work and the regulation and registration of other healthcare professionals. They review and scrutinise our performance against their standards of good regulation. They also review the decisions made by our independent adjudicators who consider fitness to practise concerns.

## Performance analysis

This section of the report provides an analysis of our performance, working to our strategic ambitions set out against each of our 5 strategic pillars.

### 1. Our regulatory approach

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**Strategic ambition:**

**A new regulatory approach – we will learn, reflect and test boundaries**

**Collaborate and engage, developing understanding and leadership in regulation**

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#### Registration and advice

Over the last year our registration and advice service has brought together and built on the learning from 2020 to 2021. We continued to deliver high levels of service to enquirers, applicants and social workers. We've also established a stronger understanding of our register and how we can be effective and efficient for both professionals and the public.

As planned, we developed a more accessible website and critiqued our content. As a result, more people now use our digital services to access information. We recognise that many prefer to communicate with us over email and phone calls. We continue to review our approaches to find the right balance, considering customer need alongside available resources.

As our registration and advice team eased into a hybrid way of working, we gathered and listened to feedback to improve our services. Doing so allowed us to improve our response times, be more effective with our communications and continue to deliver efficient public protection.

## **The social work register**

We continued to welcome people onto the social work register to enable them to practise in England. We received over 7,989 individual applications over the course of the year. As expected, when COVID-19 restrictions eased across the globe we saw an influx of overseas applications, totalling 1,212. These applicants benefitted from our efforts to improve our processes and available information, including our overseas course list. We've published and maintained this online list of overseas courses to speed up the process for applicants from outside the United Kingdom. It has allowed us to be better satisfied that these courses are of a comparable standard to those we regulate in England.

We continued to annotate entries on the register to show social workers that can practise as an approved mental health professional (AMHP) or best interests assessor (BIA). 1,538 social workers currently hold one or both titles. In the coming year we'll be considering our approach to annotations. We want people to better understand them and to have confidence in our register when it comes to specialist roles.

## **Temporary registration**

We had introduced temporary registration in March 2020 as an emergency response to the pandemic, to allow previously registered social workers to return to practice. We continued to include social workers with temporary registration on our register throughout the year and reviewed those with this status. In November 2021, we removed 6,630 people with temporary registration status. They had each previously left the register 2 to 3 years before the introduction of temporary registration. We did this to ensure that the temporary register remains an effective tool of public protection during the continuing response to COVID-19. We continue to work with government on our approach to temporary registration. We also encourage social workers with this status to apply to restore to full registration, in anticipation of the closure of temporary registration expected later in 2022.

## Registration renewal

This year also saw our second annual registration renewal cycle. This process required social workers to apply to renew their registration, pay their registration fee and record continuing professional development (CPD) between 1 September and 30 November.

We developed our online renewal service based on feedback, user research and testing from our first cycle. Changes included a detailed overview for social workers to better understand any outstanding actions. We also added more employment categories to recognise the diversity of social work, and clearer information on fitness to practise declarations.

As in our first year, our regional engagement team held online events to support the renewal process. As a result, we received fewer emails and phone calls relating to renewal and fitness to practise declarations. By 30 November 2021, 95,710, or 96.5%<sup>6</sup> of social workers, had succeeded in renewing their registration.



**95,710**

**social workers successfully renewed their registration by 30 November 2021**

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<sup>6</sup>A further 720 social workers submitted valid CPD during the grace period up to 21 December, taking the total successful renewals to 96,430 (97.2%).

## **Fitness to practise**

'Social worker' is a protected title. This means that to work as a social worker in England, individuals need to register with us and uphold professional standards. If we receive evidence that indicates a social worker may have fallen below these standards, we will conduct an investigation to determine whether it has an impact upon the social worker's suitability to continue working without restriction. Where the evidence obtained through an investigation indicates that there are ongoing concerns about a social worker's fitness to practise, suitable action will be taken to ensure that the public remain protected.

Over the last year we have developed and implemented a 2-year strategy to stabilise our fitness to practise service. From the outset we faced the 3 broad challenges of:

- the high legacy caseload we inherited from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC);
- a consistently high rate of new referrals into the service; and
- the impact of the pandemic.

We designed a strategy to address these challenges, focusing primarily on reducing caseloads within our investigations service so that we could improve the timeliness of case progression and achieve responsive outcomes.

One of our 6 key performance indicators for fitness to practise focused on monitoring our progress against reducing the legacy caseload. This was a necessary first step. Without reducing the legacy caseload, we risked being unable to address other challenging areas in the service, such as the timeliness of case progression. At the start of the year, we reviewed and restructured our triage and investigations services. We streamed cases more effectively based on age and risk profile and increased the efficiency of case progression. These steps allowed us to make significant progress in reducing caseloads to a stable level.



Throughout the year we made better use of the powers available to us at the triage stage. In some cases, we identified that further information would allow us to apply our triage threshold more effectively. In these circumstances we paused application of the triage test in order to make targeted enquiries. These enquiries allowed us to gain a stronger understanding of the severity of the concerns and whether they were likely to be supported by evidence. They also allowed us to make an early assessment about whether the problems underpinning matters raised had been remediated by the social worker. Effective use of these powers delivered a resolution rate at the triage stage that was about 20% higher than the previous year, removing the need for a lengthier investigation and case examination in almost 400 cases.

### **A look at what we achieved by 31 March 2022**

Target	What we achieved
To reduce the triage caseload to 300	We've reduced to 417 from 723, despite this being a challenging area of service
To reduce the investigations caseload to 1,230	We've reduced this to 773
To progress beyond the investigation stage on 80% of the historic caseload that was transferred to us from the HCPC	We've progressed 84.2% beyond the investigations stage

By 31 March we had resolved 69.3% of the 1,459 cases transferred to us from HCPC. At the beginning of the year, 1,003 of these cases remained open and by the end of the year, we had resolved a further 556 cases. Next year, in the second year of the 2-year strategy to stabilise the service, we will focus on resolving the remaining 447 transferred cases.

We set other performance indicators to ensure that our focus on reducing caseloads wasn't at the expense of quality of delivery. Throughout the year we have continued to monitor the quality of case preparation and adjudication through a targeted sampling process. Overseeing this process is our decision review group, who meet monthly. The group includes senior employees, an independent member from another UK professional regulator and a member of our National Advisory Forum. They give a quality rating to the management and resolution of each case they review. The decision review group fully endorsed the quality of work supporting a case resolution in 93% of cases analysed this year.

## **Strengthening our understanding of fitness to practise referrals**

Our approach means that members of the public and professionals who raise concerns with us now get a quicker resolution than they did at the beginning of the year. In turn, social workers don't have to wait as long for resolution.

We delivered a programme of research and development to strengthen our understanding of why we were receiving a large number of referrals into the service that were not suitable for regulatory intervention. As part of this programme we:

- looked at how people navigate our website when considering raising a concern;
- undertook research to understand why some concerns are not first raised locally; and
- strengthened relationships with employers and how we work together to handle concerns.

Early signs from this project are positive. We have identified points of contact within local authorities to source the information we need to clear cases more quickly. They will also work with us to look at other preventative actions that could address inappropriate referrals.

We have also noted that the percentage of referrals coming to us from employers following local investigation has increased. We are keeping a close eye on this pattern. It may suggest that our website developments are helping the public to determine when their concern is better dealt with initially by the service provider rather than the regulator.

## **Hearings**

Because of the pandemic, we had to redesign our hearings to deliver them remotely. We have consulted to allow us to make these temporary powers permanent. The fitness to practise rules were amended on 19 April 2022 to reflect the response to the consultation on amendments to rules, electronic communication and remote hearings and make the amendments permanent to our rules. We piloted and introduced new procedures to accommodate 2-person panels. We also made better use of our powers to adjudicate at meetings rather than hearings in suitable circumstances. This greater flexibility allows us to schedule more final hearings and can reduce the impact on the parties involved.

As part of our 2-year strategy, reducing the caseload at the hearings stage will form part of next year's focus.

## 2. Education and training

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### **Strategic ambition:**

**Improve quality and consistency in education and training**

**Through collaboration and intelligence gathering build an evidence based on models of provision**

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### **Education and training**

One of the reasons why we were established was to ensure appropriate education and training standards. Part of that is to assure the quality of social work courses through inspection and approval. By doing this work we support ongoing improvement in the quality of initial social work education and training. The aim is to prepare social work students for practise as registered social workers.

### **Education and training standards**

Following consultation, we launched our education and training standards in September 2021. The standards act as the requirements against which we approve and monitor courses of initial social work education and training. Included within them are new elements relating to admissions, supporting students, curriculum and assessment, course governance, management and quality, and the learning environment.

Together with our quality assurance activity, this work aims to ensure that graduates from approved social work courses meet professional standards. It's essential that they're able to begin their career practising safely and effectively. We have started the 3-year process of reapproving all social work courses against these new standards. Courses are being quality assured and providers asked to show how they are meeting the standards.

### **Our future approach to education and training**

This year we started to develop our approach to social work education and training. We're looking into how we set out our expectations of students' knowledge, skills and behaviours upon completing a qualifying social work course. By better understanding how to approach this important juncture in a social worker's career, we will ensure consistency across courses.

Our work on this approach includes engagement with the public, profession, educators, students and people with lived experience of social work. Our starting point is readiness for professional practice, and we invited interested people to speak with us and held 2 online events. We also held an event with our education quality assurance inspector partners.

After analysing the feedback, we will consult further later in 2022 and detail our new approach alongside our longer-term approach.

We also intend to reconfigure our structure. We want to ensure appropriate investment into this vital aspect of the social work profession and our assurance of public protection. To do so, we will create a dedicated education function.

### **Quality assurance**

Alongside supporting providers in the delivery of their courses, we continued working on course approvals throughout the year. Our quality assurance shows the public that social workers train in environments that meet our standards of safe and effective practice.

We increased our internal people resources to deliver our quality assurance activity. We continue to develop their engagement-led approach to maintain and deepen our relationships with course providers. This approach has mutual benefit for course providers and us as the regulator, helping us both to better understand the ways we each work.

This year we carried out 38 inspections, resulting in 17 courses being approved or reapproved. At the time of reporting, due to the length of the regulatory process, the remaining 21 courses inspected await final decisions.

### **Annual monitoring**

We carried out our second annual monitoring exercise with education providers this year. The aim was to gather information on how they are continuing to adapt their courses in the pandemic. We also set out to understand any challenges relating to practice placements for social work students. We've offered support to education providers with any changes to their courses, to ensure that they continue to meet our standards.

### 3. The social work profession

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**Strategic ambition:**

**Create a different approach to standards and professional development**

**Provide a picture of social work in England**

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#### **Continuing professional development (CPD)**

This year, we focused on learning from social workers' first experience of renewing their registration and recording CPD with us.

Our regional engagement leads listened to the sector, helping us measure sentiment and move the conversation forward. It's been important to us to reiterate that CPD is a core part of being a social worker. It goes together with being a regulated professional and provides confidence to the public.

Our extensive communication and engagement campaign emphasised this message. Through our website, social media, video, engagement events and trade press, we encouraged professionals to regularly record their CPD online. By the end of the renewal cycle, just 65 social workers had to restore to the register because they did not meet our CPD requirements. Such a high rate of successful renewal demonstrates that the profession is on this journey with us. Most social workers are dedicating the time to maintain and improve their practice despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Looking forward, we will continue to encourage proactive, and regular recording of CPD. We hope to reduce the last-minute spike of activity around the deadline, which puts our service and social workers under unnecessary pressure. We recognise that we need to work on this shift as a much longer-term behaviour change.

We also learned a lot from our second annual CPD review in January to March 2022. We selected 2.5% of eligible social workers<sup>7</sup> at random to take part, which totalled 2,354. Of them, 2,225, or 94.5%, received an accepted outcome. We advised the remaining 129, or 5.5%, on how to improve their CPD in future.

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<sup>7</sup> Sampling for our CPD review excluded those who at the time were subject to a fitness to practise investigation, had a live sanction of suspension or condition of practice applied to their registration, or who had not been registered continuously since the start of the registration year.

The review noted that some social workers focused more on what CPD they did than what they learned from it. To address this issue, in January we launched a new structured form that guides the social worker to reflect on their CPD.

Our approach to CPD will always aspire to improve confidence in the profession and ensure public protection. In May 2021, we held a 12-week consultation, following which we increased the requirements (see case study). From 1 December 2022, the CPD requirements are to record:

- a minimum of 2 pieces of CPD; and
- include at least one piece with a peer reflection.

Moving forward, we hope to work more closely with employers to embed CPD in workplaces. We will continue to promote the value of CPD, the depth it brings to practice and its tangible impacts.

