

**Social Work England
Annual Report and Accounts
2022 to 2023**

**2022
2023**

**Social
Work
England**

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Annual Report and Accounts
For the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

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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HC 1648

Contents

Overview from the chair and chief executive	4
Performance report	6
Performance analysis	18
Financial commentary	55
Accountability report	58
Corporate governance report	59
Directors' report	59
Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities	62
Governance statement	63
Remuneration and staff report	74
Parliamentary Accountability Report	86
The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the Houses of Parliament	87
Financial Statements	94
Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	95
Statement of financial position	96
Statement of cash flows	97
Notes to the financial statements	99

Overview from the chair and chief executive

Welcome to our annual report and accounts for 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. This report marks the end of our first 3 year corporate strategy as the specialist regulator of social work in England. Here we look back on this strategy, specifically in our third year. We reflect on our performance, what we've learned, and how we can improve.

This year has been one of transition. We've moved from startup to business as usual, bringing stability to our regulatory functions. We've stayed focused on closing legacy cases inherited from the Health and Care Professions Council (the HCPC). We've also gathered data on the types of concerns we receive. This will help inform our decision-making.

In fitness to practise, timeliness remains a challenge. We've grappled with a large volume of cases and delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, we've strengthened our processes and changed some of our rules and regulations. We also delivered a project to understand and address higher than anticipated referral rates.

Our registration renewal process demonstrates how effectively our services can run. This year, most social workers renewed on time. Most also met the new requirement to record 2 pieces of continuing professional development (CPD), demonstrating to the public that they remain capable of safe and effective practice. Through this process we gathered equality, diversity and inclusion

data from the majority of social workers. We now have a clearer picture than ever of our profession.

The national children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love, was launched by the government this year. Our presence on the implementation groups reflects our unique view of the profession. We look forward to helping to influence the impact of upcoming reform across children and adult services. Our approach to education and training, which we published in June, also aligns strongly with the government's strategy.

We know people look to us for insight into the profession. This year, we published our third Social work in England report. This 'state of the nation' report is the most comprehensive picture of the profession since it began in England. Together with our successful third Social Work Week, our goal is to spark a national conversation on the importance of social work.

Social workers are a direct line into the lives of millions of people, creating powerful potential for improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people in society. The pandemic and cost of living crisis are accelerating real demand for social change. We know, however, that the profession faces ever growing demands and recruitment and retention issues. It is therefore a challenge to achieve change on the required scale.

We're dedicated to listening to and working with the sector to find solutions.

As such, engagement and co-production are at the heart of all we do. Our National Advisory Forum remains essential in developing our work and holding us to account.

Following our [statement of intent](#) and [action plan](#), equality, diversity and inclusion are guiding principles of our new strategy. By engaging with the profession, we developed professional standards that include a focus on anti-oppressive practice. We're part of an anti-racism partnership to drive commitment from the sector. We will keep working to ensure our professional standards are embedded throughout the profession. We will continue to encourage social workers to exercise accountability and anti-racism in their practice and professional pathways.

2023 saw Lord Patel of Bradford OBE step down as chair of our board. Under Lord Patel's leadership, we established ourselves in partnership with the sector

and launched in 2019. He oversaw new rules and regulations, professional standards, fitness to practise processes, and registration and CPD requirements, amongst other changes. Each was a major step towards our objectives of raising standards in the profession, and improving public safety and confidence in social work.

We're confident that the work we've done so far has made an impact. We're pleased to have met 16 of the 18 standards in our third performance review by the Professional Standards Authority. This result is a reflection of continued hard work across the organisation to deliver long-term, positive change.

As we close one chapter, we begin another by moving forward with our new strategy. In our first 3 years we laid strong foundations. Now, we're ready to drive more change for the benefit of all who need social work in their lives.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew McCulloch".

Dr Andrew McCulloch
Interim Chair of the Board,
Social Work England



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Colum Conway".

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

Performance report



Performance overview

The performance report explains who we are, our purpose, how we are organised and our performance against our objectives.

Overall, our performance for 2022 to 2023 was in line with what we set out to achieve in our [business plan](#) for the year. Page 18 to page 57 provide a detailed analysis.

Our purpose

Social Work England was established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 ('the Act'). We are the 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 ('the Regulations'). The Regulations were amended on 16 December 2022, as set out in this published [briefing note](#). The changes covered a wide range of areas, including changes to our data sharing powers. Further details can be found on page 29.

We operate as a non-departmental public body and are classified as a central government organisation. We agreed our framework document with our sponsor the Department for Education, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care. The Department for Education has responsibility for child and family social workers. The Department of Health and Social Care has responsibility for adult social workers.

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

Our corporate strategy for 2020 to 2023 set out our strategic aims.

In pursuing our overarching objective we aim to (do all of the following):

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

The Regulations detail the framework within which we regulate social workers. We're responsible for delivering key regulatory functions by (doing all of the following):

- 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 continuing professional development
- approving post qualifying courses and specialisms

The Regulations were amended on 16 December 2022, following consultation. The amendments reflected learning from our first 2 years of operation. They gave greater clarity to our processes, removed operational inefficiencies and addressed unintended anomalies in the original drafting. They covered a wide range of areas including changes to our data sharing powers. They allowed a social worker to voluntarily remove themselves from the register during fitness to practise processes, with our approval. Changes also streamlined our interim orders process.

Professional Standards Authority

The Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care oversees our work alongside the work of other health and care regulators. They review and scrutinise our performance against their standards of good regulation. They also review our independent adjudicators' decisions on fitness to practise concerns.

Our leadership

Chief Executive



Colum Conway

People and Business
Support



Linda Dale
Executive Director

Regulation



Philip Hallam
Executive Director

Professional Practice and
External Engagement



Sarah Blackmore
Executive Director

Our values

Our values shape and steer how we work. We're proud of our values and what they mean to us:

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

Performance overview

Our corporate strategy for 2020 to 2023 set out our strategic ambitions to raise the standards of social work and education and training, deliver radically different regulation and to build confidence in the profession. It described how activity and impact would be measured across the following 5 key areas:

- Our regulatory approach
- Education and training
- The social work profession
- People we work with and for
- Our organisation

This year's annual report reflects on what we've achieved in the third and final year of our first corporate strategy.

Overall, our performance for 2022 to 2023 was in line with what we set out to achieve in our [business plan](#) for the year. Page 18 to page 57 provide a more detailed analysis.

Our regulatory approach: Registration and renewal

- We achieved all of our targets for providing registration and advice in 2022 to 2023 and have continued to maintain an accurate public register of all social workers in England.
- 96,886 people completed their application to renew their registration as a social worker during the annual registration renewal period. This year, we increased our requirement for continuing professional development (CPD) from one to 2 pieces. We also asked for social workers' diversity data to help us build a clearer understanding of the register. As at 31 March 2023, 93,949 or 94% of social workers in England had shared their diversity data. We're now analysing this in more detail to ensure that our policies and processes are fair and equitable.
- In response to the pandemic in March 2020, the government gave us powers to temporarily register social workers, allowing previously registered social workers in England the opportunity to temporarily return to practise using the protected title of social worker. Temporary registration ended on 30 September 2022. 6,214 social workers who held registration on a temporary basis were removed from the register.
- We continue to receive a high number of applications to join our register from social workers who qualified overseas. The median time taken to process overseas applications has increased during the year. Additional resources are being invested to ensure applications can be processed more quickly.

Our regulatory approach: Fitness to practise

- A significant area of focus this year has been to conclude the legacy caseload inherited from the Health and Care Professionals Council. We have maintained increased capacity in our fitness to practise service, using additional funding from the Department for Education to work through legacy cases. By 31 March 2023, the number of legacy cases has reduced to 134 cases from the original 1,459 cases. The remaining legacy cases will continue to take priority and we expect the majority to be completed in the first quarter of 2023 to 2024.
- We assessed 1,610 cases that were referred directly to us. We progressed 468 to case examination and closed 1,142 with no further action. Timeliness in progressing our cases to conclusion has remained a challenge, and over the course of the year we met 2 of our 5 fitness to practise targets. External factors that have contributed to this timeliness challenge have included pressures on the people and organisations from whom we need information as we investigate concerns. Pressures on the court system and the NHS have also limited our ability to progress our cases. We continue to expand our understanding of the number and nature of the concerns we receive and to refine how we manage these concerns at all stages of the fitness to practise process.

Education and training

- Our target was to make reapproval decisions on at least 33% of courses by 31 March 2023. We have almost met this target, reapproving 81 courses (31%) out of the 265 courses that needed reapproving. We remain on track to complete all reapproval inspections by the end of the 3-year cycle.
- We published our long-term plan for social work education and training in June 2022. It highlights 7 areas we're focusing on to improve quality, consistency and ensure that all social work graduates qualify with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet our professional standards. As a first step, we have developed and consulted on skills and behaviours statements that will eventually be part of our regulation.
- We appointed a practising social worker as an associate advisor in education and training, and established an education and training advisory forum to act as a critical friend and support us in implementing guidance

- We have drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals and approved mental capacity professionals. Introduction of the approved mental capacity professional role has, however, been delayed until after the end of the current Parliament. We have therefore paused further work on these standards and the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards framework will remain in place for the foreseeable future.

The social work profession

- Our third Social Work Week took place in March 2023 with almost 7,000 attendees joining our 19 headline sessions. The week represented a powerful moment, bringing professionals and people with lived experience together to learn, connect and influence change. For the first time, regulators from the 4 nations came together to present their experience of practice education and showcase the breadth of learning.
- Learning from our regulatory activities, engagement and research fed into our latest Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report, published in March 2023. The report was co-produced with our National Advisory Forum and shared what we've learned about the profession from our unique perspective as the regulator.
- We welcomed the publication of the children's social care strategy: Stable Homes, Built on Love. We have joined the national practice group that will support and oversee implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard.

The people we work with and for

- We recognise the pressure social workers have been operating under this year and the issues around recruitment and retention, agency work and supporting new social workers to thrive. We convened a workforce roundtable, inviting leaders from across the sector to consider solutions together.

Our organisation

- We achieved strong performance in responding to corporate complaints (99%), subject access requests (99.7%) and freedom of information requests (98%), but narrowly missed our stretching targets of 100% timeliness in these areas. We are reviewing the way we measure performance in future years.
- We launched our strategy for 2023 to 2026 in March 2023. Alongside our standard plain text and PDF versions, to make the strategy accessible to as many people as possible, we also published an introductory video and an easy read version.
- To ensure we're well placed to deliver our vision for the next strategy period, we've made several changes to our structure and organisation. We've introduced a new assistant director level to strengthen leadership capacity, re-organised our directorate structure, and introduced new arrangements for planning and performance management. We've also developed our first people strategy, data and insight strategy and sustainability plan for 2023 to 2026, aligned to our strategic vision.
- We recruited, trained and developed an additional 65 partners in the past 12 months, to provide the independent expertise and decision-making that we need

Key risks

- The primary risks in relation to our regulatory responsibilities, and the actions we have taken to manage and mitigate these risks, are summarised below. Our actions have kept key risks within our organisational tolerance this year. We expect to see further impacts in future years.

Title	What we've done to mitigate this risk in 2022 to 2023
<p>We are unable to progress fitness to practise cases within reasonable timescales with existing resources</p>	<p>We continue to stress the importance of engaging with the fitness to practise process at an early stage.</p> <p>We've established single points of contact at local authorities across England. This network helps manage and respond to requests, so we can progress cases as quickly as possible. Early feedback suggests that it has had a positive impact on case progression.</p> <p>We offer local authorities the opportunity to learn how and when to refer fitness to practise concerns to us. And we've created guidance to assist these officers.</p>
<p>We fail to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications to register in a timely way</p>	<p>We've made improvements to our registration and renewal processes, ensuring that our systems were fully operational and able to respond to peak times of demand. We've increased capacity to process overseas applications to join our register.</p>
<p>Our education quality assurance process is not robust enough to identify poor quality provision</p>	<p>We've consulted on readiness for professional practice guidance, new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals and set up a social work education and training advisory forum to advise on key developments.</p>
<p>Our governance and assurance frameworks are not robust enough to enable good and transparent decision-making</p>	<p>We've further developed our assurance framework and agreed an implementation plan for 2023 to 2024. We've reviewed and amended our internal governance meetings to strengthen accountability.</p>
<p>We fail to understand and respond to changes in the external environment</p>	<p>We've established a policy committee to discuss strategic, political and workforce changes. We've convened a national roundtable to look at workforce issues within social work. We've joined the national practice group that will support and oversee the implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard, and we will remain engaged in this work and continue to explore implications for our future role as regulator.</p>

More detail on our corporate risks can be found in the accountability report on page 58.

Measuring and reporting our progress

We measure progress against our objectives (in all the following 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 quality assurance team conducts process reviews and internal audits to ensure that our departments and regulatory functions operate effectively and align with our statutory purpose to protect the public.
- Our regular Audit and Risk 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.
- We continue to engage with the Professional Standards Authority¹. They conducted a monitoring review this year, rather than a full performance review. We met 16 of the 18 standards of good regulation including, for the first time, the standard on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 2 standards we didn't meet related to our fitness to practise function, on both the time taken to conclude cases and the time taken to make decisions regarding interim orders. Changes we have made this year to our legal framework, and to our processes, will assist in addressing these issues.

¹ Authority Performance Reviews - PSA [professionalstandards.org.uk](https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk)

Looking ahead

Our new strategy, developed in partnership with people with lived and learned experience of social work builds on the achievements, challenges and learning from the organisation's first 3 years. The strategy focuses on 3 main areas where we aim to have an impact on the next stage of our journey:

1. Prevention and impact
2. Regulation and protection
3. Delivery and improvement

Next year we look forward to building on our establishment as a regulator. We will continue to work determinedly to resolve challenges around timeliness in case progression for our fitness to practise operation. This will include working closely with our sponsor department to explore how best to improve on reducing the number of cases awaiting hearing. By the end of June, we will have concluded our project to progress the outstanding legacy caseload we inherited. This means we can focus on managing our own caseload, driven by our own targets and measures of success as set out in our business plan.