## Case study

### Consulting on proposed changes to CPD requirements

In May 2021, we held a 12-week public consultation on our proposed changes to the CPD requirements. Our proposals were based on insight gathered during our first year. They also drew on findings from CPD research commissioned with YouGov in 2020.

#### Approach

We first discussed our thoughts at 2 pre-consultation workshops with social workers, people with lived experience and representatives for national organisations. Their feedback then shaped our wider consultation proposals. We:

- asked targeted questions in an online survey;
- encouraged feedback by email and post;
- held 10 public online events with people with lived experience;
- held 2 workshops with professional regulators; and
- encouraged participation via our communication channels, trade press and regional networks.

#### Outcome

We received 618 responses.

Generally, respondents approved of our proposal to increase the required amount of recorded CPD to 2 pieces per year. Of those who disagreed, many thought it was too small an increase.

Respondents generally agreed with peer reflection, as good practitioners already do this. They questioned the proposal to make it mandatory for every CPD record, though, as social workers can benefit from private reflection.

Nearly half of respondents agreed with the definition of a peer as a UK registered social worker. Many encouraged us to broaden this definition to accommodate social workers in multidisciplinary settings.

Following this consultation, we increased the requirement from one to 2 pieces of CPD. We introduced the need to record at least one piece of CPD with a peer reflection. And we published a broad list of professionals who may act as a peer.

We decided not to introduce a mandatory CPD theme for 2021 to 2022, nor to change how we sample records for review. We'll continue to consult on future changes.

## **Strategy development**

As we move through the final years of our first corporate strategy, we are turning towards our next strategic ambitions. We have successfully established our organisation and new, important areas of our specialist regulation. We are now keen to use this strong foundation to achieve impact across the social work profession.

This year we held strategy sessions with our leadership and board. We began to proactively engage with our key stakeholders and partners in social work and government. We want to understand where we can bring about change and align leadership and activity in social work. The coming year will see us invest in an intense programme of activity to develop our next corporate strategy. Alongside this, we'll spell out in more detail and consult on our intentions in key areas, including education and training.

## **Engaging in the public policy environment**

The need for a robust policy function came to the fore this year. Emerging from the pandemic is a climate of reform. We are awaiting white papers on health and social care integration and the future of adult social care. We have also seen national responses and strategic initiatives in social work. These include the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the consultation on the future of local strategic partnerships and the national safeguarding review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson.

Considering these initiatives, we have readied ourselves to contribute to important conversations about social work. We are prepared to examine our own role in achieving critical improvements to the wider system. Issues of high caseloads, recruitment and retention have for too long threatened safe and effective practice for those in need of support. To strengthen our work in this area, we established a dedicated committee of our board focused on policy. The committee met for the first time in the final quarter of this year.

Over the past year, we've continued to be proactive in engaging in the public policy environments around social work and professional regulation. Publishing our second Social Work in England report<sup>8</sup> in January 2022 was a key milestone. The report is an authoritative commentary on the state of social work in England. It provides a platform to inform improvements in practice and decision-making. Representing people with lived and learned experience of social work, it's also part of our wider innovations in co-production and inclusion.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/social-work-in-england-emerging-themes>



Our aim is to build a strong and accurate picture of the profession. In line with our first corporate strategy, this will culminate in our third and final Social Work in England report in 2023.

### **Supporting the profession and progressing our regulation**

We've continued to support social workers to navigate COVID-19 and adjust to life and work at each stage of the pandemic. We have kept our COVID-19 guidance up to date online, including around changing requirements on vaccination for healthcare professionals. We've also adapted the way we reach and engage with social workers through our communications and regional engagement team. We've made better use of digital technology to connect and consult, through online workshops, drop-in sessions and our social channels.

We've identified significant improvements to our efficiency that can be made through changes to the rules and regulations that underpin what we do. Identifying these changes involved considerable investment and cooperation from our legal, policy, communications and projects teams, and work alongside our sponsor team in the Department for Education.

We were able to launch a public consultation on the first round of changes to our rules at the beginning of 2022. The Department for Education then held a consultation on amendment to our regulations. This work and further consultations will continue through the course of the next financial year.

We worked with the Department of Health and Social Care to understand the timeframe for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards under the Mental Capacity Act amendment. This legislation will introduce the new approved mental capacity professional (AMCP), replacing the best interests assessor (BIA). Our role will be to approve and monitor courses for this specialist qualification, like we do for the approved mental health professional (AMHP). We will be consulting on our 2 sets of education and training standards for courses leading to these awards in the next year.

## **Insight, research and publications**

We're committed to gathering insight and intelligence about the profession. We do so both to inform our own work and to share an accurate picture of social work. To date, we've built a strong track record of research activity. We make strategic use of this research to strengthen our consultation and development of our regulatory functions.

We published research carried out by Sheffield Hallam and partner universities into AMHPs and BIAs. This research will inform our upcoming consultation activity on new education standards for these 2 roles. We also published research from the University of Greenwich into social work education and training. This area is key to our strategic focus on assuring the quality of social work courses.

We commissioned research into the public perceptions and experiences of raising a concern about a social worker. This research informs how we support members of the public to decide whether their concern is a matter for fitness to practise investigation.

Alongside our research, we have gathered rich anecdotal evidence about the sector through our regional engagement activity. We fed this expertise into policy and operational development. These insights form pieces of the jigsaw. They help us to create a better picture of the profession and become the authoritative voice of social work in England.

From our engagement and research, we know that people are keen to engage with us. We've shared these stories in case studies, blogs and the first series of the 'This Is Social Work' podcast. In doing so, we promote the value of social work to policy makers, the profession and the public.

## Case study

### **'This Is Social Work' – a podcast bringing the professional standards to life**

We want to provide social workers with useful content that will equip them with practical tools to inform their practice. One topic that social workers told us they wanted to explore further is their need to meet the professional standards to maintain their registration. To make the standards more memorable and relatable, we produced a podcast series.

#### **Approach:**

Podcasts offer us a unique way of engaging with social workers. They're accessible to people no matter where they are. They're also a way to both explore professional practice and support CPD.

This podcast was for and by those with lived and learned experience of social work. We wanted it to showcase knowledge and enthusiasm from within the profession and build confidence and connection.

Collaboration was key. Our communications team worked alongside regional engagement leads to gather insight on topics. As social workers themselves, the leads were able to connect us directly with the sector. Guests included members of our National Advisory Forum, social workers and young people with lived experience.

Recordings were remote due to the pandemic, which presented some challenges. But research and planning kept each episode true to the values of our organisation and the profession.

#### **Outcome:**

'This Is Social Work' was our first original podcast series. We welcomed 11 guests onto 7 episodes. As of 1 April 2022, we achieved over 5,580 downloads. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We not only created a space for meaningful engagement, but stood by our principles to test, learn and refine.

## **Working with our stakeholders**

In the last year, our stakeholder engagement has become more proportionate, targeted and thoughtful. This is in part thanks to the implementation of our stakeholder relationship management system. The system has allowed us to be more analytical about who we speak to, when, and what about. More joined-up engagement across the organisation has ensured we don't have several people talking to the same stakeholders. We're pleased to continue to evolve the sophistication of our communication and engagement work.

Our engagement with colleagues and partners covers the full spectrum of social work topics. It includes everything from developing our approach to the post-qualifying landscape to reiterating our basic messages around what is and isn't within the boundaries of our regulation. Our events and research have had a positive reception, showing that people are keen to engage with what we have to say. It is essential that we continue bringing stakeholders with us on this journey. We will address their concerns and provide strong, clear messaging around how we work together.

## 4. People we work with and for

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### **Strategic ambition:**

**Co-produce our work with everyone who has in interest in social work**

**Deepen the understanding and values of social work**

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### **Co-production**

Co-production runs through everything we do. It's at the heart of our work.

We continue to embrace influence from the National Advisory Forum as a critical friend. 4 new members joined the forum over the past 12 months. They bring with them a wealth of lived and learned experience and take the total membership up to 18. In October we published a summary of what the forum had achieved in its first year. We also suggested improvements to ensure we are hearing the full range of voices we need. This evaluation considered the experiences of members, the way the forum operates and the relationship between the forum and us.

Our leadership team has welcomed the consistent, constructive challenge offered by the forum. We've created buddy relationships between members of the forum and our board, while board members regularly attend forum meetings.

We wish to further embed our vital relationship with representatives of universities through the Education and Training Advisory Forum. The forum is essential given our ambition in this area. Due to its broad representation, we are looking at opportunities to reconfigure this forum to make best use of it in the future.

## Case study

### The National Advisory Forum's shaping of our work

All those who are impacted by what we do should have the opportunity to participate in and influence our work. We established the National Advisory Forum to act as a critical friend and to share a wealth of lived and learnt experience. The forum is the main driver of co-production across the organisation. They ensure that our work is relevant and accessible to those it affects the most.

#### Approach

Over the past 2 years, the forum has co-produced over 50 pieces of work, from reviewing policies to planning and delivering events. Members offered their expertise even more widely this year and became more prominent in our work beyond operational tasks. They played a role in strategic appointments such as board members, helped to shape our business plan and plan Social Work Week.

Members were also a valuable part of the working group for the development of our second Social Work in England report. They were central to shaping the content, highlighting challenges, encouraging further improvement to practice and promoting positive change.

#### Outcome

We are still very much at the beginning of our journey with the National Advisory Forum, but they have proved to be a great asset. They have been effective and efficient in their purpose to provide expert support, advice and challenge. Their work has cemented the value of co-production in achieving our objectives and moving the organisation forward at pace.

Our hope was that members would find their role satisfying, rewarding and productive. Recent feedback showed that individuals felt included, listened to and integral to the decision-making process. Responses also demonstrated that the culture within the forum is positive, fair, open, safe and respectful. We will continue to uphold these aspects of the forum in our aspirations.

#### **Ify, National Advisory Forum member, said:**

"The forum has really evolved over time and has gone from strength to strength in ways I would never have expected. People now have no doubts whether it is useful or valid. We must continue to build on our learnings, branch out and find new ways of getting involved and being of use to the organisation."

#### **Jillian, National Advisory Forum member, said:**

"My hope is that we continue to feel empowered enough to act as this critical friend. There is still work that needs to be done, but we have now created a pathway in which to do it."

## **Communication and engagement**

Communication, engagement and collaboration with the sector, and people with lived experience, have always been the foundations of our regulation. That's how we created our professional standards and our education and training qualifying standards. This year, establishing and sustaining a dialogue with social workers has been integral to our approach.

Through our regional engagement leads, we spoke with and listened to social workers, employers and service providers in all settings. We've moved the conversation forward, but we've also continued to remind people of the basics, like why CPD and regulation matter. The ongoing pandemic has posed a significant challenge, but we have adapted and reached our audiences through remote, digital engagement as well as working in collaboration with partners.

From April 2021 to the end of March 2022, we held over 600 engagement events, reaching an audience of approximately 14,000. Events included national CPD sessions, fitness to practise employer workshops and regional engagement sessions. They also featured consultations with the sector to encourage them to feed into policy developments. Together they created a strong circular process, in which the sector is empowered to shape their own regulation.

One notable example of co-production and engagement working side by side was Social Work Week 2022. Following on from our first successful Social Work Week in 2021, we moved to a sector-led event for 2022. We encouraged social workers and people with lived experience to take ownership of the week. We curated a smaller main programme of 13 sessions, which was accompanied by a larger programme of over 30 independent events.

Social Work Week reflects our commitment to raising the profile of social work and improving public perceptions and understanding of the profession. We saw over 3,200 logins to our main programme sessions across the week. This total is a testament to the appetite in the profession for communal, sector-led engagement.

Alongside communicating expectations in relation to registration and CPD, robust communication has also been important to meet our wider objectives, to build confidence and trust in both ourselves and the profession. This year we built on the channels and tactics established during start up and our first year of operating to uphold our value of transparency, providing commentary even through the challenges.

We will continue to actively seek dialogue with all those who have a stake in our work. We want the sector to influence our own regulation as well as the wider transformation of the system we are a part of. We are committed to continually evaluating our work in this space and ensuring that our communication and engagement approaches remain rooted in audience insight. This, together with a clear consideration of big picture issues affecting society will ensure that we deliver with Impact.

**Communications and engagement statistics from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**

**9.8 million**  
webpage views, including  
414,277 views of the CPD pages



**we published**  
**56**  
**news stories and**  
**blog articles**



we responded to

**83**  
media enquiries



we were referenced in

**157**  
positive and neutral  
media stories



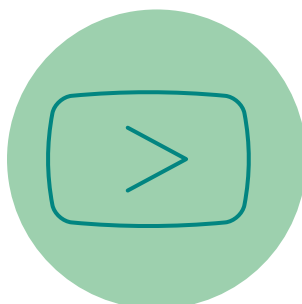
we saw our Twitter  
followers grow by

**29%**

we published

**17**  
videos on YouTube,  
with

**40,977**  
views across the  
channel



we saw our LinkedIn  
followers grow by

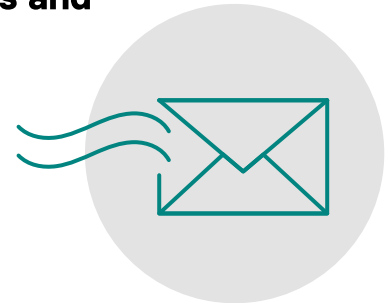
**39%**

we sent

**8**  
editions of our digital newsletter  
to an average readership of  
**82,677**

we grew our stakeholder  
management system to include

**519**  
organisations and  
**1,556**  
individuals



we welcomed

**11**  
guests onto

**7**  
podcast episodes  
with

**5,580**  
downloads

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

This year we have progressed at pace with our equality, diversity and inclusion action plan<sup>9</sup>, launched in December 2021. Our internal steering group drove forward activities to enable us to meet our 3-year statement of intent. Our work in this space is complemented by continued engagement with the sector, social workers, people with lived experience and our employees. We are committed to achieving real, tangible steps towards positive change by March 2023, with the following objectives.

### Objective 1: Carry out our regulatory functions fairly

#### **Build a more accurate picture of the workforce to better understand the makeup of the social work register**

We asked social workers to record their diversity data, for example around ethnicity and disability. 4% of social workers had provided this data by 31 March 2022. We know anecdotally what the issues are, but it's important that we're able to report and analyse from a clear evidence base. Doing so will also better enable us to ensure our policies and processes are fair for everyone. We will continue to prioritise recording this information, sharing why we want it and how we're going to use it.

We ran an anti-racism survey alongside partners and leaders in social work to help build our evidence base. We aimed to understand the prevalence, impact and general awareness of racism in social work. Nearly 2,000 social workers took part. We're committed to working alongside others from across the profession to build on the recommendations in the report<sup>10</sup>.

We also commissioned research into public perceptions and experiences of raising a fitness to practise concern about a social worker. We included specific questions around equality, diversity and inclusion.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-action-plan/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/research-report/anti-racism-survey-report/>

**Use available diversity data to identify and monitor any disproportionate impacts of our work on different groups and take steps to understand and deal with potential bias and discrimination**

We co-produced a new approach to our equality impact assessments. We also began training our people on the importance of assessing the impact of their work. Alongside this, we added specific considerations related to equality, diversity and inclusion to our decision review group. We also amended our online concerns journey to reduce the potential impact of bias and prejudice when making a referral.

**Use our education and training standards to proactively embed equality, diversity and inclusion principles in education and training courses**

Our 2021 education and training standards incorporate requirements around supporting students. It also includes requirements on embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in course design and delivery.

**Objective 2: Develop our culture as an inclusive organisation that attracts, develops, supports, retains, and fully engages diverse talent**

**Implement measures to embrace and facilitate diversity of our workforce, and ensure equality throughout the organisation**

We've strengthened our equality, diversity and inclusion considerations in our recruitment and selection processes. These changes have included updating recruitment briefing information to share more information around bias and how to minimise it. We also launched a targeted recruitment drive to appoint a new pool of partners, focusing on reaching people from diverse communities.

**Treat all our employees with equality, fairness, and respect**

We use diversity data to identify any biases, issues or gaps in representation, and work towards improving them. We've listened to our people and considered how we go forward. The knowledge, skills and lived experiences of those within our internal groups and networks will continue to support our work.

**Embed equality, diversity, and inclusion into our culture by increasing understanding of equality issues, and be responsive to the needs of those who use our services**

We regularly share learning and resources, encouraging our people to improve their understanding about equality, diversity and inclusion. We undertook a review of our bitesize workshops and resource discussions that explore topics relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion. Following this review, we implemented recommendations including co-producing each session with a member of our National Advisory Forum.

**Objective 3: Proactively deliver communications and engagement activity in a way that is diverse, relevant, and accessible to all**

**Review, test and develop our communications and engagement activities to ensure inclusivity**

We are committed to ensuring that our content seeks to reflect a wide range of voices and we actively encourage that. For example, via our Social Work Now bulletin where people can contribute their stories and experiences, through compiling content for our intranet, through co-producing Social Work Week sessions, and through user testing workshops for our digital services.

As planned, we developed a more accessible website and critiqued our content to test and troubleshoot some of the areas where we are only partially compliant with accessibility standards. Our forthcoming work on our brand perception and refinement will encompass equality, diversity and inclusion. Meanwhile our engagement events, including Social Work Week 2022, have been inclusive and accessible by ensuring that equality impact assessments took place early in the planning process.

**Co-produce our work with people with a range of protected characteristics to improve our products and services**

The National Advisory Forum continue to co-produce our work, ensuring that a diverse range of voices act as our critical friend. We're delivering co-production training to further embed this approach across the organisation.

We co-produced the Social Work Week 2022 programme with an increased number of individuals and organisations. And we ensured that there was a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion throughout.

We continued to engage with a range of external representative groups. These include the principal social worker networks and UKSWA, the professional association for Black and ethnic minority social workers. They also include groups supported by the British Association of Social Workers, including the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group and Neurodiversity Special Interest Group. Each group shares learning and promotes diverse engagement with us.

Co-hosting with Skills for Care, we welcomed 21 leaders from the sector to a roundtable on anti-racism. The roundtable highlighted the collective energy in the sector and the need to harness it with constructive action. We will build on this activity in our work with the Anti- racism Steering Group. The group are comprised of representatives from the Principal Social Workers' Network for Adults and Children and Families, the Department for Education, Social Work England, Office of the Chief Social Workers Department of Health and Social Care, and What Works for Children's Social Care.

We continue to be active members of the joint healthcare regulators' equality, diversity and inclusion forum. Likewise, we are members of the UK social care regulators equality, diversity and inclusion forum, which we established last year.

## 5. Our organisation

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### **Strategic ambition:**

**Encourage innovative approaches across all areas of our work**

**Promote a positive culture focused on improvement and co-production**

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### **Our people**

Over the 12 months from 1 April 2021, we consolidated our workforce and grew from 219 people to 225. In response to the pandemic, we had flexed our operating model in the previous year. Learning from this experience, we were able to be proactive in planning and adapting our ways of working.

Despite having 22 unplanned leavers during the year, we met our target retention rate of 90%. We have seen 21 internal promotions and 10 lateral moves, reflecting our ongoing commitment to developing our people.

We conducted our second people engagement survey this year. The survey achieved a 78% response rate, a 4% increase on the previous year. So that we could make clear comparisons, we used the same methodology and questions as the previous year. The engagement index score of 81% suggests our people have a high level of engagement. The highest scoring category, with a 93% positive response, was inclusion and fair treatment. The lowest scoring category was leadership and managing change at 65%, a 12% decrease from the previous year.

The drop in score on leadership and managing change highlighted the continued challenges we faced in staying connected through the pandemic. It reflected the working environment of the time, with limited office working and lower visibility of the leadership team. However, there were strong scores in inclusion, culture and wellbeing.

Since the survey, we have implemented several changes, with a focus on leadership and visibility. Through our internal communications we celebrate success, and have increased transparency of challenge and change. We've created more opportunities for people to observe board and committee meetings. We've also been more explicit about how we make decisions and manage risk.

Our peer-to-peer recognition scheme, Applause, has made a big contribution to the visibility of work across the organisation during the pandemic. We award e-vouchers to individuals in recognition of outstanding contributions that demonstrate our behaviours or values. People from across the organisation comprise the Applause panel and meet monthly to decide on nominations.

## Case study

### Applauding our people

#### Example 1

He always looks for ways to bridge the gaps in his day job and encourages others to see the bigger picture. He shows great integrity in his work and keeps things in good order, which is incredibly reassuring. Even when a problem falls outside of his job or his delegated tasks, he will seek to solve it. He does so for the greater good of the organisation, recognising that we are one team.

His revisions of our COVID-19 webpages, for example, have had a great impact. His actions ensure that the public and social workers have accurate, up to date information. This is crucial in a fast-moving, extremely nuanced and often politically sensitive sea of change to keep people safe.

#### Example 2

They played a key role in the successful delivery of Social Work Week 2022. They supported the steering group and myself in various tasks, and managed administration of all the core programme events. Much of their work was within the scope of their role. But what persuaded me to nominate them was the level of detail they applied. They were able to identify and suggest solutions to risks and issues. And they took personal responsibility to ensure that all tasks were carried out to the highest standard within tight timescales.

## **Learning and development**

Learning and development became further embedded in our work this year. We supported our people in how they work, deepening their understanding of those we regulate and those we protect.

Our learning and development offer also supported our progress to be more inclusive and representative. We hosted regular bitesize workshops and resource discussions on equality, diversity and inclusion. Led and facilitated by a broad mix of people from across the organisation, they form part of our 'clumsy conversations' campaign. The campaign creates opportunities for people to participate in discussions and gain confidence in topics across this important subject area.

In May 2021 we launched a new learning platform, Grow. As well as sharing important mandatory learning, Grow enables people to drive their own learning. They can collaborate, share learning and enhance their knowledge and competence through suggested pathways. Analysis of engagement with Grow has helped us to refine our offer and tailor interactions to different needs.

Through our management development programme, we empowered our managers. We supported them to manage themselves and others and to lead the organisation.

In response to capacity and COVID-19 challenges, we paused implementing a workforce planning, succession and talent framework. We will resume this work in 2022 to 2023 to align with the development of our corporate strategy.



## Learning and development statistics for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

**158**  
courses and



**224**  
learning sessions

**1,047.5**  
hours of learning

**18**  
professional  
qualifications being  
undertaken or completed



**1,271**  
attendees



Over  
**40,000**  
views of content on  
Grow since launch  
on 17 May 2021



### Partners

We collaborate with a range of partners who provide independence, impartiality and transparency. Our partners are social workers, legal professionals and members of the public. As of 31 March 2022, we have 178 partners. Their roles include fitness to practise adjudicators, legal advisors, education quality assurance inspectors, registration advisors, CPD assessors and professional associates. In February we began to recruit an additional 60 fitness to practise partner roles to increase our hearings capacity.

We implemented a self-appraisal framework, providing our partners an opportunity to reflect on their work. The framework also allows them to consider the impact of training, learning and development on their performance. We held focus group sessions too, to get partners' feedback on partner work and changes in response to the pandemic.

## **Data and business intelligence**

We are intelligence-led and have continued to implement significant improvements to how we manage and report on our data. These changes have enabled informed decision making and effective risk management. They also allow us to be consistent in showing our board and the public how we're performing.

One way we used data to inform decision making is by building a forecasting model. The model aimed to reduce the number of outstanding fitness to practise cases transferred to us from the previous regulator. It helped us understand what we need to do to conclude all these cases by the end of March 2023.

## **Freedom of information and individual data rights requests**

In the financial year, we received 629 individual data rights requests that required a response within the reporting period. 614 of these were data subject access requests. The remainder comprised other requests such as for the erasure of personal data that we hold. We responded to all requests within the statutory timeframe, which is usually no later than one month from date of receipt.

During the financial year we also received 146 freedom of information requests that required a response within the reporting period. We responded to 145, or 99.3%, within the statutory timeframe, which is usually 20 working days following date of receipt. We did not hold the information in respect of 74, or 50.7%, of these requests. We held part of the information in respect of 23, or 15.8% of the requests and all of the information in 49, or 33.6%. Where we held part or all the requested information, we disclosed it in full in response to 38, or 52.8%, of the requests. We applied an exemption on disclosure to part of the held information in 24, or 33.3%, of the requests. We applied an exemption from disclosure in full in 10, or 13.9%, of the requests.

## **IT and infrastructure**

We recognise the importance of technology and digital services within our work. With responsive technology in place across the organisation, our people have been able to continue to work well from home. This technology has supported our ongoing digital engagement, as we offer remote options across everything we do.

During the year we have continued to develop our integrated case management and registration system in support of our corporate strategy and operational requirements. Whilst we have been able to provide limited functionality to meet our regulatory requirements, we do not judge that the system is operating in the manner that we intend.

During the 2022/23 financial year we plan to implement a number of system enhancements which we expect to be completed by early 2023.

We have been proactive in maintaining the security and robustness of our IT systems as cyber security threats have grown. Through horizon scanning we have been quick to respond and intervene, protecting infrastructure and data. Regular learning and internal communications have ensured our people remain focused on security.