We will focus on continuous improvement of the approaches and systems which underpin our work. Key to this are our digital services through which so much of our engagement with the public and the profession takes place.

Our new people strategy will help us attract and retain the talent we need to deliver the ambitions in our business plan and for our new strategy. Along with our equality, diversity and inclusion plan, our people strategy will also enhance our role as a diverse and inclusive employer that puts people at the heart of change.

In supporting the implementation of the government's 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' strategy, we will look to explore the role of regulation and be innovative as part of the implementation process over the next few years. We will have a strong focus on education and training, ensuring our education and quality assurance process is reviewed and improved. We will implement our strategy in this area, build the advisory group and ensure a strong vision and ambition for education and training into the future.

Performance analysis

This section provides an analysis of our performance. We've been working to the ambitions set out in our strategy for 2022 to 2023.

Being the regulator is a privilege and carries responsibilities. We operate within a clear legislative framework and choose to be guided by 2 main principles:

- Equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to all that we do.
- We listen, engage and co-produce with those directly influenced by our work.

These principles are embedded in our work across the year and we highlight examples throughout this performance analysis.

1. Our regulatory approach

Strategic ambition:

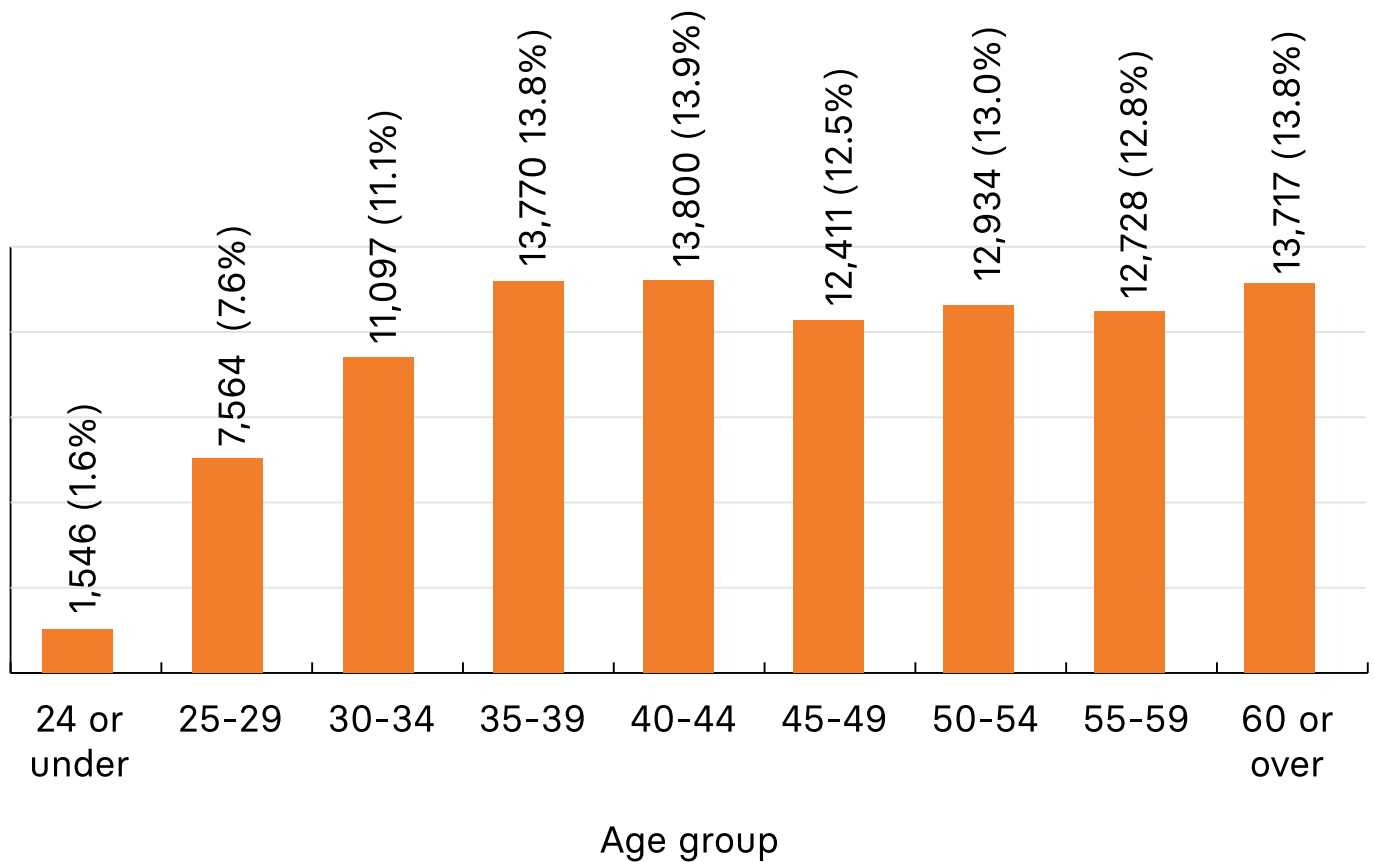
- A new regulatory approach – we will learn, reflect and test boundaries
- Collaborate and engage, developing understanding and leadership in regulation

The social work register

All social workers who want to work in England must be registered. We're responsible for maintaining an accurate and up to date public register of social workers in England.

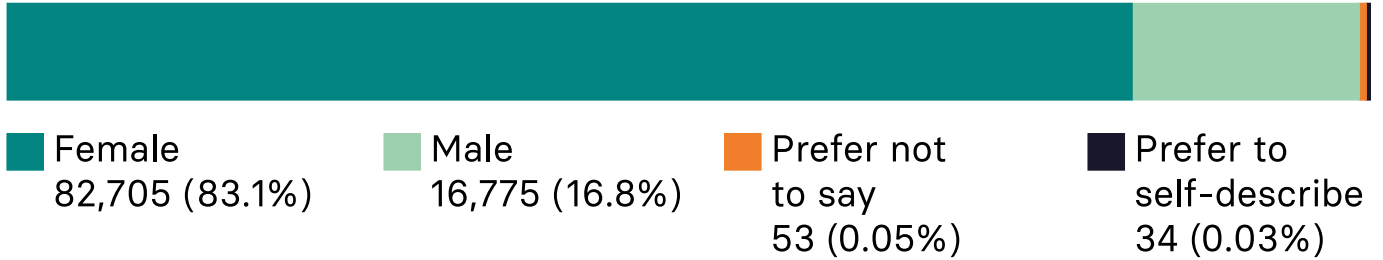
The register constantly changes as people join and leave the profession. Pages 19 to 21 provide a snapshot of the profession from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Number of social workers by age



Social workers by gender identity

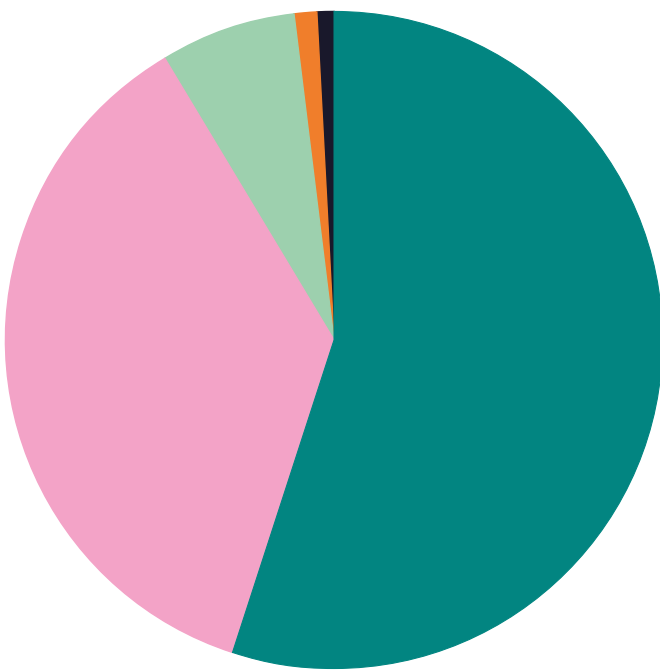
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023



Leavers data

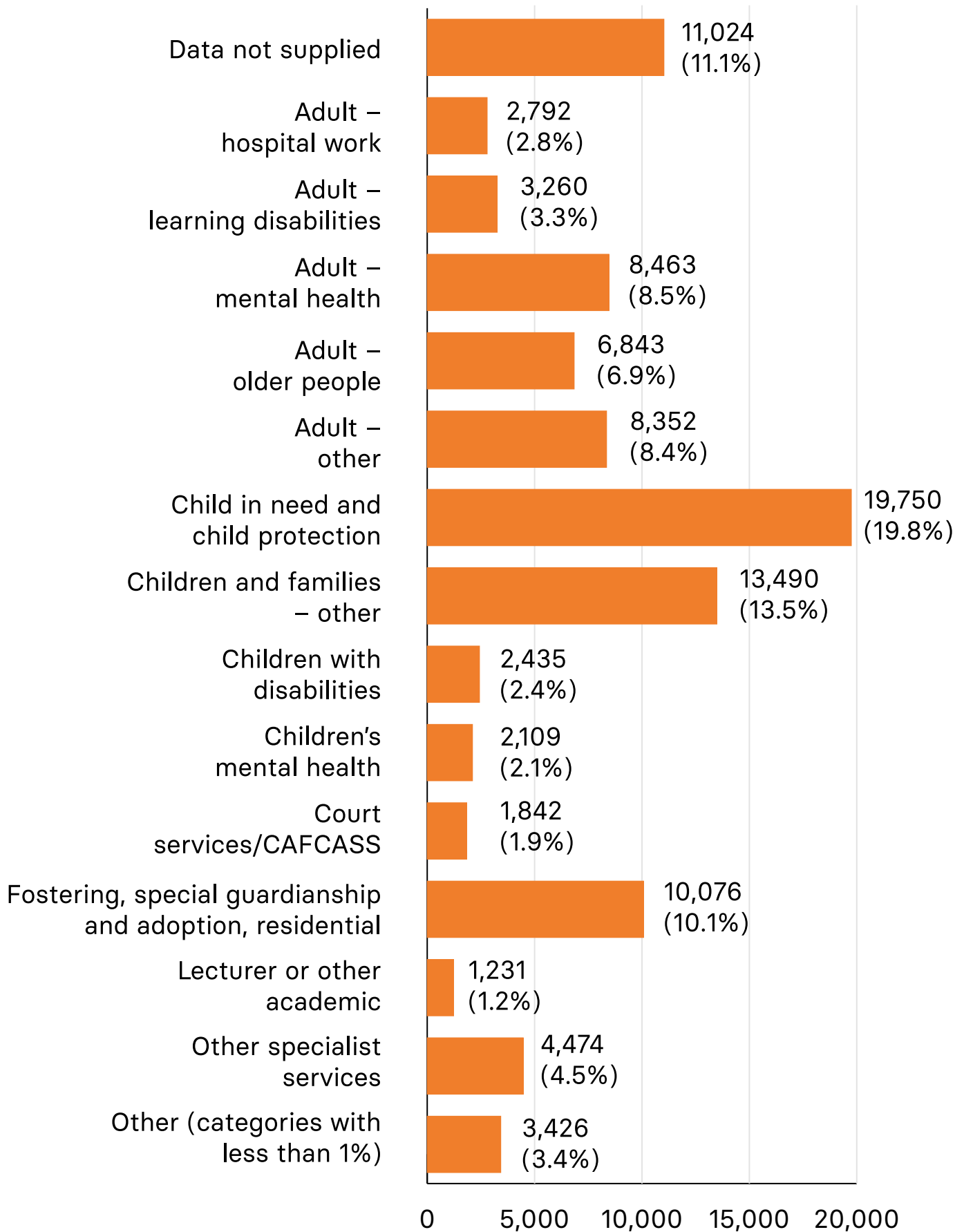
Reasons for leaving (grouped):

Total number of leavers **6,299**



- Social workers no longer registered - failed to renew 3,470 (55.1%)
- Social workers no longer registered - voluntary removal 2,283 (36.2%)
- Social workers no longer registered - failed to meet CPD requirements 431 (6.8%)
- Social workers no longer registered - removed 70 (1.1%)
- Other – Deceased, fraudulent entry, administrative reasons 45 (0.7%)

Number and percentage of social workers by area of practice



Diversity data

This year we asked for social workers' diversity data to help us build a clearer understanding of the register. We can only make decisions and accurately reflect the social work profession based on the data we hold.

As at 31 March 2023, 93,949 or 94% of social workers in England had shared their diversity data. In our early analysis we compared the data with the [Census 2021 for England and Wales](#). We published this comparison in our [Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report](#). We're now analysing the data in more detail. This is to ensure that our policies and processes are fair and equitable.

Annotations

We annotate the register to show which social workers have told us they practise as (either, or both of the following):

- an approved mental health professional (AMHP)
- a best interests assessor (BIA)

It is not mandatory for social workers to request an annotation. Social workers have been able to request an annotation since 2 December 2019. By 31 March 2023, 1,803 social workers on our register held one annotation (or both).

We drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals. We also drafted and consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental capacity professionals, the successor qualification to best interests assessor (BIA).

Please note: on 5 April 2023 the Department of Health and Social Care announced a delay in the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards framework. This framework includes the introduction of the approved mental capacity professional role. It is being delayed until after the end of the current Parliament. We have therefore paused any further work on these standards, pending any further update from the government. The existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards framework will remain in place for the foreseeable future. We will be setting out plans shortly around our regulatory support for the best interests assessor role under this framework.

Temporary registration

In response to the pandemic in March 2020, the government gave us powers to temporarily register social workers. Social workers previously registered in England could temporarily return to practise using the protected title of social worker.

Temporary registration ended on 30 September 2022. 6,214 temporary registrants were removed from the register.