From April 2021 we brought together our finance, human resources and commercial operating systems into one integrated corporate system, Enable. Enable has allowed us to increase efficiencies and support our people in their work, particularly for expenses. We've moved implementation of the recruitment and people management elements of the system to the latter half of 2022 to 2023.

## Case study

### **Modernising our payroll service to better support our people and drive efficiencies**

Previously our payroll was administered by a third-party supplier. As we implemented our new corporate system Enable, we bought the payroll function in house. We wanted to enhance our customer service, speed up response times and reduce cost.

#### **Approach**

Our payroll is relatively complex as we offer a variety of flexible working options. To ensure we handled these variables correctly, we spent 4 months testing the new processes in Enable. While testing the new system, it was important that we undertook 3 parallel payroll runs with our third-party supplier. Doing so allowed us to test in real time. It helped us ensure that both payrolls delivered the same outcomes, paying employees accurately and on time.

#### **Outcome**

As a result of this shift, we have saved the organisation approximately £10,000 a year. We have improved accuracy and the internal finance team provide a more responsive customer experience. Our internal auditors inspected us in the same year of implementing payroll too.

## **Governance and assurance**

We've further streamlined business processes and strengthened our governance and assurance framework. These advancements included:

- significant improvements to performance reporting;
- consistent quality of board reports to a real shift in assurance; and
- strong, regular scrutiny of risk management, financial planning and control and assurance.

Our internal quality and improvement team are an additional line of assurance. They remain independent of our regulatory functions, serving as a critical friend. This year, we conducted 12 internal reviews and audits. They led to several improvements including to our risk assessment process, internal guidance and how we record decisions.

We engaged frequently with the Professional Standards Authority (the Authority) who oversee the regulation and registration of healthcare professionals. As part of this oversight, they published their first performance review of Social Work England. It covered the period 2 December 2019, when we started regulating social workers in England, to 30 November 2020. It was an especially challenging year for everyone in social work. In this context, we were pleased to have met 15 of the 18 standards of good regulation.

We acknowledged<sup>11</sup> the Authority's feedback as to why we did not meet 3 standards in our first year. We had already started to address these areas prior to the report's publication and have continued to do so this year. Our work in these areas has included:

- publishing and progressing action with our equality, diversity and inclusion action plan;
- improving information sharing with other organisations including education and training providers;
- accelerating the time it takes us to process registration applications;
- improving risk assessment at the initial stages of our fitness to practise process; and
- providing refresher training to investigators on risk assessment and interim orders.

We're confident that we have made significant improvements in each of these areas and will continue to do so. As a result of this work so far, the Authority concluded that we met 16 of the 18 standards in their latest review. This review covers the period 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021.

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11 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/news/professional-standards-authority-performance-review-2020-to-2021/>

## Sustainability and the environment

We have built on our commitment to good practice and social responsibility this year. We have endeavoured to maintain environmentally friendly and sustainable systems and approaches by:

- taking a digital-first approach, thinking before printing and utilising digital document sharing platforms;
- being considerate of waste management suppliers and recycling where possible;
- lowering our carbon footprint by keeping business travel to a minimum; and
- supporting our local community by beginning a relationship with 2 local charities. Our 2 local charities are Assist Sheffield and Sheffield Cathedral's Archer Project, as nominated and voted for by our people.

## Greening Government Commitments

Social Work England is committed to the Greening Government Commitments (GGC) 2021 to 2025. We have reported to our best ability to meet the requirements of the government financial reporting manual, though we have not been able to make a full disclosure.

Our ability to report against all the GGC requirements is limited by the fact that we are a tenant in a multi-occupancy office building, owned by CEG. The terms of our lease with CEG includes a charge for services relating to the supply of all utilities to Social Work England.

In its sustainability policy and strategy, CEG states: *'We act responsibly across all projects, working with customers, local people and authorities to build genuinely sustainable communities.'* The CEG building Social Work England occupies, North Bank, has an energy rating E, as reported in its Energy Performance Certificate to 2030. The energy performance for the building is recorded as follows:

**Main heating fuel:** Natural Gas

**Building environment:** Air Conditioning

**Assessment level:** 4

**Building emission rate (kgCO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup> per year):** 78.25

**Primary energy use (kWh/m<sup>2</sup> per year):** 460

We do not own, hire or lease car fleets; we have not been involved in construction during the period 2021 to 2022; we have no material differences to report on compared with last year. Our digital first approach has resulted in nil expenditure on A4 reams of paper purchased between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

It is also important to note that over the last 12 months, the impact of COVID-19 has affected our occupancy of the office and use of the

hearing suite on the ground floor. Compared to last financial year, our hybrid approach has seen a slight increase in business travel expenditure. Total business travel expenditure for 2020 to 2021 was £3,485.

	2021 to 2022	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
	£	(Tonnes of CO2e)	(Tonnes of CO2e)
Car	1,228	2.15	1.46
Taxi, rail and bus	2,239	0.21	0.15
Air	2,057	0.11	0.22
<b>Total business travel expenditure</b>	<b>5,524</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Tonnes of CO2e</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>1.83</b>

### Procurement

We predominately procure using Crown Commercial Services (CCS) frameworks which contain specific terms requiring suppliers to comply with sustainability and climate control legislation. The new measures<sup>12</sup> published June 2021 by the Cabinet Office require that by September 2021, prospective suppliers bidding for contracts above £5m a year will need to have committed to the government's target of net zero by 2050 and have published a carbon reduction plan. Firms which fail to do so will be excluded from bidding for the contract.

### Recycling and waste management

All our mixed office waste is sorted for recyclable items. Our waste management supplier recovers energy from non-recyclable items wherever possible to minimise waste sent to landfill. They turn finished landfills into havens for wildlife and capture gas to turn into renewable power. Our confidential waste management providers guarantee that they recycle 100% of paper as toilet tissue, kitchen roll or paper towels and our printer lease includes recycling used ink cartridges.

12 CEG-Sustainability-Policy-and-Strategy-August-2021-shortened-v.pdf

## **Respect for human rights, dealing with anti-corruption and anti-bribery**

As a public sector body, we comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights. Our work is in line with public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 and UN sustainable development goal 10 'reduced inequalities'.

Our procurement policies, as set out in our Financial Control Handbook, align with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. They comply with all relevant UK or other international procurement rules. We procure works, equipment, goods, and services based on a full option appraisal and value for money. We have policies and practices to safeguard against fraud and theft. Duties are clearly segregated within the finance team. Our commercial team work with designated contract managers to manage contracts with third party suppliers. We expect all our employees, board members, partners and third parties working on our behalf to conduct their business in an open, honest and fair manner.

## **Financial commentary**

The following commentary summarises our net expenditure and financial position as at 31 March 2022. Further detail can be found in the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. As an arm's-length body our financial statements are classified to the central government sector and will be consolidated into the Department for Education's 2021 to 2022 annual accounts.

### **Statement of comprehensive net expenditure**

During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2022, income of £9.617m was received in the form of registration fees from social workers. Further detail can be found in note 2 of the financial statements.

We also received £11.210m from the Department for Education in the form of grant in aid; to be used in furtherance of our objectives.

Revenue expenditure for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was £19.572m. Our revenue expenditure had increased compared to 2020 to 2021. Towards the end of the financial year, the Department for Education provided a grant of £1.9m to spend on the increased activity in fitness to practise to resolve the legacy cases from the previous regulator; as agreed with the Department £0.40m has been carried forward to the 2022 to 2023 financial year. Expenditure incurred is inclusive of staff and other staff related costs including board costs of £9.6m, IT infrastructure costs of £1.191m, legal and professional fees of £7.35m, and depreciation of £0.56m. Further detail can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements.

## How we use our funds

### Total expenditure

Total expenditure £19.57m  
(2020 to 2021 £17.12m)



- Staff and related costs: £9.56m (2020 to 2021 £8.61m)  
Consists of wages and salaries of £9.20m and other staff related costs including board fees and travel and subsistence of £0.36m.
- Other operating costs: £8.33m (2020 to 2021 £6.40m)  
Consists of professional fees of £7.35m, depreciation of £0.56m, research and development costs of £0.08m and other operating costs of £0.34m.
- Infrastructure costs: £1.68m (2020 to 2021 £2.12m)  
Consists of IT infrastructure costs of £1.19m and premises related costs of £0.49m.

## Statement of financial position

Non-current assets obtained in the year cost a total of £1.891m.

£1.741m was incurred on a digital customer relationship management system, which continues to be under development, £0.152m on IT equipment.

As at 31 March 2022, cash and cash equivalent balance was £6.042m.

## Impact of COVID-19

During the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, we have moved toward a hybrid approach, with staff working both in the office and at home. Our fitness to practise hearings were conducted remotely online and our expenditure on travel and subsistence continued at a similar level to the 2020 to 2021 financial year. Reduced travel and subsistence expenditure is offset by increases in other areas of operational expenditure, including increased hearings costs due to the complexity of managing the associated technology.

In the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, we did not receive any additional funding for COVID-19. None of our people were redeployed or furloughed as an impact of COVID-19.



## Impact of EU exit

To date, leaving the EU has had limited financial impact. We will continue to keep under review any impact relating to the recognition of social workers from other countries.

## Going concern

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2023. Funding for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 has been confirmed in writing by the Department for Education and forms part of the 3-year financial forecast for the period ending 31 March 2025.

As envisaged in these forecasts, Social Work England will continue to receive registrant fee income, which will offset a significant proportion of its operating expenditure. The remaining forecasted balance is to be financed by the Department by way of grant in aid. The Department for Education's estimates and forward plans include provision for Social Work England's continuation and ongoing funding. Based on this information, the board considers that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

We do not expect any material financial impact arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which would impair our role as a regulator.

## Long term financial perspective

Our long-term strategy is to become self-financing rather than be reliant upon grant in aid funding. Our future financial operating models are being developed on this basis.

## Next steps

Our corporate strategy<sup>13</sup> was published on 5 May 2020 and our annual business plan 2022 to 2023<sup>14</sup> details what we will do in year 3 of the strategy. During 2022 to 2023 we will be working on our next 3-year corporate strategy.

### **Colum Conway**

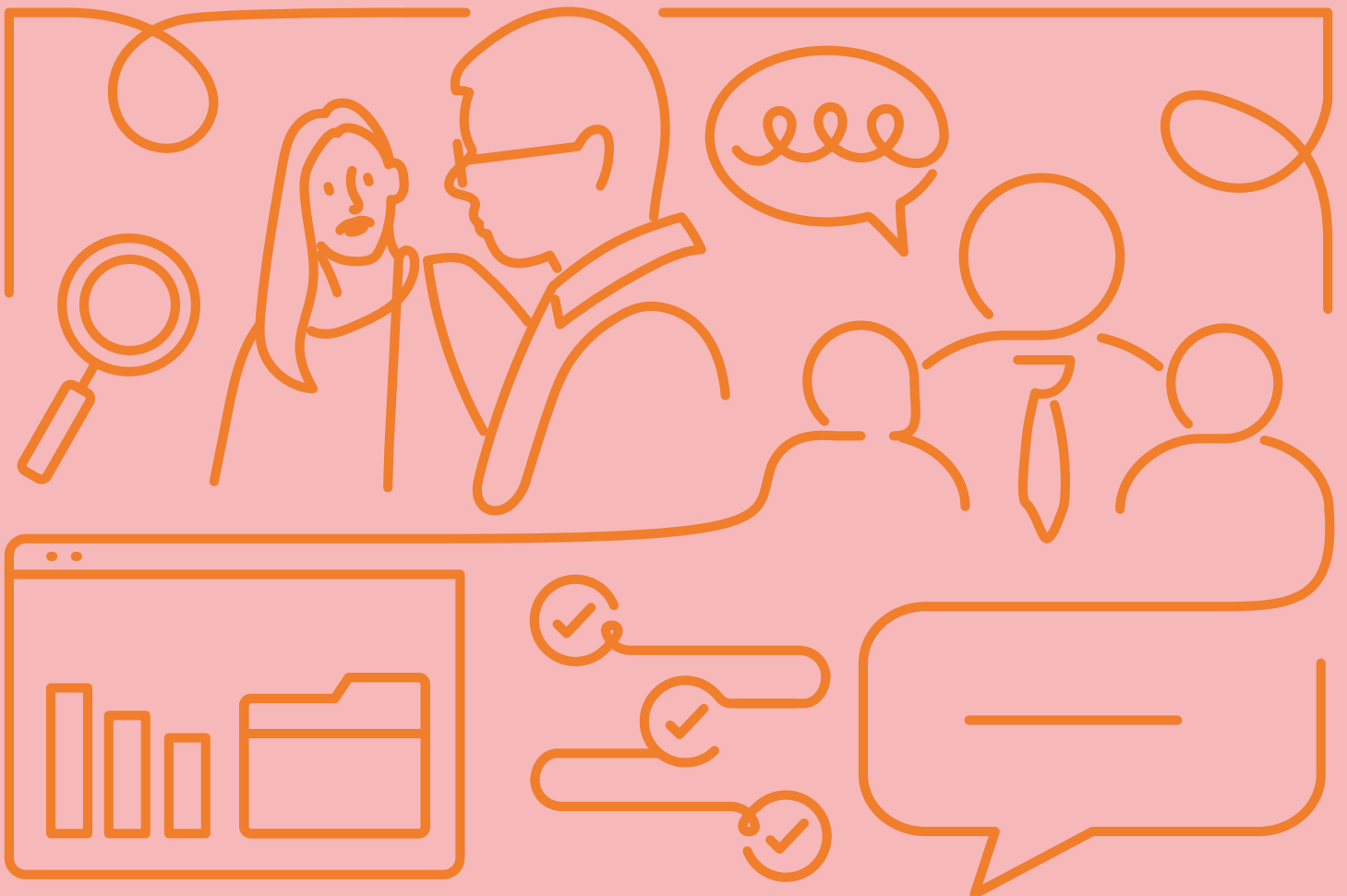
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer  
13 July 2022

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13 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/corporate-strategy/>

14 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/business-plan-2022-to-2023/>

# Accountability report



## Corporate governance report

The purpose of the corporate governance report is to explain our governance structure and how this supports the achievement of our objectives.

## Directors' report

Our chair, deputy chair, board and chief executive have decision-making authority at board level as per the governance framework. They are supported by the executive leadership team and staff in discharging their duties.

## Register of interests

We maintain a register of interests that contains details of company directorships and other significant interests held by non-executive board members. We publish the register<sup>15</sup> on our website and update it regularly. Members declare interests on agenda items at the start of every board and committee meeting and between meetings as required. The executive office lead updates the register accordingly.

## Report on personal information breaches

All departments and non-departmental public bodies are required to report personal data related incidents during the financial year in their annual reports. This is in accordance with the standard disclosure format issued by the Cabinet Office. There are regular reports to the board or the audit, risk and assurance committee.

We have had 62 personal data related incidents within this financial year. No incidents have been deemed to meet the threshold of risk that would require us to report them to the Information Commissioner's Office.

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15 <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/board/register-of-interests/>

## Statement of accounting officer's responsibilities

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Secretary of State, Department for Education, has directed Social Work England to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the accounts direction. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Social Work England and of its income and expenditure, statement of financial position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the accounting officer is required to comply with the requirements of the government financial reporting manual and in particular to:

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Secretary of State, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the government financial reporting manual have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable

The Permanent Secretary, as principal accounting officer of the Department for Education, has designated the chief executive as accounting officer of Social Work England. The responsibilities of an accounting officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the accounting officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding Social Work England's assets, are set out in *Managing Public Money*, published by HM Treasury.

As the accounting officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Social Work England's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

## Governance statement

### The purpose of the governance statement

This governance statement describes the corporate governance and risk management frameworks used in the 2021 to 2022 financial year. Social Work England operates within a framework agreed with the Department for Education.

The Framework Document 2022 to 2025 was agreed in February 2022. The agreement was between the Department for Education, as sponsor department, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Social Work England. It was in accordance with HM Treasury's handbook Managing Public Money and has been approved by HM Treasury.

### Our board

Our board oversees the full range of the organisation's regulatory responsibilities. The board holds the chief executive and the executive leadership team to account. They also provide a strategic steer for the organisation. The board oversees performance and the use of resources and ensures a sound system of internal control and risk management.

In summary, our board ensures that 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 the core purpose.
- provide assurance and ensure effective systems are in place for managing performance, risk, governance and internal control.
- maintain probity in, and public accountability for, the exercise of Social Work England's functions and the use of public funds.

## Membership

On 31 March 2022, the membership of the board comprised:

- the chair
- the deputy chair
- 5 non-executive directors, and
- the chief executive.

The chair, chief executive and non-executive directors 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 comply with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. Each board member brings a distinct set of skills and expertise. Their areas of expertise include health and social care, social work, regulation, policy, finance, digital technology and business planning.



Lord Patel of  
Bradford OBE



Colum Conway



Dr Adi Cooper



Jonathan Gorvin



Ann Harris OBE  
CPFA



Mark Lam



Dr Andrew  
McCulloch



Dr Sue Ross

Dr Andrew McCulloch was appointed and took up the role of deputy chair on 1 January 2022. The main duties of this role are delegated by the chair of the board and include:

- attending external stakeholder engagements;
- attending meetings with other regulators;
- participating in non-executive director recruitment; and
- chairing Social Work England board meetings if the chair is unavoidably absent.

### Board and committee attendance in 2021 to 2022

Attendance at board meetings during 2021 to 2022 by the non-executive and executive director members of our board, based on their eligibility to attend, is recorded as the following:

Board member	Position	Appointment term	Meetings attended
The Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair	19 March 2019 to 18 March 2024	6/6
Colum Conway	Chief Executive, Executive Director	1 September 2018	6/6
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-Executive Director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	3/3
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 to 9 August 2024	6/6
Ann Harris	Non-Executive Director	19 July 2019 to 18 July 2025	6/6
Mark Lam	Non-Executive Director	11 January 2019 to 10 January 2024	6/6
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director Deputy Chair since 1 January 2022	10 August 2018 to 9 August 2023	6/6
Dr Helen Phillips	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 appointment ended 9 August 2021	2/2
Dr Sue Ross	Non-Executive Director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	3/3
Baroness Tyler of Enfield	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 appointment ended 9 August 2021	2/2

In addition, board members attended 6 private strategy meetings across the year and an awayday.

We continued to hold our board meetings in public during COVID-19 using video conferencing. Doing so allowed us to increase the number of observer places we offered. Excluding our sponsor team, 28 members of the public and 35 Social Work England staff observed a board meeting. Key matters discussed at board meetings, beyond reporting on performance and operational matters, involved approval of business cases, our pay remit and risk appetite statement as well as deep dive discussions on strategy, policy and risk.

## Details of committees reporting to the board

### Audit, risk and assurance committee

The audit, risk and assurance committee provides assurance to the board and accounting officer on:

- strategic processes for risk management, governance, levels of assurance activity and the annual Governance Statement;
- 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;
- proposals for the tendering and appointment of internal auditors or for purchases 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 HM Treasury's Managing Public Money; and
- anti-fraud policies, whistle-blowing processes and arrangements for special investigations.

The chair of the board is responsible for appointing the chair of the audit, risk and assurance committee. The membership comprises:



- the chair (a non-executive director who is independent of the chair of the board and the chair of the remuneration committee); and
- non-executive directors who are not existing members of the remuneration committee. and

The chief executive (accounting officer) also attends audit, risk and assurance committee meetings.

The audit, risk and assurance committee may also:

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

Committee member*	Position	Meetings attended
Colum Conway	Chief Executive	4/4
Jonathan Gorvin*	Non-Executive Director	4/4
Ann Harris*	Chair	4/4
Dr Andrew McCulloch*	Non-Executive Director	4/4

## Remuneration committee

A review and update of the terms of reference for the remuneration committee took place in May 2021.

From May 2021, the purpose of the remuneration committee has been to:

- advise the board who then advises the Secretary of State for Education annually on the remuneration of the chief executive;
- advise the board on executive team remuneration;
- support the succession planning for the chief executive;
- advise the board on appointing chief executives subsequent to the first chief executive;
- support the succession planning for executive team members; and
- support talent management at executive level.

There was one remuneration committee meeting held during the year, in May 2021. It was attended by members and board members as follows:

Committee member*	Position	Meetings attended
The Lord Patel of Bradford	Chair of the board	1/1
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	1/1
Mark Lam*	Chair of remuneration committee	1/1
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Non-Executive Director	1/1
Dr Helen Phillips*	Non-Executive Director	1/1
Baroness Tyler of Enfield*	Non-Executive Director	1/1

The board reviewed the membership of the remuneration committee in the final quarter of the year. Since 31 March 2022 membership has comprised:

- Mark Lam as chair of the remuneration committee. He is a non-executive director independent of the chairs of the board and audit, risk and assurance committee; and
- Dr Adi Cooper and Dr Sue Ross as members of the committee. They are non-executive directors who are not members of the audit, risk and assurance committee.

On behalf of the remuneration committee, the chair may invite the chief executive to attend any parts of its meetings. This excludes times when the committee is discussing the chief executive's own remuneration. The committee may also invite them to take part in discussions, except on the committee's decision-making process. The committee may also ask any of our other employees to attend to assist with discussions on a particular matter.

The chair of the board also attends meetings, as appropriate, to discuss the chief executive's remuneration and performance.

The remuneration committee chair reports to the chair of the Social Work England board after each meeting. The Department for Education and our internal and external audit providers have free, confidential access to the chair of the remuneration committee.

## Policy committee

Following Dr Andrew McCulloch's appointment as chair of the new policy committee, the inaugural meeting took place February 2022.

As detailed in the terms of reference, 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, risk and 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, such as workforce, regulation, health and social care; and
- takes account of stakeholder management regarding how we relate to stakeholders in our policy arena tactically and strategically to achieve maximum appropriate impact.

The membership of the committee comprises:

- the chair, a non-executive director;
- at least one other non-executive director; and
- 2 executive directors with responsibility for regulatory functions.

Committee member	Position	Meetings attended
Sarah Blackmore	Executive Director Strategy, Policy and Engagement	1/1
Philip Hallam	Executive Director Registration, Quality Assurance and Legal	1/1
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-Executive Director	1/1
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Chair of policy committee, Non-Executive Director	1/1

### Engagement with and by the board

Our board was engaged in 18 board, committee and private strategy meetings. In addition to this, they have engaged in a variety of internal and external meetings and stakeholder events. The success of our buddying scheme has enabled their wider engagement. We set up the scheme last year with executive directors and regional engagement leads. The support of the executive office team has also been essential to the success of the board’s wider engagement.

We ask board members for feedback after each meeting, which has led to improvements in the quality of reports.

### Management control activities

The chief executive has delegated responsibility from the board for leading the organisation on a day-to-day basis. They are the executive decision-maker at board level. The chief executive determines which duties are discharged by members of the executive leadership team, through line management arrangements. They also work with the board to discharge duties as a collective.

The executive leadership team meet weekly to provide strategic oversight of progress and performance, review risks and issues. They also agree on matters to be escalated to the board as appropriate.

This year we developed an assurance framework with 4 levels of assurance to complement our management of risk. It is in line with our board’s risk appetite to ensure that any assurance is proportionate to our appetite for risk.

### Whistleblowing policy

We reviewed our internal whistleblowing policy in April 2021. Our policy encourages our people to speak up if they have a concern that they reasonably believe is of public interest. It may be about the conduct of others or the way in which we run ourselves. Our partners

also have a raising concerns and whistleblowing policy included within the partner handbook.

Together with the whistleblowing policy, we have an anti-fraud, anti-bribery, an anti-corruption policy and a gifts and hospitality policy. We review and update these policies annually, with approval by the audit, risk and assurance committee. Everyone working with and for us has mandatory anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption training. No whistleblowing concerns were raised this year. No instances of fraud were found or suspected instances of fraud, bribery or corruption reported this year.

## Risk management

### Context

Our risk appetite statement lays out the way that we balance threats and opportunities in pursuit of our strategic ambitions. We set it annually in line with business planning processes.

### Risk management

Our risk management aligns with our purpose of protecting the public and raising standards across social work in England. It aims to ensure that people receive the best possible support whenever they might need it in life. It also aligns with the principles set out in HM Government's Orange Book.

Our approach involves:

- identifying and managing risks at the strategic, corporate and operational levels;
- using risk appetite to determine risk response;
- integrating assurance and internal control review; and
- creating an organisation-wide culture that builds increasing risk maturity.

Each risk is owned by the chief executive or an executive director. Risk management is part of our strategic decision-making process. The executive leadership team review existing, new and emerging risks each month.

The executive leadership team highlight risks for the audit risk and assurance committee to undertake a 'deep dive' on. In this way, over a year, the committee achieve a 'deep dive' on every corporate risk.

Our business planning manager also attends regular Department for Education arm's-length-body risk-lead meetings to share learning and work through common challenges.

## Risk appetite statement

Our board members and executive leadership team decide the level of risk we're willing to take as we pursue our objectives. They review this annually or in the event of strategy change. We balance the cost of mitigating the risk with the impact of the risk being realised.