Registration

Registration renewal – 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022

Social workers are required to renew their registration with us on an annual basis. This allows us to ensure information about those on our register is up to date. It also demonstrates to the public that social workers continue to be capable of safe and effective practice. This year, 96,886 people completed their application to renew their registration during the renewal period.

3,773 people did not renew their registration by the deadline. This number is consistent with previous years. We removed these people from the register. This is because they (did one of the following):

- chose not to renew their registration
- didn't complete all 3 renewal steps, causing their registration to lapse
- voluntarily removed themselves from the register

6,753 social workers joined the register.

Misuse of title

When we receive information that suggests that someone may be using the protected title of social worker in England whilst not on our register, we are required to investigate. In the last year, there were 164 of these misuse of title cases (up 45% on the previous year). Cases included people who continued to practise after being removed from the register at the end of the registration renewal period. It also included those who continued to practise after the end of temporary registration.

Anyone can tell us about possible misuse of title, and we continue to receive concerns from members of the public as well as employers. None of the misuse of title cases we investigated this year met our threshold to prosecute in line with our prosecution policy.

Continuing professional development (CPD) and CPD review

This year we increased our CPD requirement from one to 2 pieces. We also added the requirement to reflect on CPD with a peer, reinforcing the importance of peer reflection and supervision.

These changes demonstrate the following 2 parts of the CPD standard:

- Using supervision (standard 4.2)
- Contributing to an open learning culture (standard 4.5)

The number of social workers renewing their registration was not affected by the increase in CPD requirements.

Each year we carry out a CPD review and randomly select 2.5% of social workers. A team of 10 independent assessors did our most recent CPD review between January and March 2023.

Overseas applicants

During the 2021 to 2022 registration year, we received 1,685 applications from overseas applicants. This was up 67% from 2020 to 2021. Over half of these applications came from the following 3 countries:

- South Africa
- Zimbabwe
- India

Our registration and advice team maintain a list of overseas social work qualifications that we've assessed since becoming the regulator. This list now includes 592 qualifications that we're confident are comparable to those available in England.

Registration and advice

Over the last year, our registration and advice team have delivered a consistent service to enquirers, applicants and social workers. They managed:

- 36,672 phone calls
- 25,691 emails

It took us a median of 8 minutes to answer phone calls and a median of 2 working days to respond to emails.

It is not mandatory to include category data for phone calls or emails in our system. However, we have category information for 12,416 (34%) of the phone calls received. The majority, 9,364 (75%), of these phone calls were about registration.

We have category data for 11,163 (43%) of the emails we received. The majority of these emails, 7,958 (71%), were about registration.

Fitness to practise

On 1 April 2022, there were 2,115 open fitness to practise cases.

We've dedicated significant focus to conclude the legacy caseload inherited from the HCPC. We have maintained increased capacity in our fitness to practise service, using additional funding from the Department for Education. By 31 March 2023, we reduced the number of legacy cases to 134 cases (from the original 1,459).

The following sections show (both of the following):

- the volume of activity during the year
- the proportion of cases that progress to each stage of the fitness to practise process

All numbers are based on cases that we concluded during the year (meaning we know the final outcome). This includes cases that we started in previous years.

Social Work England cases (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023)

We made 1,610 assessment decisions across the pre-triage and triage stages of our fitness to practise process. Of these:

- 468 decisions were to progress cases to the case examination stage
- 1,142 decisions were to close cases with no further action

Case examiners made 525 decisions. Of these:

- 209 were to refer to a hearing
- 239 were to take no further action
- 77 were to close cases by means of accepted disposal

Where we found there was a realistic prospect of impairment at the case examination stage, we applied the following accepted disposal sanctions:

- a suspension order in 4 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 12 cases
- a warning order in 61 cases

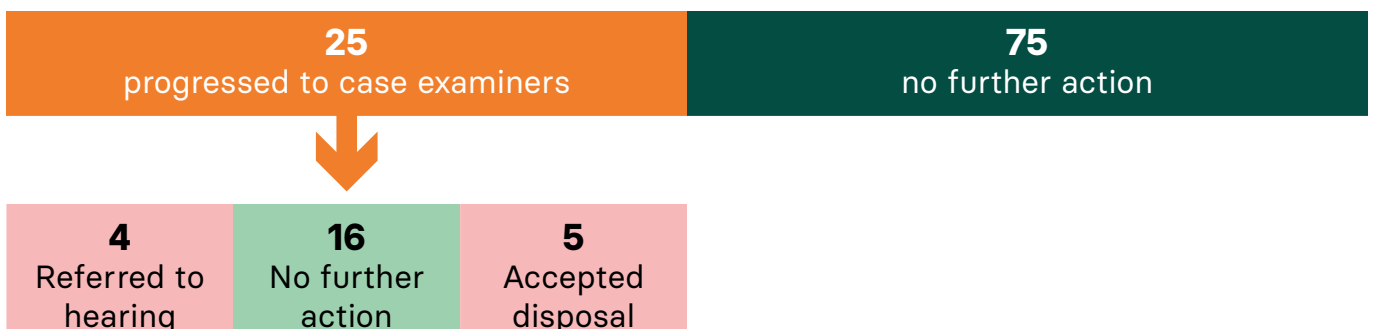
We decided 57 cases at hearings. Of these:

- we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired in 36 cases
- we found no impairment in 21 cases

Where we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following sanctions:

- a removal order in 10 cases
- a suspension order in 18 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 3 cases
- a warning order in 4 cases
- no further action in 1 case

For every 100 Social Work England cases where a final outcome is known



Legacy cases (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023)

We made 216 assessment decisions at the investigations stage. Of these:

- 84 decisions were to progress cases to the case examination stage
- 132 were to close cases with no further action

Case examiners made 131 decisions on legacy cases over the year. Of these:

- 86 were to refer to a hearing
- 26 were to take no further action
- 19 were to close cases by means of accepted disposal

Where we found there was a realistic prospect of impairment at the case examination stage, we applied the following accepted disposal sanctions:

- a conditions of practice order in 3 cases
- a warning order in 16 cases

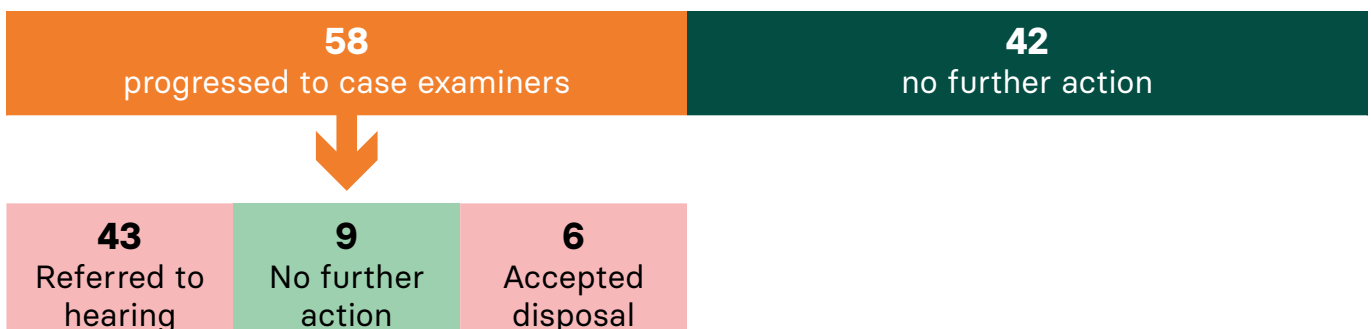
We decided 133 legacy cases at hearings. Of these:

- we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired in 90 cases
- we found no impairment in 43 cases

Where we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following sanctions:

- a removal order in 35 cases
- a suspension order in 37 cases
- a conditions of practice order in 12 cases
- a warning order in 3 cases
- no further action in 3 cases

For every 100 legacy cases where a final outcome is known



Reflecting on fitness to practise

Our fitness to practise function has expanded its understanding of the number and nature of the concerns we receive. We've continued to refine how we manage these concerns at all stages of the process.

This year we received 1,769 referrals, of which 1,461 have a known source. Of these:

- 339 were from employers of social workers
- 861 were from members of the public (primarily people who use the services of social workers)
- 261 were received from other sources

At the triage stage of our process, we referred 88% of the concerns we received from employers into our investigation process. 85% of referrals from the public were not appropriate for us to investigate in our role as the regulator. For example, we cannot (do either of the following):

- influence court proceedings
- investigate concerns about social care services or employers of social workers

On our website we are clear about the types of concern we can consider.

Timeliness in the fitness to practise process has remained a challenge this year. External factors have contributed to this challenging situation. For example, pressures on (all of the following):

- the people and organisations we need to source information from
- the court system
- the NHS

Legacy cases from the HCPC continued to account for a significant part of our work this year. With additional funding, we increased the number of hearings held in the second half of the year. This helped us work towards our goal to bring these cases to conclusion.

We continue to stress the importance of engaging with the fitness to practise process at an early stage. We operate case reviews to assist social workers who have restrictions on their practice. In doing so we support them to successfully demonstrate when they have remediated the concerns that led to their restrictions.

Case study

Supporting a social worker through case review

We inherited a number of fitness to practise cases from the HCPC. One case involved a social worker with an interim conditions of practice order. The social worker had breached their conditions so our case review team called for an early review.

The hearing panel upheld the order, calling for increased supervision and reflection. At the final hearing, the panel found minimal evidence of remediation and risk of a repeat incident and so they imposed a suspension order.

The social worker was initially disengaged however we gave them extra support to engage with the recommendations of the reviewing panel. At the next review, the social worker produced a wealth of evidence of reflection, reading and CPD. From this, it was clear that the social worker was able to look beyond how their misconduct impacted on themselves. They now understood how their actions affected the reputation of their profession.

The panel determined that the social worker had demonstrated full insight and accountability. They said: "We (the panel) bore in mind that there is a public interest in allowing a competent social worker to return to work, and this was a social worker who was passionate about the role." So they concluded that the suspension order should lapse upon expiry.

With our support, this social worker was able to show considerable, genuine improvements and return to unrestricted practice.

Changes to our legal framework

Over the year we consulted on amendments to our rules on fitness to practise and registration. We also worked with the Department for Education on amendments to the Regulations. Learning from our first 3 years of operation informed these changes.

Amendments to rules on electronic communication and remote hearings (April 2022)

We consulted on and implemented amendments to (all of the following):

- our fitness to practise rules
- the removal from the register rules
- our registration appeals rules

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we changed our hearings processes to send notices electronically and hold hearings remotely. Our amendments made these changes permanent.

Further amendments to our rules (July 2022)

These changes covered a broad range of measures to streamline our regulatory processes.

They introduced a route to discontinue an allegation before it reaches the adjudicators. They also brought the requirements for restoring a social worker to the register after time away from practice or education, in line with registration requirements.

We also consulted on how we might use legally qualified chairs in our fitness to practise proceedings.

Amendments to regulations and further amendments to our rules (December 2022)

The Department for Education consulted on changes to our Regulations from March to May 2022, publishing their response in August. Following this consultation, we further changed our rules to reflect the changes in the Regulations.

We refreshed and published 21 pieces of guidance to support our revised legal framework. The changes to our Regulations, rules and guidance came into effect on 16 December 2022.

The changes covered a wide range of areas. They included changes to our data sharing powers. They allowed a social worker to voluntarily remove themselves from the register during fitness to practise processes, with our approval. Changes also streamlined our interim orders process.

Case review team

Our case review team support and monitor (both of the following):

- suspended social workers
- social workers with conditions of practice on their registration

It's sometimes possible for a social worker to return to unrestricted practice if they demonstrate remediation. This means showing us how they've addressed the concerns that led to restrictions on their practice.

67 social workers returned onto the register at the end of their cases this year. This success indicates the value of the support we offer social workers with remediation.

The wider landscape and ensuring appropriate referrals

We ran activities to better understand how local authorities manage complaints about social workers locally. We also wanted to improve

the way we engage social work employers in the fitness to practise process.

We've established single points of contact at local authorities across England. This single point of contact network helps manage and respond to requests, so we can progress cases as quickly as possible. Early feedback suggests that it has had a positive impact on case progression.

The network (does all of the following):

- improves communication and access to the documents we need for our investigations
- improves employer oversight of investigations involving their employees
- helps us better understand the context of concerns
- allows us to more easily access information about the social worker's practice

To engage on a local level, we've also set up a network of local authority designated officers. The purpose of the network is to disseminate our key messages across England. They also ensure referrals are not made too early or unnecessarily. This is to support our work to ensure we are receiving appropriate referrals.

We offer local authorities the opportunity to learn how and when to refer fitness to practise concerns to us. And we've created guidance to assist these officers. Together we've also agreed principles on the most useful time for the network to invite us to key information sharing meetings.

2. Education and training

Strategic ambition:

- **Improve quality and consistency in education and training**
- **Through collaboration and intelligence gathering, build an evidence based on models of provision**

Our approach to education and training

We approve and monitor all new and existing qualifying social work courses in England. This includes (all of the following):

- undergraduate degrees
- postgraduate degrees
- apprenticeships
- fast track courses

In our reapproval of courses, we've spoken to (all of the following):

- students
- course leaders
- placement providers
- practice educators
- employers
- people with lived experience of social work

We found out what is working well and identified some challenges.

We learned that course providers deal with a confusing landscape, with multiple frameworks, guidance and requirements from different organisations.

To address this issue, we published our long-term plan for social work education and training in June 2022. It highlights 7 areas we're focusing on to improve quality and consistency. Work towards reforming qualifying education is part of our new strategy. Our goal is that all social work graduates will qualify with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to meet our professional standards.

We appointed a practising social worker as an associate advisor in education and training. He helped us develop our approach for 2023 to 2026.

Our first step was to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours statements, which will eventually be part of our regulation. They include a specific focus on equality, diversity and inclusion and anti-oppressive practice. We held a public consultation and published the response in January 2023.