Our risk appetite is reflective of:

- our role as a regulator;
- our 2020 to 2023 strategy;
- the controls and assurances we have in place;
- our resources; and
- external factors.

Our risk appetite for strategy and reputation is hungry, reflecting our ambition to shape the regulatory landscape. We have an open risk appetite in terms of operational delivery, people and culture, and innovation and change. We have a more cautious approach to risks relating to regulatory functions, finance and legal. We accept minimal or no risk in relation to cyber security and data protection.

## Corporate risk register

Our risk register provides assurance that we have a clear picture of our risk environment. It helps us to keep in place the mitigations and controls to manage risks effectively. Our risk appetite also enables good judgement and decision making.






While we categorise our risks, we recognise the interplay between different risks and the potential for risk mitigations in one area to increase risk in another area.

### Our risk categories

Finance	Legal
Strategy	Innovation and change
Operational delivery	Reputation
People and culture	Cyber security
Regulatory functions	Data protection

## Corporate risks

Outlined below are the most pertinent risks to our regulatory role for the period ending 31 March 2022. Our proactive management led to risk scores decreasing across our corporate risks.

Risk	Trend	Controls and mitigations
<p>We are unable to meet fitness to practise referral demand or process cases within our resources</p> <p>Residual risk: 12 Major impact (4) Feasible likelihood (3)</p>	<p> Mitigations have reduced the risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to complaints management, referral process and case management system</li> <li>• Deployment of a team to resolve legacy cases</li> </ul>
<p>A data breach, unlawful data processing or poor practice or governance in relation to personal data leads to harm, reputational damage or other serious adverse consequences</p> <p>Residual risk: 10 Critical impact (5) Slight likelihood (2)</p>	<p> Mitigations have reduced the risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly review of data protection risks at senior and executive leadership levels</li> <li>• Implementation of contractual duty of confidentiality for all employees</li> </ul>
<p>We fail to anticipate and respond to strategic, political and policy changes in the external environment</p> <p>Residual risk: 15 Critical impact (5) Feasible likelihood (3)</p>	<p> Mitigations have reduced the risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from the sector via our regional engagement leads</li> <li>• Continued horizon scanning and consultations by our policy team to understand the impact of social and political change on the sector and our organisation</li> </ul>
<p>We fail to deliver effective regulatory functions</p> <p>Residual risk: 15 Critical impact (5) Feasible likelihood (3)</p>	<p> Risk is within tolerance and we continue to monitor and mitigate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop management information to improve insight into our regulatory functions, starting with the fitness to practise caseload</li> <li>• Identified and recommended refinements to our rules and regulations</li> </ul>
<p>Our governance and assurance frameworks are not embedded and do not lead to transparent and consistent decision making</p> <p>Residual risk: 12 Major impact (4) Feasible likelihood (3)</p>	<p> Mitigations have reduced the risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of our assurance and risk management frameworks</li> <li>• Implementation of an audit framework that achieved a substantial assurance from internal auditors</li> <li>• Monthly senior and executive leadership business meetings focused on performance, assurance, risk and audit</li> </ul>

### Effectiveness of the internal control framework

As accounting officer, I review the effectiveness of our system of internal control. This review is informed by the work of the internal auditors, by feedback from the heads of functions who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework and by comments made by the National Audit Office in their audit completion report. We are subject to review by the National Audit Office, for our statutory audit and annual report. The Department for Education also conducts monthly strategic review meetings with us.

### Internal audit

5 out of the 7 audits received substantial assurance. We achieved the following assurances and reported to the board and audit, risk and assurance committee.

Internal audit	Level of assurance
1. CPD 2. Budgetary control follow up 3. Registrant fees 4. Payroll and benefits 5. Follow up	Substantial
6. Fitness to practise decision review group 7. Procurement including contract management	Adequate

In our opinion, based upon this year’s reviews, Social Work England has adequate and effective:

- risk management
- governance, and
- control processes.

### Haines Watts’ internal audit annual report 2021 to 2022



## Conclusion

As accounting officer, I am responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of Social Work England's system of internal controls, as set out above. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls was informed by:

- assurance from executive directors for our 5 key areas that they have acted in accordance with their delegations and the operation of our governance framework
- independent assurance from our internal auditors in their annual audit report
- scrutiny and advice provided by the audit risk and assurance committee
- discussion of the annual report and accounts with the board in May 2022 and July 2022.

Based on my review of this evidence I am assured that we have a strong system of internal controls to support the delivery of our strategy, but acknowledge that we are managing some challenging risks in relation to our regulatory role and that these remain a key focus for us.

## Remuneration and staff report

### Remuneration report – subject to audit

The remuneration and staff report sets out our remuneration policy for all staff and board members. It also provides details of actual costs.

### Remuneration policy

Our employees are public servants. The Treasury, Cabinet Office and Secretary of State approve our pay levels.

Department for Education secondees are civil servants and paid in accordance with the Civil Service pay structure. Local authority secondees are local government workers and paid in accordance with the relevant local authority. We have a secondee from another regulator and they are paid in accordance with that regulator.

As a non-departmental public body, we must adhere to the pay guidance set each year by Cabinet Office. We're required to submit a pay remit business case for approval by the Secretary of State for Education. In 2021, this included a temporary pay pause as part of the Spending Review 2020. This did not include staff on a pay level of under £24,000 per annum, who received a consolidated increase of £250.

### Executive leadership team remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements

Executive leadership team	Salary £000	Non-consolidated performance award £000	Benefits in kind £000	Pension benefit £000	2021 to 2022 total £000	2020 to 2021 total £000
Colum Conway	145 - 150	5 - 10	0	7	160 - 165	155 - 160
Sarah Blackmore	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Jonathan Dillon	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Philip Hallam	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100
Greg Ross-Sampson to 7 April 2021	5 - 10	0 - 5	0	0	5 - 10	90 - 95
Tracy Watterson	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	4	95 - 100	95 - 100

Separate disclosures relating to pension entitlements are not applicable. Social Work England operates an unfunded multi-employer defined contribution pension scheme provided by the National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) and therefore there are no value or lump sum increases.

## Board member's remuneration

Name	Position	Appointment term	2021 to 2022 fees £000	2020 to 2021 fees £000
The Lord Patel of Bradford*	Chair	19 March 2019 to 18 March 2024	65 - 70	70 - 75
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-Executive Director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	0 - 5	-
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 to 9 August 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Ann Harris*	Non-Executive Director	19 July 2019 to 18 July 2025	10 - 15	5 - 10
Mark Lam	Non-Executive Director	11 January 2019 to 10 January 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dr Andrew McCulloch*	Deputy Chair, Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 to 9 August 2023	10 - 15	5 - 10
Dr Helen Phillips to 09 August 2021	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 appointment ended 9 August 2021	0 - 5	5 - 10
Dr Sue Ross	Non-Executive Director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	0 - 5	-
Baroness Tyler of Enfield to 09 August 2021	Non-Executive Director	10 August 2018 appointment ended 9 August 2021	0 - 5	5 - 10

\*Note: The number of days for The Lord Patel of Bradford decreased to accommodate the new deputy chair role. The number of days for Ann Harris as chair of the audit, risk and assurance committee increased to 30 (20 days 2020 to 2021). Dr Andrew McCulloch took up the role of deputy chair on 1 January 2022. His remuneration was enhanced to reflect the increased responsibility and time allocated to fulfil this role.

Members of the board are not entitled to any pension or other financial benefits, the remuneration disclosed consists of board fees only.

Total non-executive board expenses for the year were £500.

Total non-executive board expenses for 2020 to 2021: nil

## Fair pay disclosure

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the organisation's highest paid director and the median remuneration of its workforce as well as the relationship with pay at the 25th and 75th percentile.

In 2021 to 2022, nil (2020 to 2021, nil) employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director. Total remuneration ranged from £19,664 to £155,000 (2020 to 2021, £22,445 to £152,500). Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer value of pensions.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid director during the year ending 31 March 2022 was £155,000 (2020 to 2021 £152,500). This was an increase of 1.64% from last year. This was 4.87 times (2020 to 2021 4.83) the median employee remuneration which was £31,806 (2020 to 2021 £31,583).

The total average remuneration per employee in the year ended 31 March 2022 was £38,351, an increase of 1.18% from last year (2020 to 2021 £37,904). The movement in both the total average remuneration and the median pay ratio is as a result of a flat rate annual pay increase of £250 applied to salary steps below £24,000 effective from September 2021. The increase in the median pay ratio compared to 2020 to 2021 is also reflective of an increase in the remuneration of the highest paid director.

Year	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Pay Ratio	Median (50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) Pay Ratio	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Pay Ratio
2021 to 2022	5.89:1	4.87:1	3.45:1

The pay and benefits for each percentile are shown below.

Pay and benefits	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Pay Ratio £	Median (50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile) Pay Ratio £	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile Pay Ratio £
Annual Salary	25,695	31,206	44,300
Non-consolidated performance award	600	600	600
Total	26,295	31,806	44,900

## **Pension scheme**

The National Employment Savings Trust (NEST) provides our pension scheme. NEST is an unfunded multi-employer defined contribution scheme. Employees are auto enrolled in the pension scheme and can opt out if they choose. The number of employees who were members of the pension scheme increased by 37 in 2021 to 2022. The employee contribution is a minimum of 3% and our employer contribution is 5%; this remains the same as the 2020 to 2021 financial year.

Employers' pension contributions for the period ending 31 March 2022 were £378,964 based on 5% of pensionable pay.

No one retired early on ill-health grounds.

## **Salary**

Salary includes gross salary and overtime. This report is based on accrued payments made by Social Work England and therefore recorded in these accounts.

## **Benefits in kind**

Benefits in kind is the monetary value of benefits in kind. It covers any benefits provided by Social Work England and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as taxable.

## **Non-consolidated performance awards**

Our non-consolidated performance award budget is 2% of the total salary bill. These figures include awards paid or agreed in the 12 months up to 31 March 2022. For 2020 to 2021 our non-consolidated performance award budget was also 2% of the total salary bill.

## **Reporting of exit, compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages**

There was no exit compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages in the year ending 31 March 2022. This was the same for the year ended 31 March 2021.

## **GDPR article 21 staff disclosure**

No staff members asked for their entitlements not to be disclosed in the year ended 31 March 2022, this was also the case for the year ended 31 March 2021.

## Staff Report

### Part A: subject to audit

#### Analysis of staff costs

	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2021 to 2022 Total £000	2020 to 2021 Total £000
Wages and Salaries	7,832	140	7,972	7,260
Social security costs	855	0	855	746
Pension costs	379	0	379	328
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,066</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>9,206</b>	<b>8,334</b>

'Others' are staff engaged on our objectives via short term contract, for example agency or temporary workers. We pay a flat fee for agency staff, which includes social security and holiday pay.

Others also includes the salary and on-costs of inward secondments.

#### Staff Composition

On 31 March 2022 Social Work England's headcount for employees was 225 (compared with 31 March 2021 employee headcount of 219).

Staff composition analysis	2021 to 2022 total	2020 to 2021 total
Social Work England permanent	205 (91%)	151 (68.9%)
Social Work England fixed term	18 (8%)	64 (29.2%)
Other	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Secondment	2 (1%)	2 (1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>225 (100%)</b>	<b>219 (100%)</b>

We achieved our aim of reducing the overall number of fixed term contracts, going from 29% to 8%. Some contracts ended and others we converted to permanent. Doing so has reduced our retention risk in key business areas and supported business continuity. There was a 10% turnover of staff during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

## Part B: Unaudited

### Staff by level and gender

Levels	Permanent males	Other males	Permanent females	Other females	Other Non-binary	Total
Chief Executive	1	0	0	0	0	1
Executive leadership team	2	0	2	0	0	4
Heads of functions	5	1	11	0	0	17
Other levels	59	5	125	14	0	203
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>225</b>

'Other' includes fixed term appointments, secondees and agency or temporary workers.

### Average headcount during the period:

Permanent employees	Others	Total
202	20	221

This represents the average across the year. 'Others' includes fixed term appointments, secondees and agency or temporary workers.

## Our people

The following sections are not subject to audit.

### Our staff policies and practices

One significant success was gaining approval for our pay business case to increase our pension contributions and offer life assurance. This was the third year of making the same case for a better rewards package. Following consultation with our people, we will implement these changes in 2022 to 2023.

We strive to be a workplace that values mental health and physical health equally. We've seen a lot of honesty around challenges and difficulties, as well as a great deal of kindness and compassion. 97% of those that responded to the engagement survey felt they could rely on colleagues to support them.