Social work education and training advisory forum

We invited anybody involved in social work education and training to express their interest in joining our new forum. We appointed representatives from across the sector, including (all of the following):

- social workers
- course providers
- employers
- organisations
- practice educators
- people with lived experience of social work

The independent forum acts as a critical friend. They offer insight and expertise, as well as a link to stakeholders. They'll support us in implementing guidance for course providers.

Practice education

Our 2021 education and training standards require social work students in England to spend at least 200 days learning in practice settings. The role of the practice educator is fundamental to this standard. They teach, supervise and assess students on placement.

We want to develop a closer relationship with practice educators by (doing all of the following):

- assuring their training
- supporting their practice
- ensuring the suitability and competence of social workers in this role

Our research shows practice educators want a relationship with us and welcome greater recognition. This year we commissioned further research into their role in preparing future professionals.

The government published the 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' strategy in response to 3 independent reviews of children's social care. This strategy reflects our ambitions for practice educators. We've discussed its education and training elements with the Department for Education, including a new early career framework. We'll continue to liaise with the department closely on the strategy.

Quality assurance of social work courses

We completed the first year of our initial 3 year reapproval cycle in August 2022. We're currently delivering the second year of reapprovals, ending August 2023.

As of 31 March 2023 there were 83 providers of qualifying courses, delivering a combined total of 297 courses. The number of courses has remained stable over the last 3 years.

Our target was to make reapproval decisions on at least 33% of courses by 31 March 2023. We have almost met this target, reapproving 81 courses (31%) out of the 265 courses that needed re-approving.

Our education quality assurance team delivered 48 inspections this year, covering 129 courses. They conducted 28 of these inspections remotely.

The team inspect alongside partner inspectors, including (all of the following):

- lay inspectors
- registered social workers
- approved mental health professionals
- best interest assessors

Inspections help us understand how courses are embedding equality, diversity and inclusion. We want students from all backgrounds to feel encouraged to train as social workers. They should have consistent experiences and achieve consistent outcomes.

Our 2021 standards introduced the requirement for course design and delivery to involve people with lived experience of social work.

Our inspections and annual monitoring process help us remain up to date, identify innovation and highlight best practice. Before we became the regulator, some courses had not been inspected for several years. The majority of course providers have welcomed our input and together we've built positive relationships.

Our robust approach means students can feel confident their course will prepare them for practice. The public can also feel confident that all new social workers in England are trained to a consistent standard.

Case study

Co-production in higher education

Courses must provide opportunities for students to learn from the diversity of the communities they will work with. This requirement is set out in our [2021 education and training standards](#).

Effective co-production ensures that curriculums are evidence based and continually evolving.

At Anglia Ruskin University, the Service User and Carer Involvement group brings together people with lived and learned experience of social work.

They work together on co-producing core modules, revalidation and course development. Members of the Service User and Carer Involvement group (do all of the following):

- sit on admissions panels
- take part in practical exercises, reflection sessions and assessments
- co-produce research papers and training

The group's oversight and leadership means co-production is embedded across the university's several sites and social work courses. It's a valued part of the student journey, from day one to graduation. Students learn a relationship-based approach to practice, and are prepared for their placements.

3. The social work profession

Strategic ambition:

- Create a different approach to standards and professional development
- Provide a picture of social work in England

Publications

In March 2023, we published our Social work in England: State of the nation 2023 report. Learning from our regulatory activities, engagement and research all fed into the report.

In the report, we share what we've learned about the profession from our unique perspective as the regulator. We hope it will inform national conversations on the importance of social work.

Co-production is about giving people who are affected by our work the opportunity to participate in and influence our work. We co-produced the report with the social work profession. In particular, members of our National Advisory Forum were key to producing the report. They also wrote an open letter thanking the profession, acknowledging good practice and sharing words of encouragement.

We will carry on sharing outputs, insights and data from the report over the next year.

Case study

Shaping our state of the nation report

As with the first 2 reports, co-production was once again at the heart of developing our latest Social work in England report [state of the nation report](#).

Our steering group included colleagues from across the organisation and volunteers from our National Advisory Forum. The group agreed we needed to talk to the people the report is about.

We facilitated 2 online events for the profession and public to share their experiences and priorities. Our regional engagement leads also ran separate events. Through these conversations, the themes and structure of the report began to take shape.

Our National Advisory Forum and regional engagement leads used their contacts to source a wide range of case studies highlighting other people's experiences of social work.

We're proud to have published a co-produced report, which reflects the voice of both the profession, and people with lived experience. After publication, we also co-produced a Social Work Week session with members of the National Advisory Forum at which they shared findings from the report and the process behind it.



KEY THEMES

REINFORCING the ROLE of SOCIAL WORKERS in IMPROVING LIVES



TRAINING

297 PROGRAMS

Committed to creating a **LEARNING COMMUNITY**

CHALLENGE & OPPORTUNITIES of COVID



INCLUSIVITY, ACCESSIBILITY + CULTURAL SENSITIVITY KEY!

SOCIAL WORKERS

Ongoing challenges of **COVID**



100,654
SOCIAL WORKERS WHO ARE **MORE DIVERSE** than GENERAL POPULATION

LEARNING

CPD

220,937 pieces of CPD

2.3 per SOCIAL WORKER

TRAINING MOST POPULAR

Co-Production



This illustration was first produced by Nifty Fox during Social Work Week in March 2023.

Research

Our research continues to strengthen our approach to consultation and regulatory functions.

In January 2023, we commissioned research into (all of the following):

- public perceptions of the social work profession
- attitudes toward us as regulator
- the professional standards

We expect the outcomes in summer 2023. We will compare the data with [similar research](#) we published in May 2020. We'll then see how perceptions have evolved and use the insight to inform future plans.

We've also commissioned research into issues affecting workforce recruitment and retention. This will help us to better understand vacancies across the sector. We want to know how workplace culture affects employers' abilities to recruit and retain employees. Workforce pressures could increase levels of risk to the public, so the outcomes will be important to our future approach. We'll evaluate this research in the next year. It will feed into our objective of collaborating with sector leaders, to develop a clear and shared understanding of risks to the public. We can then agree how to manage those risks.

Policy

Our policy work interprets, shapes and influences the environments in which we regulate. Across the year, we responded to developments in politics, Parliament and legislation. Our new policy committee is a sub-committee of our board and offers scrutiny of our work.

We welcomed the publication of the children's social care strategy: 'Stable Homes, Built on Love'. We also welcomed the opportunity to be part of the national practice group. The government established this group to support and oversee their implementation of the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard. We'll respond to the formal government consultations in the first quarter of 2023 to 2024.

We've continued to seek views from the profession, expert groups and the public to inform our work. During the year we delivered 6 consultations, on areas including (all of the following):

- our next strategy
- amendments to our rules
- new guidance on required knowledge, skills and behaviours required for social work practice
- draft standards for approving specialist social work courses

We recognise the pressure that social workers have been operating under this year. We've witnessed the issues around recruitment and retention, agency work and supporting new entrants to thrive. Each of these issues poses a risk to the effectiveness of social work.

We welcomed leaders from across the sector to our workforce roundtable to consider solutions together. The group includes representatives from government, employers and professional bodies. They'll now meet every 6 weeks, with sub-groups focused on (each of the following):

- recruitment
- retention of experienced staff
- agency and other working practices

Internally, we continue to monitor relevant sector and world developments. We highlight how they affect our work in our regular internal policy summaries. Our policy leads engage with leadership and management throughout the year and manage any potential regulatory risks.

4. People we work with and for

Strategic ambition:

- **Co-produce our work with everyone who has an interest in social work**
- **Deepen the understanding and values of social work**

Working with the sector

We share common goals with those we regulate. We all want to protect the public, enable positive change and improve people's lives. It's vital to our success that we have ongoing conversations with the profession.

As well as listening to social workers, we use these conversations to feed back to the sector. They're an opportunity to share our learning, understanding and ideas for taking the profession forward. Staying informed, engaged, and close to issues of regulatory risk helps us find collective, long-term solutions.

This year we've focused on promoting the value we add to the profession. We've also worked to increase our visibility as the specialist regulator.

We work closely with everyone with an interest in social work. This includes (all of the following):

- people with lived experience of social work
- social workers
- social work students
- stakeholders
- networks
- principal social workers

This year, we (did all of the following):

- hosted 3 national roundtables to examine workforce recruitment and retention
- established an education and training advisory forum
- invited other organisations to join the anti-racist steering group
- had a stand and presented at the Community Care Live conference
- presented to mental health student social workers at Think Ahead summer institute
- presented on education and training at the Skills for Care Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (AYSE) conference
- presented at the Professional Standards Authority's Safer Care for All conference
- presented at the National Organisation of Practice Teaching conference
- presented at the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services conference on our work on workforce issues

National Advisory Forum

Our National Advisory Forum is a group of people with lived and learned experience that acts as a critical friend. They offer support and challenge to our work, providing a depth of insight into people's experiences and expectations of social work practice. We value, respect and consider the contribution and view of each member equally.

This year, we have involved the forum in nearly 50 pieces of work. The forum has been involved in and strengthened the recruitment of 6 senior leadership roles. It also contributed to our policy programme, research commissioning and state of the nation report, business planning and development of our strategic plan. In addition, representatives actively participate in our policy committee and equality, diversity and inclusion steering group.

Case study

A summary of our year in co-production

Our National Advisory Forum was the main driving force behind our developments in co-production this year. This includes:

- forming our new strategy
- planning, delivering and evaluating Social Work Week 2023
- securing strong representation on our new policy committee
- developing and delivering co-production training

The forum recently published an article in the British Journal of Social Work titled 'Knocking on the Regulator's Door ... or is It an Open Door?'. The excerpt below reflects the impact of co-production on individuals involved.

"Being involved in the group has been very eye-opening. I've become aware of issues within social work practice that I didn't know existed. Efforts to address issues by the organisation and the fact that so many voices (like mine) are listened to, when making decisions on those issues is very liberating.

"Realising I could have a say in real-world issues that affect me and others like me, has gone a long way in helping me feel more secure in the systems set up for my welfare. And being able to feedback my own experiences into those systems, reminds me that my experiences are valued and could hopefully help someone else in the future.

"Since joining the National Advisory Forum and beginning my journey in co-production, I am a far more confident person and no longer feel as alone as I once did in the early days of my career in disability awareness."

Next year, we'll recruit new members, develop a second round of training and work in new ways with co-production partners.

Social Work Week 2023

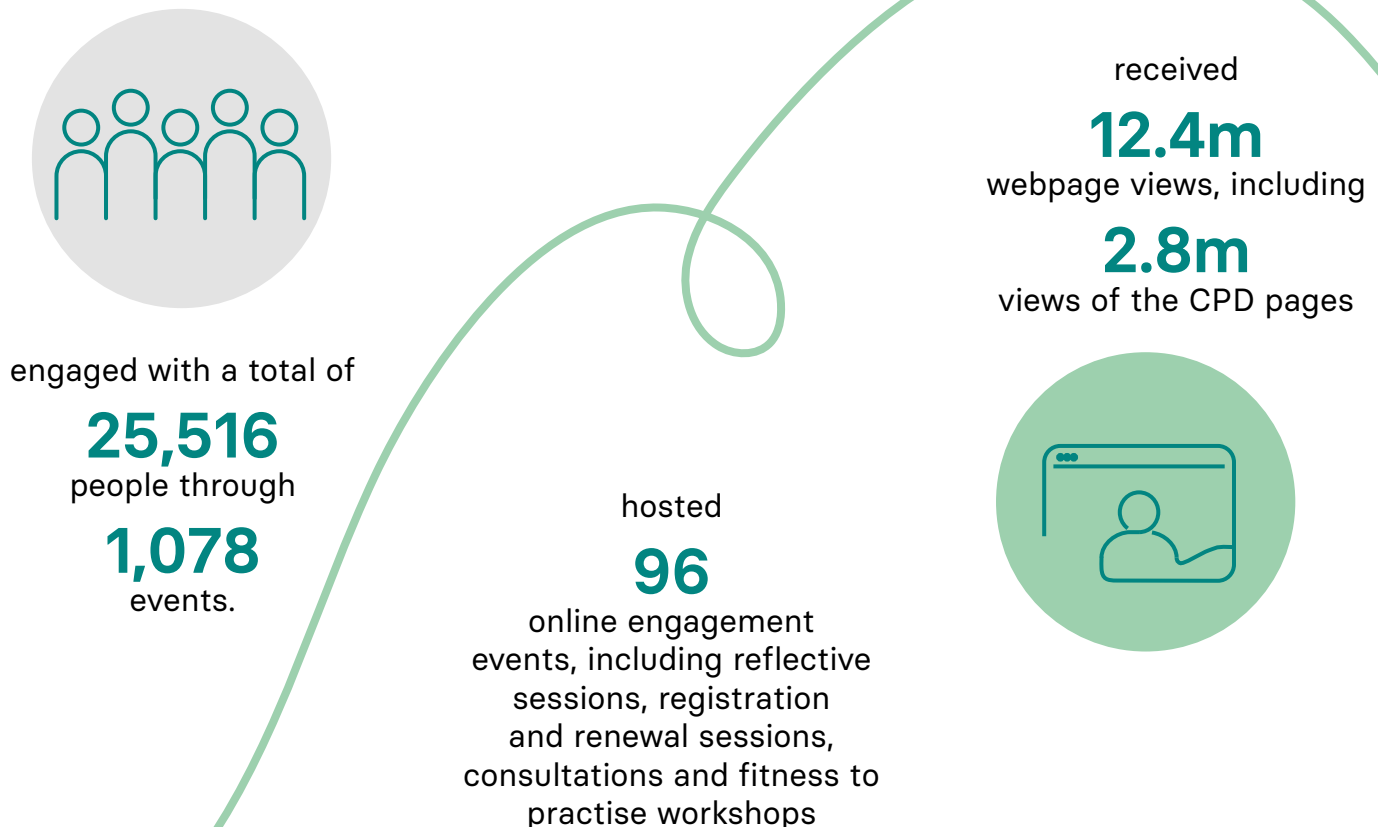
The impact of Social Work Week has continued to grow year on year. Coinciding with World Social Work Day in March, this year's event attracted attention from across the UK and internationally.

Almost 7,000 attendees joined our 19 headline sessions, an average of 363 at each. Our hashtag [#SocialWorkWeek2023](#) reached 1.7 million social media users and trended on Twitter. The week represented a powerful moment, bringing professionals and people with lived experience together to learn, connect and influence change.

As well as elevating the profile of the profession, we used the week to explain our strategic aims. We listened to different perspectives and considered where we must collectively do better to prevent harm. Equality, diversity, and inclusion were core themes, and we examined how we can create forward movement on tackling racism.

Communications and engagement

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, through our communications and engagement activity, we (did all of the following):



reviewed and published over

40

pieces of new or revised guidance and policies



responded to

82

media enquiries



were referenced in

263

positive and neutral media stories

sent 7 editions of our newsletter, which at the 31 March 2023 had a total of

88,470

subscribers

grew our stakeholder contacts to include

619

organisations and

2,008

individuals



kept key stakeholders up to date with significant moments with

42

mailshots



spoke at

9

national conferences and events

saw our Twitter followers grow by

14%



saw our LinkedIn followers grow by

25%

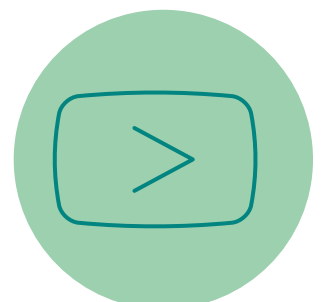
published

43

videos on YouTube, with

60,700

views across the channel



5. Our organisation

Strategic ambition:

- Encourage innovative approaches across all areas of our work
- Promote a positive culture focused on improvement and co-production

Changes to our organisation

To ensure we're well placed to deliver our vision for the next strategy period, we've made several changes. These include (all of the following):

- introducing an assistant director level to strengthen leadership capacity
- restructuring from 4 directorates to 3 with new responsibilities and accountabilities
- developing new arrangements for planning and performance management to improve accountability

Our board has also changed. The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE stepped down as chair on 28 February 2023. The Secretary of State for Education appointed existing deputy chair Andrew McCulloch as interim chair for up to one year, commencing 1 March 2023.

Our people

Over the last year, our organisation grew from 225 people to 256. The Department for Education supported this growth by providing additional funding. We used this funding to close legacy fitness to practise cases inherited from the HCPC.

We saw 29 internal promotions and 6 lateral moves. We continued to meet our target retention rate of 85%, reflecting our ongoing commitment to our people.

We carried out our third people engagement survey this year. We used a new methodology that helps us compare with other public sector organisations. The survey achieved an overall engagement score of 76%. This is above the average for public sector organisations (65%). The results shows that our people have a high level of engagement and are generally motivated in the workplace.

70% would recommend Social Work England as a great place to work.

Our lowest scoring areas were in (both of the following):

- access to tools and systems
- how leaders connect to the daily reality of people's work

These scores were still above the public sector average. Our directorates and teams undertook comprehensive engagement to develop the planned actions in response to the survey.

Aligned with our new strategy, we also developed our first people strategy. We co-produced this through discussions with both internal and external stakeholders.

Rewarding our people

We continued to improve our rewards package. This helps with retention and keeps us competitive as an employer. See the remuneration and staff report on page 74 for details.

We enhanced our peer-to-peer recognition scheme. This included encouraging our people to consider innovation, equality and diversity in their nominations.

We also introduced new employee benefits this year. These include a benefits portal offering discounts from retailers, and a cycle to work scheme.

Equality, diversity and inclusion at work

We've signed up to the Mindful Business and Race at Work charters and built on our Disability Confident scheme.

We were proud to receive a bronze award for our Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion.

We've continued to champion and support a range of internal employee networks. Doing so ensures that we consider the lived experience of our people in our decision-making.

We launched workplace adjustment passports this year. These offer a flexible way to support employees with physical or mental health conditions, disabilities, and any other individual needs. We've also expanded our mental health first aiders programme.

Building a diverse workforce encourages trust and confidence in us as both regulator and employer. For this reason we asked employees to share equality and diversity data, details of which are in the remuneration and staff report on page 83.

We embedded our new approach to equality impact assessments, helping employees better assess the equality impact of their work. We saw an increase in these assessments for key products and services, including Social Work Week and regional engagement events.

Learning and development

We expanded our learning and development platform, Grow, this year. We've (done both of the following):

- rolled Grow out to partners, sharing mandatory content and annual refresher training
- worked collaboratively with the Department for Education to create and deliver mandatory learning on fraud awareness

We relaunched a coaching programme for our operational leads, assistant directors and executive leadership team. We also launched our positive action mentoring programme to embrace and nurture diversity in our workforce. 35 people applied, and 17 mentoring partnerships are now in place. We've offered training and reflective sessions to applicants. We'll evaluate the programme by the end of the coming year.

Feedback from positive action mentoring participant:

"Reciprocal mentoring has been a transformative experience for me. It's incredible how much I've learned from my mentoring partner, as they always bring a fresh perspective that challenges my own assumptions."

Our partners

Our partners are social workers, legal professionals and members of the public. They enable an objective approach to our decision-making by providing independent expertise, impartiality and transparency.

We recruited, trained and developed an additional 65 partners in the past 12 months.

Freedom of information and individual data rights requests

Over the year we received 434 data rights requests that required a response within the reporting period. 430 were data subject access requests. The remainder included requests such as the erasure of personal data that we hold. We responded to 433 (99.8%), within the statutory timeframe, which is usually one month from receipt.

We also received 168 freedom of information requests that required a response. We responded to 165 (98%) within the statutory timeframe, which is usually 20 working days from receipt. Of the requests we received, we:

- did not hold the information for 80 (47.6%)
- held part of the information for 24 (14.3%)
- held all of the information for 64 (38.1%)

Where we held part or all the requested information, we disclosed it in full in response to 41 (46.6%). We applied an exemption on disclosure to part of the held information in 31 (35.2%), and in full in 16 (18.2%).

Digital services

We significantly changed our annual renewals process to enable us to collect equality and diversity data. We maintained 100% system capacity and functionality throughout our renewals period, giving social workers access up to the deadline date.

Based on learning over our first 3 years, we've improved our digital service delivery. We migrated our services onto our own cloud-based infrastructure platform, giving us more control, security and cost efficiency.

Following re-tendering, we appointed our digital services development partner for the next 4 years, ensuring service continuity and value for money.

Case study

Developing our digital framework to improve our online services

Improving our digital delivery framework to align with Government Digital Services standards allowed us to overhaul our registration renewals service too.

Social workers' equality, diversity and inclusion data had a low completion rate. We were aware that we needed to improve our understanding of these characteristics. So in May 2022 we decided to introduce a requirement that registrants provide this data.

Over the following 3 months we used our digital delivery framework to address low data capture by (doing all of the following):

- analysing and defining the problem
- designing a solution combining the services of data capture and renewal
- conducting user research with the National Advisory Forum
- using feedback to improve the design
- ensuring the proposed solution met General Data Protection Regulation
- refining the requirements to get the solution ready to develop
- planning delivery within very tight timescales
- testing the product against requirements and accessibility

We developed and tested the approach to ensure that it met requirements and was fully accessible. Rigorously following the framework kept us on track to deliver the system changes by the start of the renewal period.

By applying government service design principles, we streamlined 2 services into one. As a result, completion rates have risen from under 5% to 94.3%. It also gives us the benefit of having one less service to maintain.

We can now provide deeper insight into the diversity of social workers, while supporting compliance with general equality duty. Plus, our digital services team has a robust delivery framework to use when improving other services.

Data and insight

Analysing and understanding our data informs improvements we make to our regulatory approach. It keeps our processes fair, effective and evidence based. It also helps us identify opportunities to make better use of our resources.

We've developed a data and insight strategy for 2023 to 2026 that will (do all of the following):

- ensure the necessary skills, systems and technology for our strategic ambitions
- uphold the responsible and transparent use of our data
- improve our regulatory processes while demonstrating consistency and fairness
- be a trusted, knowledgeable source of information on the profession
- use a comprehensive evidence base to increase our efficiency and cost effectiveness

Governance and assurance

We agreed the principles and approach to our assurance framework with our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. We'll implement it in 2023 to 2024.

Our quality assurance team conducted 3 process reviews and 6 internal audits this year. They assured that our departments and regulatory functions operate effectively and align with our statutory purpose to protect the public.

During the year we became a prescribed person for whistleblowing under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. We've since implemented a policy on whistleblowing by members of the public, with mandatory training across the organisation.

We continue to engage with the Professional Standards Authority. They conducted a monitoring review this year, rather than a full performance review. This third review reflects continued hard work as we move towards long-term delivery.

We met 16 of the 18 standards of good regulation including, for the first time, the standard on equality, diversity and inclusion. The 2 standards we didn't meet related to our fitness to practise function. This was due to the time taken to (both of the following):

- conclude cases
- make decisions regarding interim orders

We have made changes to our legal framework and processes. These changes will help us address timeliness for interim orders. They will also assist with the time it takes to conclude cases at all stages of the fitness to practise process. We've committed to work through the majority of the legacy cases by the end of June 2023.

As part of our focus on continuous improvement, we introduced a dedicated role to support corporate feedback and complaints. This helps us capture and respond to learning.

Sustainability and the environment

We're located in Sheffield. Our neighbourhood benefits from Sheffield City Council's ground-breaking Grey to Green environmental and economic development strategy. We're a tenant of North Bank, leasing 17,785 square feet, or 23.4% of the building. This multi-occupancy office building has a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of very good. Its Energy Performance Certificate was upgraded from grade E to C in 2022.

Significant energy price increases have affected us, like many organisations, this year. We're committed to being sustainable and contributing positively to environmental and societal challenges. These 2 things led us to develop a sustainability plan for 2023 to 2026, with shared ownership and responsibility. It combines (both of the following):

- our corporate social responsibilities
- our environmental, social and governance commitments.

The plan aligns with both the greening government commitments and our strategy for 2023 to 2026. It focuses on near-term areas that we can most influence and can build on in later years. They include people and communities, procurement, decarbonisation and waste minimisation.

Our report on sustainability performance for 2022 to 2023 follows statutory requirements. It is in accordance with the Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual. It's also within the scope of the greening government commitments, subject to the information we can fully disclose. We have not been able to disclose our gas consumption for this year and the prior year as specific usage since the proportion of our gas consumption is charged to us as part of our service charge.

Mitigating climate change

Greenhouse gas emissions

All our energy emissions fall under scope 3: other indirect greenhouse gas emissions. They occur as a consequence of our activity but aren't owned or controlled by us.

Scope 1, direct emissions, is not applicable as we don't own energy sources or hire or lease car fleets. Neither can we fully disclose for scope 2, energy indirect emissions. Our lease agreement doesn't give us decision-making power over our energy, gas and water suppliers. We've calculated carbon emissions for our energy usage and business travel using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's corporate standard.

We do not have any accredited carbon offset purchases.

Consumption

Following the lifting of government guidance to work from home early in 2022, hybrid working has become our norm. We've seen an upturn in travel, with employees travelling to work in the office and for business. This post-lockdown shift provides context to the year on year changes we report below.

	Unit	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Electricity ²	Kilowatt hours	143,319	135,180
Gas	Kilowatt hours	not available*	not available*
CO ₂	Tonnes	29.9	26.1
Expenditure	£	£104,086	£26,534

*Data unavailable on specific usage by Social Work England since the proportion of our gas consumption is charged to us as part of our service charge.

All our utilities are recharged monthly by our landlord. Our landlord changed in June 2022, hence the difference in the data for 2022 to 2023. Although our consumption levels for electricity have not significantly changed, the cost of our energy supply dramatically increased. To increase energy efficiency we use LED lights that switch on and off according to room occupancy.

² Note: To be as transparent as possible with available data, we've calculated our electricity consumption from invoices from our landlord.

Business travel

Our hybrid model of home and office working achieves flexibility and supports our efforts towards net zero by 2050. We minimised our need to travel by using video conferencing for hearings, board meetings and other stakeholder meetings where appropriate. We also updated our travel and subsistence policy, encouraging employees to use public transport as the more environmentally friendly and economically viable option.

	2022 to 2023 £	2022 to 2023 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)	2021 to 2022 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)
Car	5,811	3.55	2.15
Taxi, rail and bus	33,260	6.49	0.21
Air (see the breakdown of air travel in the table below)	2,935	2.47	0.11
Total business travel expenditure	42,006	-	-
Tonnes of CO ₂ e	-	12.22	2.47

Breakdown of air travel	2022 to 2023 distance travelled (Miles)	2022 to 2023 (Tonnes of CO ₂ e)
Domestic short haul (economy)	3,050	-
International short haul (economy)	3,198	-
Total	6,248	2.47

Waste

This year we produced 2.04 tonnes of general waste, including IT waste. 98% of this waste has been turned into energy and 2% was recycled. No waste went to landfill. We introduced dry mixed recycling in our office at the end of the year through our new main supplier contract. The information we are able to disclose on waste disposal is limited to the information provided below due to suppliers full reporting functionality not being available until March 2023.

We had 2 contracted suppliers and 1 free of charge service provider to meet our waste disposal needs. We used an ISO1400 certified supplier to recycle our IT that was not suitable for our buy back scheme. The service provider has a zero to landfill policy and where possible, products are refurbished and sold on for further use. We use a specialist supplier to deal with confidential waste; expenditure up to 31 March 2023 was £585. All other waste disposal costs were £1,004. Total expenditure on waste disposal to 31 March 2023 was £1,589.

Single-use plastics

We're committed to reducing consumer single-use plastics in line with the government's 25 year environment plan. We now have plans in place to track our progress towards this commitment and will be able to disclose fully on this next year. Our hydro taps encourage staff to use reusable water bottles and glasses. We provide reusable crockery and facilities to store and reheat food to encourage homemade lunches. We also changed some of our suppliers to those who use plastic-free packaging.