We've focused on providing mental health support for all our people. We do this through maintaining contact and embedding the support of mental health first aiders and the employee assistance programme. We share resources including wellbeing plans and a stress management toolkit. We've also upskilled our managers to support their teams through mandatory mental health training from Mental Health First Aid England.

We have continued to invest in our learning and development team and offer. We encourage our people to play their part in ensuring we operate fairly and equitably as an employer and a regulator. We have 6 staff networks, formed of people across the organisation with a shared interest in a particular subject. Our existing networks were Equality, diversity and inclusion Steering Group, People Forum, Queer Collective, Race Equality Network and Think Well. In 2021, the Women's Network was established.

The Women's Network is open to all staff, irrespective of their sex or gender identity. They aim to ensure that we consider the lived experience of women in our work. The network celebrated women in leadership on 8 March as part of International Women's Day.

Through Applause, we awarded 221 vouchers during 2021 to 2022, valued at £12,300. We've particularly encouraged nominations recognising achievements and contributions in equality, diversity, and inclusion.



## Sickness absence

We lost 910 days to sickness absence during the 2021 to 2022 period, compared with 683 days in 2020 to 2021. This equates to approximately 4.1 days per employee per year, which is lower than the UK public sector average for 2021 at 6.4. Our sickness rate for the year is 1.8%, which is lower than the UK public sector rate of 3.0% for 2021.

Our Employee Assistance Programme and occupational health service support those in ill health to remain in work or return following absence.

## Diversity statistics

### Gender data

Gender identity for whole workforce	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
Female	68%	65%
Male	32%	34%
Non-binary	0%	1%

Gender split for executive leadership team	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
Female	40%	33%
Male	60%	67%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Gender split for heads of functions	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
Female	65%	63%
Male	35%	37%
Non-binary	0%	0%

## Diversity data

We encourage staff to upload their diversity data into our HR system, though it is not mandatory. On 31 March 2022, 134 members of our staff, or 59.5%, had uploaded their information. This response rate is lower than the 68% who responded to our standalone equality, diversity and inclusion survey in March 2021. This is likely due to the implementation of a new system and the way we collate data. We continue to proactively encourage our people to share this vital data and we communicate the importance of capturing it.

Of the 59.5%:

- 88% of those who shared their data were white. 9% were Black, Asian and minority ethnic. 1.5% identified as other and 1.5% preferred not to say.
- 78.4% of those who shared their data considered themselves to be heterosexual or straight. 6% identified as bisexual, 4.5% as gay men and 4.5% as gay women. 3% preferred to self-describe and 3.7% preferred not to say or did not disclose.
- 10.4% of those who shared their data considered themselves to have a disability. 80.6% did not consider themselves to have a disability. And 9% preferred not to say or did not disclose.

## Consultancy spend

No expenditure on consultancy was incurred during the years ending 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2021.

## Off-payroll engagements

### Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

Off-payroll engagements of board members and senior officials with significant financial responsibility:

Engagements by category	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
Number of off-payroll engagements of board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility	0	0
Number of individuals deemed board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, including both off-payroll and on-payroll engagements	15	14

We consider that all board members and executive directors have significant financial responsibility and they are reimbursed through payroll.

# Parliamentary Accountability Report

## Parliamentary accountability disclosures: audited

### A1 Losses statement

Losses Statement	2021 to 2022	2020 to 2021
Number of fruitless payment cases	106	102
Value		
Fruitless payments	£41,000	£25,000

A fruitless payment is one that the recipient is legally entitled to even though we receive nothing of use in return. During 2021 to 2022 these payments included staff travel tickets purchased but unable to be used. They also included payments made to partners in relation to cancelled fitness to practise hearings. The value of fruitless payments increased this year due to a higher number of cancelled fitness to practise hearings.

### A2 Special payments

There were no special payments during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022 (Period ending 31 March 2021: nil).

### A3 Fees and charges

Income of £9.617m was received in the form of registration fees (£9.123m 2020 to 2021). More analysis can be found in note 2 of the financial statements on page 93.

Total expenditure for 2021 to 2022 was £19.572m (£17.118m 2020 to 2021); net expenditure for the year was £9.955m (£7.995m 2020 to 2021). More analysis can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements on page 94 and page 95.

### A4 Contingent liabilities

There were no remote contingent liabilities during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022.

#### Colum Conway

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer  
13 July 2022

# The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament

## Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of Social Work England for the year ended 31 March 2022 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The financial statements comprise Social Work England's

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2022;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted International Accounting Standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of Social Work England's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and its net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Secretary of State directions issued thereunder.

## Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects, the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

## **Basis for opinions**

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 *Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom*. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's *Revised Ethical Standard 2019*. I have also elected to apply the ethical standards relevant to listed entities. I am independent of Social Work England in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

## **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Social Work England's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Social Work England's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for Social Work England is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

## **Other Information**

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report but does not include the financial statements nor my auditor's certificate and report. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements, or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinion on other matters**

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the Children and Social Work Act 2017

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017; and
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

## **Matters on which I report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of Social Work England and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability Report.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- adequate accounting records have not been kept by Social Work England or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

## **Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- the preparation of the financial statements and Annual Report in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- ensuring that the Annual Report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable;
- internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- assessing Social Work England's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by Social Work England will not continue to be provided in the future.

## **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud**

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.



## **Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud**

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, we considered the following:

- the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of Social Work England's accounting policies, key performance indicators and performance incentives.
- Inquiring of management, Social Work England's head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Social Work England's policies and procedures relating to:
  - identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
  - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud; and
  - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including Social Work England's controls relating to Social Work England's compliance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Managing Public Money;
- discussing among the engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within Social Work England for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: fraudulent reporting of revenue through the completeness and cut off of income and associated balances. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override of controls.

I also obtained an understanding of Social Work England's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks in which Social Work England operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of Social Work England. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included Children and Social Work Act 2017, Managing Public Money, as well as relevant employment laws of the United Kingdom.

### **Audit response to identified risk**

As a result of performing the above, the procedures I implemented to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;
- enquiring of management, and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading and reviewing minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business;
- testing postings in the general ledger that fell outside of the standard transaction process flow; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud in revenue recognition, sample testing deferred income calculations, testing the appropriateness of revenue journal entries meeting our risk criteria, using analytical procedures to identify any unusual transactions or movements and confirming whether temporary social workers had been registered in the financial year. We also performed sample testing of income cut-off to ensure that transactions had been recorded in the correct financial year.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

### **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the income and expenditure reported in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

### **Report**

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

**Gareth Davies**

Comptroller and Auditor General  
National Audit Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
Victoria  
London SW1W 9SP

**Date: 14 July 2022**

# Financial Statements



## Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022

	Note	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Income	2	(9,617)	(9,123)
Staff costs	3	9,206	8,334
Expenditure	4	10,366	8,784
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>		<b>9,955</b>	<b>7,995</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>9,955</b>	<b>7,995</b>

There are no discontinued operations.

There are no other recognised gains or losses.

The notes on page 87 to page 100 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of financial position

### Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
<b>Non-current assets:</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	8	784	1,195
Intangibles	9	6,159	4,418
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>6,943</b>	<b>5,613</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Receivables	5	609	789
Cash and cash equivalents	6	6,042	5,214
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>6,651</b>	<b>6,003</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>13,594</b>	<b>11,616</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	7	(6,048)	(5,219)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(6,048)</b>	<b>(5,219)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>7,546</b>	<b>6,397</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Payables	7	(186)	(292)
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>(186)</b>	<b>(292)</b>
<b>Assets less liabilities</b>		<b>7,360</b>	<b>6,105</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity:</b>			
General fund		7,360	6,105
<b>Total taxpayers' equity</b>		<b>7,360</b>	<b>6,105</b>

The notes on page 87 to page 100 form part of these accounts.

**Colum Conway**  
Chief Executive, Social Work England  
13 July 2022

## Statement of cash flows

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022

	Note	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net operating cost	SoCNE <sup>16</sup>	(9,955)	(7,995)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	563	586
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	5	180	(500)
Increase/(decrease) in payables	7	476	87
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(8,736)</b>	<b>(7,822)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	8	(87)	(201)
Purchase of intangibles	9	(1,559)	(1,840)
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(1,646)</b>	<b>(2,041)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Exchequer supply from sponsor department	SoCTE <sup>17</sup>	11,210	9,777
<b>Net cash inflow from financing activities</b>		<b>11,210</b>	<b>9,777</b>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts)</b>		<b>828</b>	<b>(86)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at beginning of the year</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5,214</b>	<b>5,300</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at end of the year</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6,042</b>	<b>5,214</b>

The notes on page 87 to page 100 form part of these accounts.

16 Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

17 Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

## Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2022

	Note	General fund £000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2020</b>		<b>4,323</b>
Grant in Aid from sponsor Department		9,777
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	SoCNE	(7,995)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>		<b>6,105</b>
Grant in Aid from sponsor Department		11,210
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	SoCNE	(9,955)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>		<b>7,360</b>

The notes on page 87 to page 100 form part of these accounts.



## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Accounting policies

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the government financial reporting manual 2021 to 2022 issued by HM Treasury, as set out in a statutory accounts direction issued pursuant to paragraph 18(3), schedule 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The accounting policies contained in the financial reporting manual apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context. Where the financial reporting manual permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the circumstances of Social Work England for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The policies adopted by Social Work England are described below.

They have been applied consistently in dealing with items considered material in relation to the financial statements.

#### 1.1 Reporting period

The figures in the financial statements are prepared for the 12-month period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

#### 1.2 Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

#### 1.3 Going concern

Each year Social Work England receives registrant fee income which offsets a significant proportion of our operating expenditure. The remaining forecasted balance, programme and capital, is financed by the Department for Education (DfE) by way of grant in aid.

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, in accordance with the definition set out in paragraph 8.2.1 of the government financial reporting manual (FReM) as "the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, as evidenced by the inclusion of financial provision for that service in published documents".

The going concern assessment period is 12 months from the date the financial statements are authorised for issue. Funding for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 has been confirmed by the DfE by means of a grant in aid letter. DfE have also provided a stewardship letter to support the period between March 2023 and July 2023.

We offer no other discretionary services and have no ring-fenced

areas of expenditure. We have robust budgetary control processes and are currently unaware of any information or legislation that would have a material impact on our going concern assessment.

## **1.4 Income and funding**

Social Work England has adopted IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers (IFRS 15). Social Work England receives the following income and funding streams and accounts for them as follows:

### **Grant in aid**

Social Work England records all draw down of grant in aid as financing, as we regard draw down of grant in aid as contributions from our controlling party giving rise to a financial interest. Social Work England records draw down of grant in aid as financing in the Statement of Cash Flows and draw down of grant in aid to the General Reserve.

### **Fee income**

Fee income is collected under statute by Social Work England. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury has approved Social Work England to retain this fee income to offset against their expenditure.

Fee income comprises of registration and renewal fees, restoration fees and scrutiny fees. The annual registration period runs from 1 December to 30 November.

### **Registration and renewal fees**

Registration and renewal fees are collected in advance and are calculated based upon the length of time remaining before the end of the current fee year. For registration fees relating to new applicants, the fee must be paid in full once an application has been deemed successful. Renewal fees can be paid in full in advance of the new fee year or can be paid in 6-monthly equal instalments twice a year via direct debit. All fees are non-refundable.

Under IFRS 15, the point of recognition of registration and renewal fees is based upon when the performance obligation of the contract is satisfied, and the benefits have been fully received by the social worker. Social Work England fulfils its performance obligation by maintaining a social worker's registration over the annual registration period, registration and renewal fees are recognised in the statement of financial position as deferred income and are released to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure proportionately over the period that the fee relates to.

Deferred registration fee income that is recognised within the statement of financial position relates to the following financial year only and is recognised as a current liability.

### **Restoration fees**

Restoration fees are applicable where a social worker has previously been registered with Social Work England (or prior to December 2019, the HCPC) but has left the register for a period and wishes to restore to the Social Work England register. Restoration fees are paid when an application to restore is submitted.

Restoration fees are non-refundable and represent the time and resources involved in assessing a restoration application. Restoration fees are recognised immediately within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

### **Scrutiny fees**

Scrutiny fees are applicable to those whose social work qualification was gained outside of the UK. The scrutiny fee is paid when an application to join Social Work England's register is submitted and the fee is non-refundable. It represents the time and resources involved in assessing this type of application and therefore is recognised immediately within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

## **1.5 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty**

The preparation of these financial statements requires Social Work England to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure. These assumptions are based on historic and other factors that are believed to be reasonable, the results of which form the basis for making judgements. These judgements, estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. The main items included in these financial statements are:

- IFRS 16 leases: Judgement is made regarding the cost of inflation and cost of capital when determining the net present value of future lease payments.
- Accruals and prepayments: judgement as to when revenue earned or expenses incurred impact the financial statements, irrespective of the transfer of physical payment, and the associated impact on the assets and liabilities within the statement of financial position.
- Intangible asset recognition involves two critical judgements by management. The first judgement is over the projected feasibility of the intangible asset once it has been completed. Intangible assets are only recognised when management are satisfied that the organisation has or can secure the technical and operational skill set to complete the development of the intangible asset. The second critical judgement is the identification of costs that are required to be included in the assets carrying value. Costs are only

included if they are direct costs wholly incurred in developing and bring into use the future intangible asset.