Paper use

During 2022 to 2023 we procured 70 reams of A4 paper, compared with none in 2021 to 2022. We seek to reduce the use of paper by taking a digital-first approach. Where we use paper, we limit its consumption by requiring double-sided printing.

Reducing our water use

Our water use is part of our utilities service charge and we calculate usage on a pro-rated square footage basis. The building owner informed us that there is no water meter installed. We manage our water use to our best abilities by having hydro taps and dishwasher facilities installed.

Sustainable procurement

Our commercial plan sets out how we deliver value for money, minimise our environmental impact and consider sustainability and social value through effective procurement and contract management. We comply with all applicable legislative requirements and always strive to improve our knowledge in this area.

Where practical we use the Crown Commercial Service framework contracts in order to establish suppliers' compliance with environmental standards. As part of our due diligence, we vet potential suppliers and seek to only work with those complying with anti-slavery laws.

Nature recovery and biodiversity

We do not have any natural capital or landholdings. Our new sustainability plan includes providing biodiversity training for employees in 2023 to 2024.

Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and digital

Our digital services enabled us to facilitate remote and hybrid working. Compared to our working model before the COVID-19 pandemic, we've now reduced employee travel, use less carbon and are improving air quality. We recognise that CO₂ emissions at home offset these changes.

During 2022 to 2023, we sent no equipment to landfill. We enabled reuse through a buy back scheme for depreciated laptops. We donate the funds, which this year totalled £17,462.51, to our nominated charities Assist Sheffield and Sheffield Cathedral's Archer Project.

As noted above, we recycled other IT equipment through a company that is United Kingdom Accreditation Service accredited to international standards.

Communities and partnerships

This year we joined a network of other health and care regulators. Together we're embedding the importance of sustainability responsibilities across the regulatory system and sharing best practice.

Financial commentary

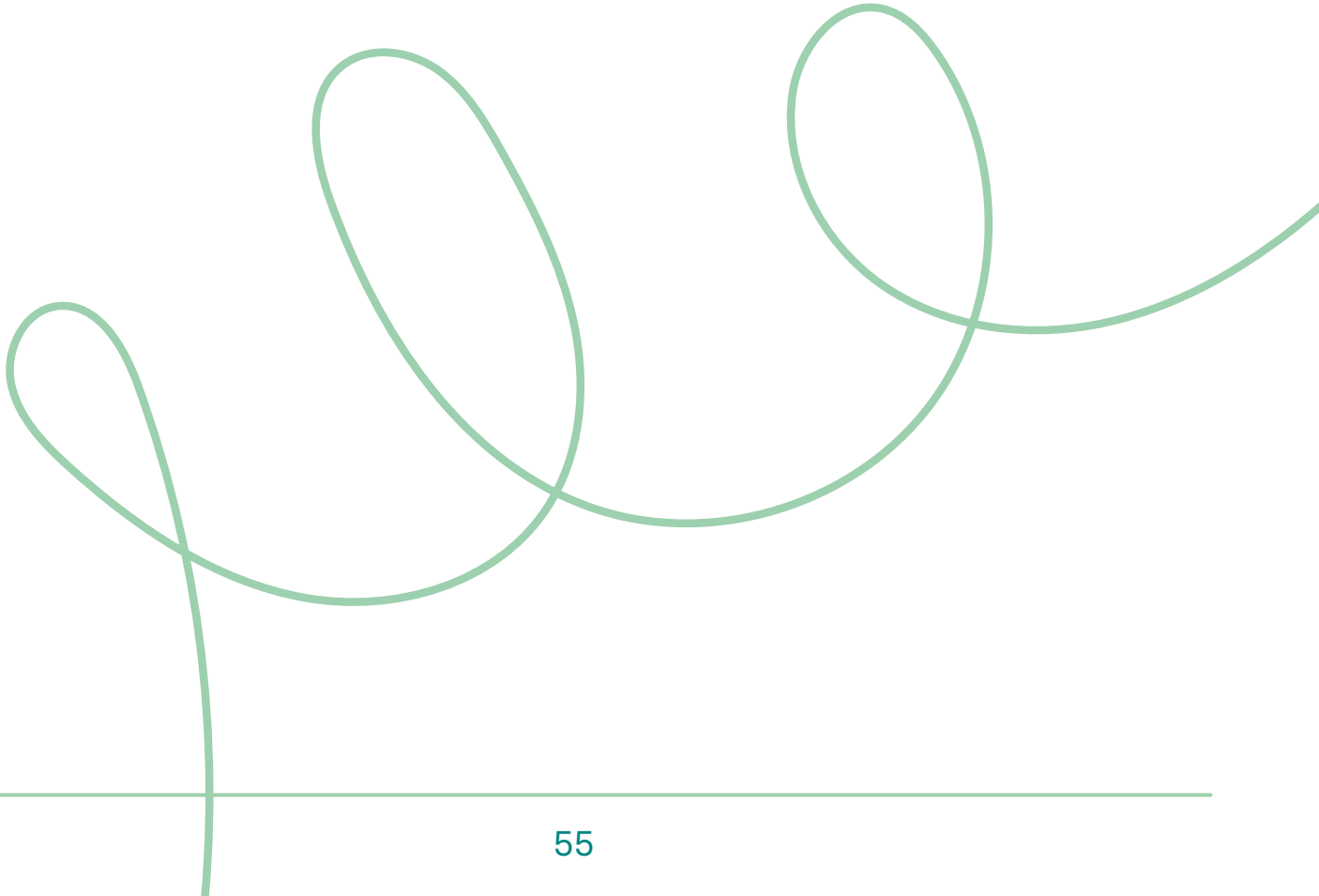
The following commentary summarises our net expenditure and financial position as at 31 March 2023. Further detail can be found in the financial statements and the notes to the financial statements. As an arm's-length body our financial statements are classified to the central government sector and will therefore be consolidated into the Department for Education's 2022 to 2023 annual accounts.

Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, income of £10.14m was received in the form of registration fees from social workers. Further details can be found in note 2 of the financial statements.

We also received £15.49m 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 2022 to 31 March 2023 was £23.94m, an increase of £4.37m compared to 2021 to 2022 revenue expenditure. The Department for Education provided an additional grant of £5.5m to spend on the increased activity in fitness to practise to resolve the legacy cases from the previous regulator; as agreed with the department £1.20m has been reallocated to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Expenditure incurred is inclusive of staff and other staff related costs, IT infrastructure costs, legal and professional fees, and depreciation. Further details can be found below and in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements.



Total expenditure

£23.94m

(2021 to 2022 £19.57m)



Staff and related costs:
£10.97m (£9.56m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of wages and salaries £10.54m and other staff related costs including board fees and travel and subsistence of £0.43m.

Other operating expenditure:
£11.28m (£8.33m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of professional fees of £10.09m, depreciation of £0.86m and other operating costs of £0.33m.

Infrastructure costs:
£1.69m (£1.67m 2021 to 2022)
Consists of IT infrastructure costs of £1.23m and building related costs of £0.46m.

Statement of financial position

Non-current assets obtained in the year cost a total of £2.66m.

£2.22m was incurred on the development of our registration and case management system and £0.44m on IT equipment.

As at 31 March 2023, the cash and cash equivalent balance was £6.25m.

Going concern

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2024. A 2-year financial forecast for the period ending 31 March 2025 has been submitted to the Department for Education for inclusion within departmental budgets. Funding for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 has been confirmed in writing by the Department for Education.

As envisaged in these forecasts Social Work England will continue to receive registrant fee income, which will offset a significant proportion of our 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.

Next steps

Our new corporate strategy was published in March 2023 and in May we published our annual business plan 2023 to 2024 detailing what we will do in year 1 of the strategy.

We will build on what we've established in our first 3 years. This means we will further develop trust and confidence in the social work profession, and in regulation, by strengthening our relationship with the sector. The role we play in supporting the implementation of 'Stable Homes, Built on Love' will be key, as will our approach towards working with the sector on children and adult services reform.

With a strong focus on regulation, education and training, we will work on continuous improvement of the approaches and systems which underpin everything we do. We will ensure that all of our regulatory activity continues to strike the right balance between protection and proportionality. We will ensure that our work is fair, transparent, as efficient as possible and in the public interest.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive, Registrar and Accounting Officer
11 July 2023

Accountability report



Corporate governance report

This part of the report explains our governance structure and how it supports us to achieve our objectives.

It includes information about our non-executive directors. It confirms the chief executive's responsibilities as Accounting Officer and how they are assured. It outlines our governance framework, including the work of the board and its committees. And it assesses the risks to the organisation.

The corporate governance report has 3 sections.

1. Directors' report
2. Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities
3. Governance statement

The report on personal information breaches is on page 69.

Directors' report

How Social Work England is organised

Our chair, board and chief executive have decision-making authority at board level as per the governance framework. Our executive leadership team and staff support them in discharging their duties.

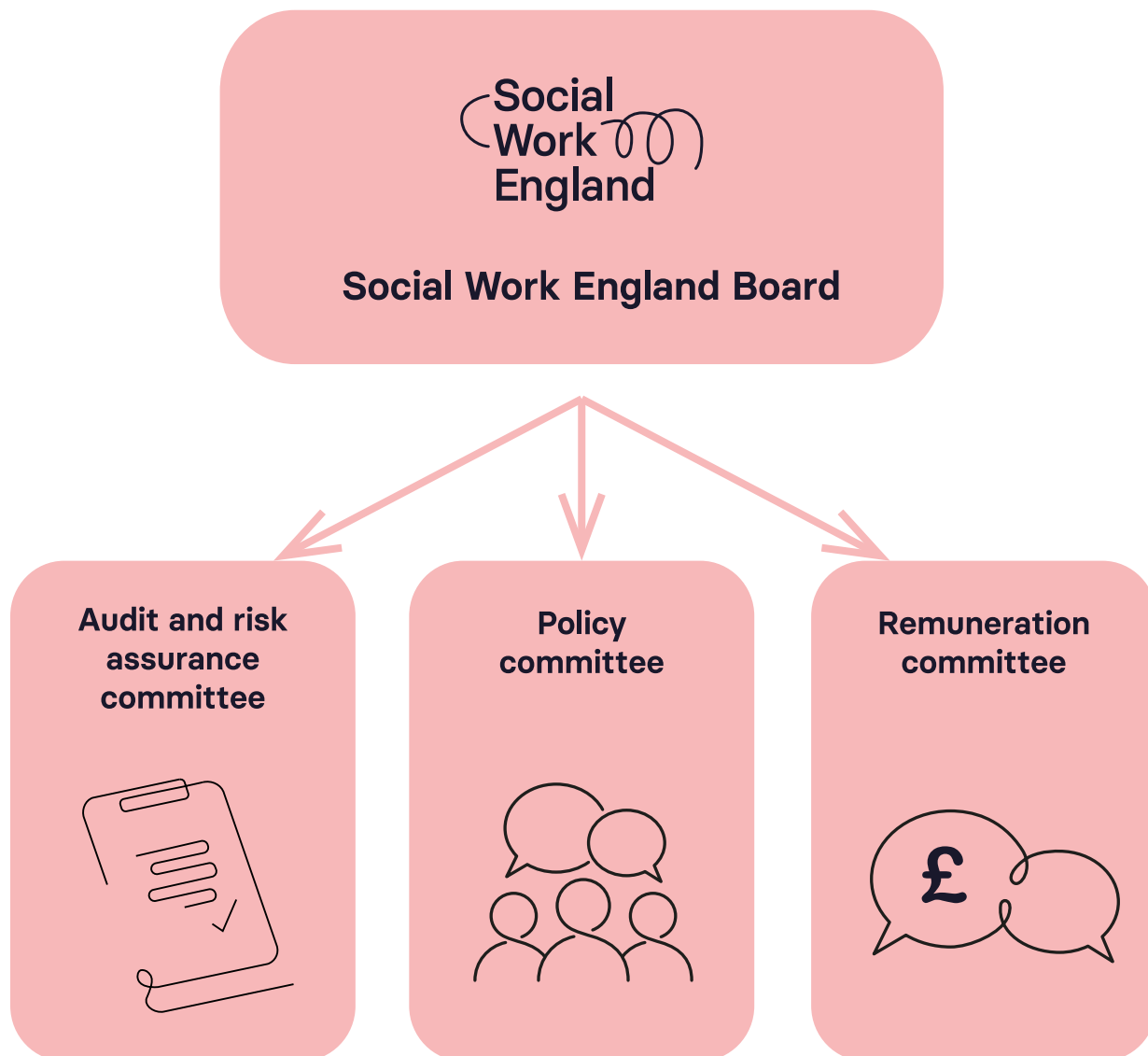
Board and committee structure as at 31 March 2023

Our board ensures effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control. It has sub committees on (each of the following):

- Audit and risk assurance
- policy
- remuneration

The committees support the board with its leadership, direction and a steer on our overall strategy. The board works to a governance framework agreed with the Department for Education, our sponsor department, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care and, in accordance with Managing Public Money published by HM Treasury.

This diagram shows our corporate governance structure for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



Board composition

On 31 March 2023, the membership of the board comprised:

- the chair, Dr Andrew McCulloch
- 5 non-executive directors
- the chief executive, Colum Conway



Dr Andrew
McCulloch



Colum Conway



Dr Adi Cooper



Jonathan Gorvin



Ann Harris OBE
CPFA



Mark Lam



Dr Sue Ross

Dr Andrew McCulloch took up the role of interim chair of the board on 1 March 2023. This appointment followed the resignation of the former chair, The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE. The Secretary of State for Education appointed the interim chair by exception to cover the period of recruitment that is now underway. He will serve for up to one year, standing down when a substantive chair is in place.

Register of interests

We maintain a [register of interests](#) that details our board members' company directorships and other significant interests.

All executive directors have also declared their outside interests for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. They did so for the purposes of ensuring full disclosure regarding related party transactions. See page 117 in the financial statements.