- Intangible asset amortisation requires management to consider whether the intangible asset is in its final condition capable of operating as management intended. Once management is satisfied as to the condition of the asset it will be amortised over its useful economic life. In the case of the software in development, management do not yet consider that all aspects of the software are functional as intended. Consequently, the software is still judged to be an asset under construction and so not amortised.
- An estimated amount is provided for accrued but untaken staff holiday.

## **1.6 Segmental reporting**

In accordance with IFRS 8: Operating Segments (IFRS 8), Social Work England has considered the need to analyse its income and expenditure relating to operating segments. Social Work England has assessed that all lines of operation fall within the same geographical location and regulatory environment as envisaged by IFRS 8.

Since segmental information for total assets and liabilities is not regularly reported to the chief operating decision-maker and in compliance with the financial reporting manual, it has not been produced in the accounts.

## **1.7 Leases**

Leases are classified as finance leases whenever the terms of the leases transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of the leased assets to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Operating leases are charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure (SoCNE) as expenditure is incurred.

## **1.8 Pensions**

Social Work England has adopted IAS 19 Employee Benefits (IAS 19) to account for its pension scheme. All employees are auto enrolled into Social Work England's defined contribution pension scheme (NEST), Social Work England contributes 5% of gross salary, and this contribution is recorded as expenditure in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

## **1.9 Property, plant and equipment**

The minimum level of capitalisation for expenditure on property, plant and equipment is £2,000. In the case of IT equipment and furniture, all items recorded as capital expenditure are capitalised and those of a similar type which fall below the capitalisation threshold, are grouped together and recorded as bulk assets. The asset value on capitalisation is measured at cost plus all direct costs, such as

installation, attributable to bringing them into working condition. The carrying value of property, plant and equipment is assessed annually and any impairment is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

### **1.10 Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the property, plant and equipment by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. Assets under construction are not depreciated.

Asset lives are in the following ranges:

1. Computer equipment 3 years;
2. Fixtures and fittings 3 years; and
3. Leasehold improvements term of lease

### **1.11 Intangible assets**

Intangible assets are recognised when management are satisfied that the organisation has or can secure the technical and operational skill set to complete the development of the intangible asset and receive economic benefit. Intangible assets include those classified as assets under construction prior to them becoming fully developed and operational as management intended.

- Intangible assets are stated at historic cost less impairment losses. Assets under construction are not amortised since they are judged to be not in their final condition.

The carrying value of non-current assets is assessed annually for impairment and any impairment is charged to the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

### **1.12 Financial instruments, assets and liabilities**

In accordance with IFRS 9 (Financial Instruments), Social Work England recognises financial assets and liabilities when it becomes party to the contracts that give rise to them. Social Work England does not hold any complex financial instruments i.e. long-term loans or equity investments.

### **Receivables**

Trade and other receivables are recognised at fair value and under IFRS 9 these are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less provision for impairment.

## **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash is the current balance at the bank and Social Work England does not have any cash equivalents.

## **Payables**

Trade and other payables are recognised at carrying value. At 31 March 2022 the value of payables predominately consisted of deferred income relating to registrant fee income.

## **1.13 Financial risks**

### **Liquidity risk**

Parliament votes annually on the financing of Social Work England's net revenue resource requirements, as well as its capital expenditure. With no borrowings, Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant liquidity risks.

### **Interest rate risk**

Social Work England's financial liabilities carry either nil or fixed rates of interest. Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant interest rate risk.

### **Foreign currency risk**

All material assets and liabilities are denominated in sterling. Social Work England does not consider itself exposed to any significant currency risk.

## **1.14 IFRSs in issue but not yet effective**

In order to comply with the requirements of IAS 8 accounting policies, changes in accounting estimates and errors, Social Work England must disclose where it has not applied a new IFRS that has been issued but is not yet effective. Social Work England has carried out a review of the IFRSs in issue but not yet effective, to assess their impact on its accounting policies and treatment.

IFRS 16 was issued in January 2016 and has been adopted within the financial reporting manual, effective from 1 April 2022. Social Work England has chosen not to early adopt these requirements which have an effective date after the date of these accounts.

IFRS 16 requires that all leases with a lease term of greater than 12 months are recognised on the balance sheet as a finance lease. This will result in the recognition of a right-to-use asset, measured at the present value of future lease payments, with a matching liability.

The pattern of recognition of the expenditure will result in depreciation

of the right-to-use asset and an associated finance cost being recognised. It is expected that IFRS 16 will be adopted within the financial reporting manual from 2022 to 2023.

### 1.15 Impact on Social Work England

The main effect of the adoption of IFRS 16 will be for lessees, which will result in any former operating leases being brought on-balance sheet.

Social Work England will recognise a right of use asset and lease liability for the two building leases currently treated as operating leases in the 2022/2023 financial year. Note 10 to the financial statements sets out the likely value of this asset.

Social Work England is taking advantage of the low value exemption for one lease for two printers.

## 2. Fee income

	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Income	9,617	9,123
Donations in kind (other income)	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,617</b>	<b>9,123</b>

### Fee income comprises:

#### Registration and renewal fees

Initial registration fees relate to social workers who make a new application to join the Social Work England Register. The fee is paid in full once an application is deemed successful and is calculated based on the length of time remaining before the end of the current fee year. Full year registration fees are £90 covering a period of 12 months from 1 December to 30 November.

Renewal fees are due annually and will be paid by social workers who wish to remain on the Social Work England register. The renewal fee for the 2021 to 2022 fee year is £90.

### Restoration fees

Restoration fees are applicable where a social worker has been previously registered with Social Work England (or prior to December 2019, with the HCPC) but has since left the register for a period of time and wishes to restore their registration. A restoration fee is paid when an application to restore is submitted and is a non-refundable amount of £135 which represents the time and resources it takes to assess a restoration application.

### Scrutiny fees

Scrutiny fees are applicable to those whose social work qualification was gained outside of the UK. The scrutiny fee is paid when an application to join Social Work England's register is submitted and the fee is a non-refundable amount of £495 which represents the time and resources it takes to assess this type of application.

## 3. Staff costs for the financial year at 31 March 2022

	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2021 to 2022 Total £000
Wages and salaries	7,832	140	7,972
Social security costs	855	0	855
Pension costs	379	0	379
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,066</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>9,206</b>

'Other' includes agency staff. Further details around staff and pensions costs can be found in the accountability report, remuneration and staff report.

### For the financial year as at 31 March 2021

	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2020 to 2021 Total £000
Wages and salaries	6,926	334	7,260
Social security costs	746	0	746
Pension costs	328	0	328
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>8,334</b>



## 4. Operating expenditure

	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Staff related costs	203	156
Consultancy and other professional fees	7,353	5,355
Board costs	131	107
Premises costs including rates and service charges	273	267
Utilities	33	44
Marketing	20	17
IT and telecommunication costs	1,191	1,630
<b>Rentals under operating leases:</b>		
- Land and buildings	182	178
Travel and subsistence	25	9
Bank Charges and interest	91	33
<b>Auditor remuneration</b>		
- External audit	53	49
- Internal audit	17	20
Research and development	76	136
Other expenditure	155	197
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,803</b>	<b>8,198</b>

The increase in consultancy and other professional fees relates to the increased activity in fitness to practise. Professional fees include the cost of partners. Our partners are registered social workers, legal professionals and members of the public who provide expertise to assist with carrying out our regulatory function.

Board costs relate to the fees paid to the chair of the board, The Lord Patel of Bradford and the non-executive directors as disclosed in the remuneration and staff report.

## Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges

	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Amortisation	-	-
Depreciation	563	586
<b>Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>586</b>

Depreciation is charged on all property, plant and equipment expenditure shown in note 8 property plant and equipment. All intangible asset expenditure as shown in note 9 is currently classed as assets under construction, and therefore not amortised.

## 5. Receivables

	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade receivables	-	-
Other receivables	-	113
Prepayments	609	676
<b>Total</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>789</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after one year</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

## 6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Balance at 1 April	5,214	5,300
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balances	828	(86)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>6,042</b>	<b>5,214</b>

The balances were held at Government Banking Service.

## 7. Payables

Amounts falling due within one year	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Trade and other payables	518	264
Accruals and deferred income	5,130	4,736
Capital payables	400	219
Total	6,048	5,219
<b>Amounts falling due after one year</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>292</b>

Deferred registration fee income of £2.91m relating to the registration year December 2021 to November 2022 is included within accruals and deferred income.

## 8. Property, plant and equipment

	Land and Buildings (leasehold improvements) £000	Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings £000	IT £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 April 2021	1,265	319	799	2,383
Additions	-	-	152	152
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2022</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>2,535</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2021	(521)	(240)	(427)	(1,188)
Depreciation charge	(253)	(79)	(231)	(563)
At 31 March 2022	(774)	(319)	(658)	(1,751)
<b>Carrying value:</b>				
31 March 2022	491	0	293	784
31 March 2021	744	79	372	1,195

	Land and Buildings (Leasehold improvements) £000	Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings £000	IT £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>				
At 1 April 2020	1,229	317	636	2,182
Additions	36	2	163	201
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>2,383</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>				
At 1 April 2020	(273)	(123)	(206)	(602)
Depreciation charge	(248)	(117)	(221)	(586)
At 31 March 2021	(521)	(240)	(427)	(1,188)
<b>Carrying value:</b>				
31 March 2021	744	79	372	1,195
31 March 2020	956	194	430	1,580

## 9. Intangible assets

	2021 to 2022 Assets under construction £000	2020 to 2021 Assets under construction £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 April	4,418	2,578
Additions	1,741	1,840
<b>At 31 March</b>	<b>6,159</b>	<b>4,418</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>		
At 1 April	-	-
Amortisation charge	-	-
<b>At 31 March</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Carrying value at 31 March</b>	<b>6,159</b>	<b>4,418</b>

Assets under construction relate to a suite of digital services required to enable Social Work England to carry out its regulatory role. As at the year end the software has a restricted public use to support Social Work England's overarching business needs. However, management do not yet consider the software to have reached its intended fully operational functionality, which is expected in 2022 to 2023. Accordingly, the software is still categorised as assets under construction and not amortised.

## 10. Operating leases

Obligations under operating leases	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
Not later than one year	186	178
Later than one year and not later than five years	139	303
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>481</b>

Social Work England has entered into operating lease contracts for office equipment and office accommodation. Regarding office accommodation, there is a break clause after 5 years and the first 20 months being rent free. Social Work England also entered into an additional operating lease contract for further office accommodation which aligns to the original operating lease and has a break clause after 4 years. There are no non-cancellable elements within these contracts.

## 11. Capital commitments

Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these accounts	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
<b>Property, plant and equipment</b>	-	-
Leasehold improvements	-	-
Furniture and fittings	-	-
<b>Intangible assets</b>		
Assets under construction	1,403	3,114
	<b>1,403</b>	<b>3,114</b>

Assets under construction relate to the remaining work required to complete development on Social Work England's suite of digital services.

Social Work England is sponsored by the Department for Education and for the purposes of these accounts, the Department is regarded as a related party. There were material transactions with the Department for Education in respect of grant in aid, secondment of staff and the provision of IT services. In addition, Social Work England is co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care, with which there were no financial transactions.

Board member and non-executive director, Dr Andrew McCulloch is chair of GMC Services International who have previously provided expertise in drafting the rules around fitness to practise, registration and education and standards. In 2021 to 2022, GMC Services International provided an inward secondment to Social Work England.

Chair of Social Work England, Lord Patel of Bradford is a patron of Mental Health First Aid England, who provided mental health knowledge training to employees of Social Work England.

## 12. Related party transactions

Expenditure	2021 to 2022 £000	2020 to 2021 £000
GMC Services International	25	20
Mental Health First Aid England	4	0

At 31 March 2022, there was nothing owing to GMC Services International or Mental Health First Aid England included in payables. (£0 2020 to 2021).

## 13. Events after the reporting period date

The accounts were authorised for issue by the accounting officer on the date of the certification by the comptroller and auditor general. These accounts do not consider events after that date.

There were no adjusting or non-adjustable events after 31 March 2022 and the date of certification.

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