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Secretary of State 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 (do all of the following):

- observe the accounts direction issued by the Secretary of State for Education, 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
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis
- 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, risk management and assurance frameworks we used in the 2022 to 2023 financial year. It identifies our compliance with our responsibilities for risk management and internal control systems. These responsibilities are set out in Corporate Governance for Central Departments Code of Good of Good Practice and the Treasury's handbook Managing Public Money. They also follow the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee handbook and UK government's The Orange Book: management of risk – principles and concepts.

Our board

Our board oversees the full range of our regulatory responsibilities, including (all of the following):

- setting professional standards and standards for education and training for social workers
- establishing and running a fitness to practise system and
- holding a register of social workers in England

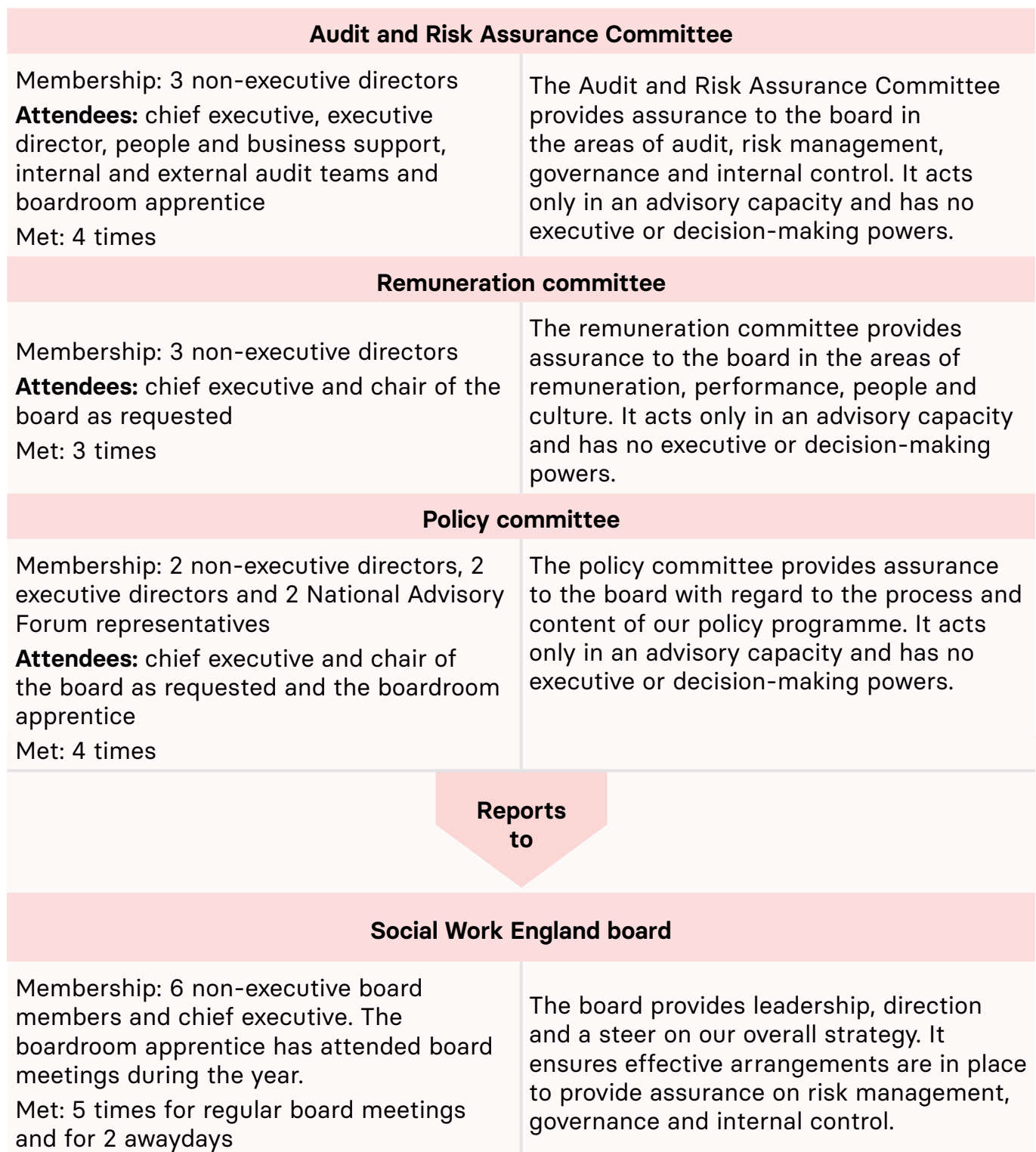
The board holds the chief executive and executive leadership team to account and provides our strategic steer. They oversee our performance and use of resources and ensure a sound system of internal control and risk management.

The board is provided with quarterly performance reports and data that tracks our performance against business objectives. Publishing quarterly means the board sees trends and performance within the year and against previous years. This year the board has been satisfied that it has been able to compare this year's performance with last year.

The Secretary of State appoints the chair and non-executive members under paragraph 2, schedule 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These appointments are subject to the Public Appointments Order in Council 2019. As such they must 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.

Our governance arrangements

The board met regularly and kept the effectiveness of our system of risk management and internal control under review. The board and its committees received regular reports on performance, risk management and assurance. This diagram shows the governance arrangements in place for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



Performance of the board and its committees

We hold our board meetings in public using video conferencing. 10 members of the public and 31 of our employees observed a board meeting during 2022 to 2023.

In accordance with high standards of corporate governance good practice, the board conducted an annual self-appraisal of its performance. The findings from this exercise are informing the board's strategy and training plan for 2023 to 2024. Overall, the quality of relationships between board members, and with the executive team, remain strong. The board and its committees are working well and receive good quality, timely information. Areas identified for further development during 2023 to 2024 include a review of the board induction process and increasing visibility of the board with staff and key stakeholders.

The board also reviewed its terms of reference and board related policies, and approved (all of the following):

- code of conduct policy
- board declarations of interest and conflict resolution policy
- gifts and hospitality policy

The board received bespoke training on information governance, fulfilling its training requirements in relation to data protection for the year.

In January 2023 our board welcomed an apprentice into its boardroom for 12 months as part of the national boardroom apprenticeship scheme sponsored by the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities. The scheme aims to enable more people to play a part on public boards.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

In 2022 the committee adopted the National Audit Office effectiveness tool to assess itself against its core responsibilities and good practice. Overall, the review found that the committee performed effectively and demonstrated many aspects of good practice. It identified particular strengths in good use of time, risk management and external audit. The findings informed our development of an action plan for 2023 to 2024.

As good practice this year, the committee chair produced a year-end report. The key areas of focus for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee during 2022 to 2023 were (all of the following):

- oversight and assurance of digital development
- finance and commercial activity including 3 major business cases for digital re-procurements
- internal and external audits
- internal quality assurance and feedback and complaints
- development of the assurance framework
- corporate risk review
- data protection and information governance
- evaluating and improving our governance

Remuneration committee

The remit of our remuneration committee expanded this year, with updated terms of reference. The committee has taken a key role in advising on (all of the following):

- our people strategy
- assurance regarding our people and culture
- pay remit
- broader workforce issues

The committee helped to achieve our pay remit and deliver a robust people strategy aligned to our 3-year strategy.

Policy committee

Over the course of 2022 to 2023, the committee has reviewed and advised on (all of the following):

- research
- data and insight
- education
- regulatory reform
- implications of recruiting social workers from overseas with regard to our regulatory functions
- horizon scanning

The work of the committee has helped to inform our approach to research and consultation, education and training and developing our data and insight strategy.

Board member attendance in 2022 to 2023

Attendance at board and committee meetings over the year is recorded as the following.

Name and role	2022 to 2023 meetings attended according to board and committee membership			
	Social Work England board	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Policy committee	Remuneration committee
Dr Andrew McCulloch Interim chair from 1 March 2023 Deputy chair to 28 February 2023	5/5	4/4	4/4	
The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE Chair up to 28 February 2023	3/5			
Colum Conway Chief executive, executive director	5/5	4/4		3/3
Dr Adi Cooper Non-executive director	5/5		4/4	3/3
Jonathan Gorvin Non-executive director	4/5	4/4		
Ann Harris Non-executive director	5/5	4/4		
Mark Lam Non-executive director	5/5			3/3
Dr Sue Ross Non-executive director	5/5			3/3

Board members also attended 5 private strategy meetings. They participated in 2 strategic planning sessions and a meet and greet event hosted by London South Bank University. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members attended an additional briefing meeting in January 2023.

Following his appointment as interim chair from 1 March 2023, Dr Andrew McCulloch stood down from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. He also stood down as chair of the policy committee.

On 10 March 2023 the board appointed Jonathan Gorvin as chair of the policy committee.

Ann Harris chaired the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee this year and Mark Lam chaired the remuneration committee.

Representatives from our National Advisory Forum, Isaac Samuels and Professor Rachael Clawson, joined the policy committee on 10 October 2022.

Management control activities

Our framework agreement sets out our delegated authorities, which the Department for Education reviews annually. The chief executive has delegated responsibility from the board for leading the organisation on a day-to-day basis. He is 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 and operational oversight of progress and performance. They also hold monthly and quarterly business performance review meetings with heads of functions and assistant directors. The executive leadership team reviews risks on a monthly basis, agreeing to escalate to the board when appropriate.

This year we developed an assurance framework with 3 levels of assurance to complement our management of risk.

Whistleblowing policy

We reviewed our internal whistleblowing policy in October 2022. 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 in the partner handbook. No whistleblowing concerns were raised this year.

We also have an anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption policy and a gifts and hospitality policy. We review and update these policies annually, with approval by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Everyone working with and for us has mandatory anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption training. No instances of bribery or corruption were suspected or reported this year. We are currently investigating one potential issue relating to the appropriate application of travel and subsistence policy. We do not expect the amounts involved to be significant.

Report on personal information breaches

As a non-departmental public body, we're required to report personal data related incidents in our annual report. This reporting is in accordance with the standard disclosure format issued by the Cabinet Office. We also regularly report to the board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

We had 90 personal data related incidents this financial year. 3 of these incidents met the threshold of risk that required us to report them to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Risk management

Context

Our risk management aligns with our purpose of protecting the public and raising standards across social work in England. It also aligns with the principles set out in the UK government's Orange Book.

Our approach involves (all of the following):

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

As part of our strategic decision-making process, executive directors individually own and manage each risk. The executive leadership team highlight risks for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to discuss and challenge. Shared learning is also applied from Department for Education arm's-length body risk lead meetings.

Risk appetite statement

Our board members and executive leadership team decide the level of risk we're willing to accept as we pursue our objectives. They review this risk appetite 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 (all of the following):

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

Our risk appetite for 2023 to 2024 will reflect the parameters above as well as this being the first year of our second strategy. The new risk appetite statement will come into effect in July 2023.

Corporate risk register

Our risk register outlines our risk environment. It helps us to keep in place the mitigations and controls to manage risks effectively. Our risk appetite enables sound, consistent judgement and decision-making.






While we categorise our risks, we recognise the interplay between different risks. There is 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
Business continuity	Equality, diversity and inclusion

Corporate risks

Outlined below are the most pertinent risks to our regulatory role for the period ending 31 March 2023. We have taken action to mitigate these risks and expect to see the impact of our actions in the future.

Title	Trend	What we've done to mitigate this risk in the 2022 to 2023 business year
<p>Fitness to practise caseload</p> <p>There is a risk that we are unable to process fitness to practise cases within reasonable timescales with existing resources</p>		<p>Created a single point of contact network within employers</p> <p>Prioritised legacy cases</p>
<p>Registration demand</p> <p>There is a risk that we are unable to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications to join the Register within reasonable timescales with existing resources</p>		<p>Made improvements to registration and renewal processes</p>
<p>Education provision</p> <p>There is a risk that the education quality assurance process is not robust enough to identify poor education provision</p>		<p>Consulted on readiness for professional practice guidance</p> <p>Consulted on new education and training approval standards for approved mental health professionals</p> <p>Set up an Education Expert Advisory Forum to consult on key developments</p>
<p>Governance and assurance frameworks</p> <p>There is a risk that our governance and assurance frameworks do not lead to transparent and consistent decision-making</p>		<p>Developed our assurance framework approach</p> <p>Amended our governance meetings to reflect changing requirements</p>
<p>External environment</p> <p>There is a risk that we fail to anticipate, understand the impact of, or have a clear organisational position in relation to strategic, political or workforce changes</p>		<p>Established the policy committee to discuss strategic, political and workforce changes</p> <p>Led the national workforce roundtable, looking at workforce issues within social work</p>

Effectiveness of the internal control framework

As Accounting Officer, I review the effectiveness of our system of internal control. My review is informed by the work of the internal auditors, by feedback from the directors, assistant directors and 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, including statutory audit and value for money reports. We are also reviewed by the Department for Education.

Internal audit

Out of the 7 audits conducted this financial year, 3 received substantial assurance and 4 adequate assurance. Internal audit reports to the board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were as follows.

Internal audit	Level of assurance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business planning 2. Financial controls – month end 3. Follow up 	Substantial
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Corporate governance 5. Consultation management 6. Business continuity 7. Internal quality and improvement 	Adequate

Haines Watts conducted our internal audit in 2022 to 2023. Based on their reviews during the year, their end of year report stated that we have:

- adequate and effective risk management
- adequate and effective governance
- adequate and effective control processes

Our new internal auditors, RSM UK, were procured through a competitive tender process and appointed at the end of this financial year. They will deliver our internal audit plan for 2023 to 2024.

Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I am responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of Social Work England's system of internal controls as set out in the governance statement. Social Work England has not suffered from any significant internal control failures during 2022 to 2023. The systems for risk management and internal control have been place during 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and accounts.

My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls was informed by (all of the following):

- assurance from executive directors 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 and Risk Assurance Committee
- discussion of the annual report and accounts with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and board in May 2023 and June 2023.

Based on my review of the evidence I am assured that we have a sound system of governance, risk management and internal controls to support the delivery of our strategy.

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 details actual costs.

Remuneration policy

Our employees are public servants. HM 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. 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 the Cabinet Office sets each year and submit a pay remit business case for approval by the Secretary of State for Education. Our business case for 2022 to 2023 was designed to help with retention of staff and ensure we remain competitive. Our approved pay award included an overall salary increase of 3% on average. We tiered this by pay band so that people on lower salaries, likely to be impacted most by the rising costs of living, received a proportionately higher increase (ranging from 2.5% to 3.6%). We also awarded a one off £650 non-consolidated pay award in recognition of people's contributions to our achievements overall.

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	2022 to 2023 Total £000	2021 to 2022 Total £000
Colum Conway	150 - 155	5 - 10	0	9	165 - 170	160 - 165
Sarah Blackmore	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	6	100 - 105	95 - 100
Linda Dale (from 1 September 2022)	55 - 60	0	0	3	55 - 60	0
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					
Jonathan Dillon (to 21 July 2022)	30 - 35	0 - 5	0	2	30 - 35	95 - 100
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					
Philip Hallam	90 - 95	0 - 5	0	6	100 - 105	95 - 100
Tracy Watterson (to 31 October 2022)	50 - 55	0 - 5	0	3	55 - 60	95 - 100
Full year equivalent (FYE)	90 - 95					

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. There are therefore no value or lump sum increases.

Executive leadership team performance awards are approved by the remuneration committee based upon the recommendation of the chief executive. Performance awards for the chief executive are based upon the recommendation of the chair of the board and are subject to remuneration committee approval to the board.

Board member's remuneration

Name	Position	Appointment term	2022 to 2023 fees £000	2021 to 2022 fees £000
Dr Andrew McCulloch*	Interim chair	10 August 2018 to 29 February 2024	20 - 25	10 - 15
Full year equivalent (FYE)			30 - 35	
The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE	Chair	19 March 2021 to 28 February 2023	55 - 60	65 - 70
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	5 - 10	0 - 5
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive director	10 August 2021 to 9 August 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Ann Harris	Non-executive director	19 July 2019 to 18 July 2025	10 - 15	10 - 15
Mark Lam	Non-executive director	11 January 2019 to 10 January 2024	5 - 10	5 - 10
Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2024	5 - 10	0 - 5

* Note: Dr Andrew McCulloch fulfilled the role of deputy chair up to 28 February 2023. He took up the role of interim chair on 1 March 2023. His enhanced remuneration reflects the increased responsibility and time allocated to fulfil this leadership role. The decreased number of days for The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE accommodates the changes to the board leadership.

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 £1,323 (2021 to 2022: £500).

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 the pay at the 25th and 75th percentile.

In 2022 to 2023, nil employees (2021 to 2022: nil) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director. Total remuneration ranged from £23,512 to £160,000 (2021 to 2022, £19,695 to £155,000). 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 2023 was £155,000 - £160,000. This was an increase of 3.28% from last year, (2021 to 2022: £150,000 - £155,000). This was 4.81 times the median employee remuneration (2021 to 2022: 4.87). The median pay ratio is consistent with our pay, reward and progression policies.

The decrease in the pay ratio for the 25th percentile of 5.47 times the remuneration of the highest paid director (2021 to 2022: 5.89) was consistent with our policy of awarding higher percentage annual pay awards to lower paid employees.

The total average remuneration per employee in the year ended 31 March 2023 was £40,364, an increase of 3.06% from last year (2021 to 2022: £39,164). The movement in the total average remuneration is as a result of an annual pay increase effective from September 2022. The increase in the median pay ratio compared to 2021 to 2022 is also reflective of an increase in the remuneration of the highest paid director.

The tables below show the pay and benefits for each percentile along with the accompanying pay ratios.

2022 to 2023	25th percentile	Median (50th percentile)	75th percentile
Pay ratio	5.47:1	4.81:1	3.40:1
Annual salary	£28,167	£32,064	£45,629
Non-consolidated performance award	£650	£650	£650
Total pay	£28,817	£32,714	£46,279

2021 to 2022	25th percentile	Median (50th percentile)	75th percentile
Pay ratio	5.89:1	4.87:1	3.45:1
Annual salary	£25,695	£31,206	£44,300
Non-consolidated performance award	£600	£600	£600
Total pay	£26,295	£31,806	£44,900

Pension scheme

The National Employment Savings Trust provides our pension scheme. It 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 19 in 2022 to 2023. In 2022 we changed the way we deal with pension contributions to a salary sacrifice scheme. Our minimum contributions increased to 4% employee and 6% employer contributions (2021 to 2022: minimum 3% employee contribution and 5% employer contribution).

Employers' pension contributions for the period ending 31 March 2023 were £514,353 based on 6% of pensionable pay (2021 to 2022: £378,964 employers' pension contributions based on 5% of pensionable pay).

No one retired early on grounds of ill health.

Salary

Salary includes gross salary, overtime and allowances. 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 budgeted non-consolidated performance award is 2% of the total salary bill. These figures include awards paid or agreed in the 12 months up to 31 March 2023. For 2022 to 2023 our non-consolidated performance award budget was 2% of the total salary bill.

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

There were no exit compensation, special, severance and non-contractual packages in the year ending 31 March 2023. This was the same for the year ended 31 March 2022.

GDPR article 21 staff disclosure

No staff members asked for their entitlements not to be disclosed in the year ended 31 March 2023. This was also the case for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Staff report

Part A: subject to audit

Analysis of staff costs

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	2022 to 2023 total £000's	2021 to 2022 Total £000's
Wages and salaries	8,901	180	9,081	7,972
Social security costs	946	0	946	855
Pension costs	514	0	514	379
Total	10,361	180	10,541	9,206

Others refers to 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 2023 Social Work England's average full-time equivalent number of employees was 243.4 (compared with 213.4 on 31 March 2022).

Staff composition analysis	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Social Work England permanent contract	209.7 (86%)	194.3 (91%)
Social Work England fixed term contract	28.7 (12%)	17.3 (8%)
Other	3 (1%)	0 (0%)
Secondment	2 (1%)	1.8 (1%)
Total	243.4 (100%)	213.4 (100%)

With additional funding from the Department for Education, we increased the number of fixed term contracts during 2022. This increase was to support the closure of fitness to practise legacy cases

Part B: unaudited

The following sections are not subject to audit.

Staff by level and gender

Levels	Permanent contract - males	Other contract - males	Permanent contract - females	Other contract - females	Permanent contract - non-binary	Other contract - non-binary	Total
Chief executive	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Executive leadership team	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
Assistant directors	1.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Heads of functions	7.0	1.0	6.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	15.6
Other levels	61.4	11.0	126.7	20.7	0.0	0.0	219.8
Total	71.4	12.0	138.3	21.7	0.0	0.0	243.4

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

Average full-time equivalent 2022 to 2023

Permanent employees	Others	Total
208	26.6	234.6

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

There was a 15% turnover of staff during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Our people

Our staff policies and practices

We changed our structure this year and appointed 4 assistant directors to build corporate leadership and organisational resilience. We now have 2 assistant directors in the regulation directorate and 2 in professional practice and external engagement.

Alongside developing our new 3 year corporate strategy, we co-produced a 3 year people strategy. We did so with input from the board, National Advisory Forum, our staff networks and our people. We'll implement our people strategy from 1 April 2023.

We successfully implemented our improved pension offer and life assurance in 2022. We have also introduced an employee benefits portal, offering discounts and a cycle to work scheme. Through Applause, our employee reward recognition scheme, we awarded 357 vouchers during 2022 to 2023, valued at £15,900 (2021 to 2022: 221 vouchers, valued at £12,300).

We continued to invest in our learning and development offer. This year it included a positive action mentoring pilot, coaching for leaders, wellbeing and resilience and a mandatory learning programme.

We encourage our people to play their part in ensuring we operate fairly and equitably as both employer and regulator. Our employee networks are formed of people across the organisation with a shared interest in a particular subject and include (all of the following):

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group
- People Forum
- Queer Collective
- Race Equality Network
- Think Well
- Women's Network

In 2022 we also established a network which brings together and supports the chairs.

Our people have a high level of engagement at 76%, compared with the public sector benchmark of 64.6%.

70% of our staff would recommend Social Work England as a great place to work.

We support our people with our wellbeing offer and employee assistance programme. We've focused on increasing our number of trained mental health first aiders from 2 to 6 and we introduced

our workplace passport. This has helped to create a positive and supportive environment for employees to discuss physical or mental health, and any other issues that may affect their performance.

During the year we have consulted with our people regarding a number of topics including hybrid working, our sustainability plan, people strategy and the recording of equality, diversity and inclusion data for all employees.

Sickness absence

We lost 915 days to sickness absence during the 2022 to 2023 period, compared with 910 days in 2021 to 2022. This equates to approximately 3.8 days per employee per year, which is lower than the UK public sector average. 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	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	69%	68%
Male	31%	32%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Gender split for executive leadership team	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	67%	40%
Male	33%	60%
Non-binary	0%	0%

Gender split for heads of functions	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Female	55%	65%
Male	45%	35%
Non-binary	0%	0%

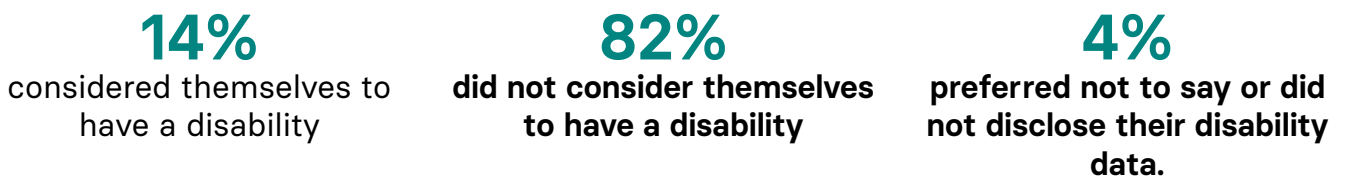
Diversity data

We encourage staff to upload their diversity data into our human resources system Enable, though it is not mandatory. Our people positively received our campaign to increase the diversity data we hold, with 74% sharing at least some data. This figure was up from 59.5% in 2021 to 2022. Diversity remains high in our priorities and we aim to increase this percentage further.

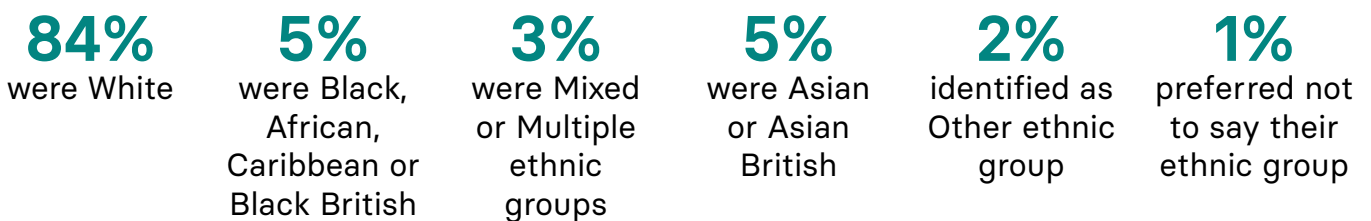
Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for sexual orientation:



Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for disability:



Of the 74% of employees who shared their data, for ethnicity:



Consultancy spend

No expenditure on consultancy was incurred during the year ending March 2023.

Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

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

Engagements by category	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
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	13	15

We consider that all board members and executive directors have significant financial responsibility and reimburse them through payroll.

Parliamentary Accountability Report

Parliamentary accountability disclosures: audited

A1 Losses statement

Losses statement	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022
Number of fruitless payment cases	323	106
Value		
Fruitless payments	£121,962	£41,000

A fruitless payment is one the recipient is legally entitled to even though we receive nothing of use in return. During 2022 to 2023 they included payments we made to partners in relation to cancelled fitness to practise hearings. The value of fruitless payments increased this year due to an increase in the number of fitness to practise hearings and a corresponding increase in postponements. Fruitless payments also included staff travel tickets purchased but unable to be used.

A2 Special payments

There were no special payments during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023. (Period ending 31 March 2022: nil).

A3 Fees and charges

Income of £10.14m was received in the form of registration fees (£9.62m 2021 to 2022). More analysis can be found in note 2 of the financial statements on page 107.

Total expenditure for 2022 to 2023 was £23.94m (£19.57m 2021 to 2022); net expenditure for the year was £13.81m (£9.96m 2021 to 2022). More analysis can be found in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements on page 108 and page 109.

A4 Remote contingent liabilities

There were no remote contingent liabilities during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive, Registrar and Accounting Officer
11 July 2023

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 2023 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The financial statements comprise Social Work England's:

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023;
- 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 2023 and its net operating 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 and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom (2022). 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 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 is anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises the 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.

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 Report and Accountability Report 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 Report and Accountability Report.

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

- 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
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; 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;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within Social Work England from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in place as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statement to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- ensuring that the financial statements give a true and fair view and are prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- ensuring that the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, is prepared in accordance with Secretary of State directions made under the Children and Social Work Act; 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, I:

- considered 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.
- inquired of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to Social Work England's policies and procedures on:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of 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.

- inquired of management and those charged with governance whether:
 - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
 - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- discussed with 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: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions, and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of Social Work England's framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which Social Work England operates. I focused 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 the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Managing Public Money as well as relevant employment laws of the United Kingdom.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed 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;
- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed 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, I tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessed whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business;
- testing postings to the general ledger that fell outside the standard transaction process flow; and

- in addressing the risk of fraud in revenue recognition, considered deferred income calculations, testing the appropriateness of revenue journal entries meeting our risk criteria, and using analytical procedures to identify any unusual transactions or movements. We also considered income cut-off to ensure that transactions had been recorded in the correct financial year.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud 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. This description forms part of my certificate.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income 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.

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 I identify during my audit.

Report

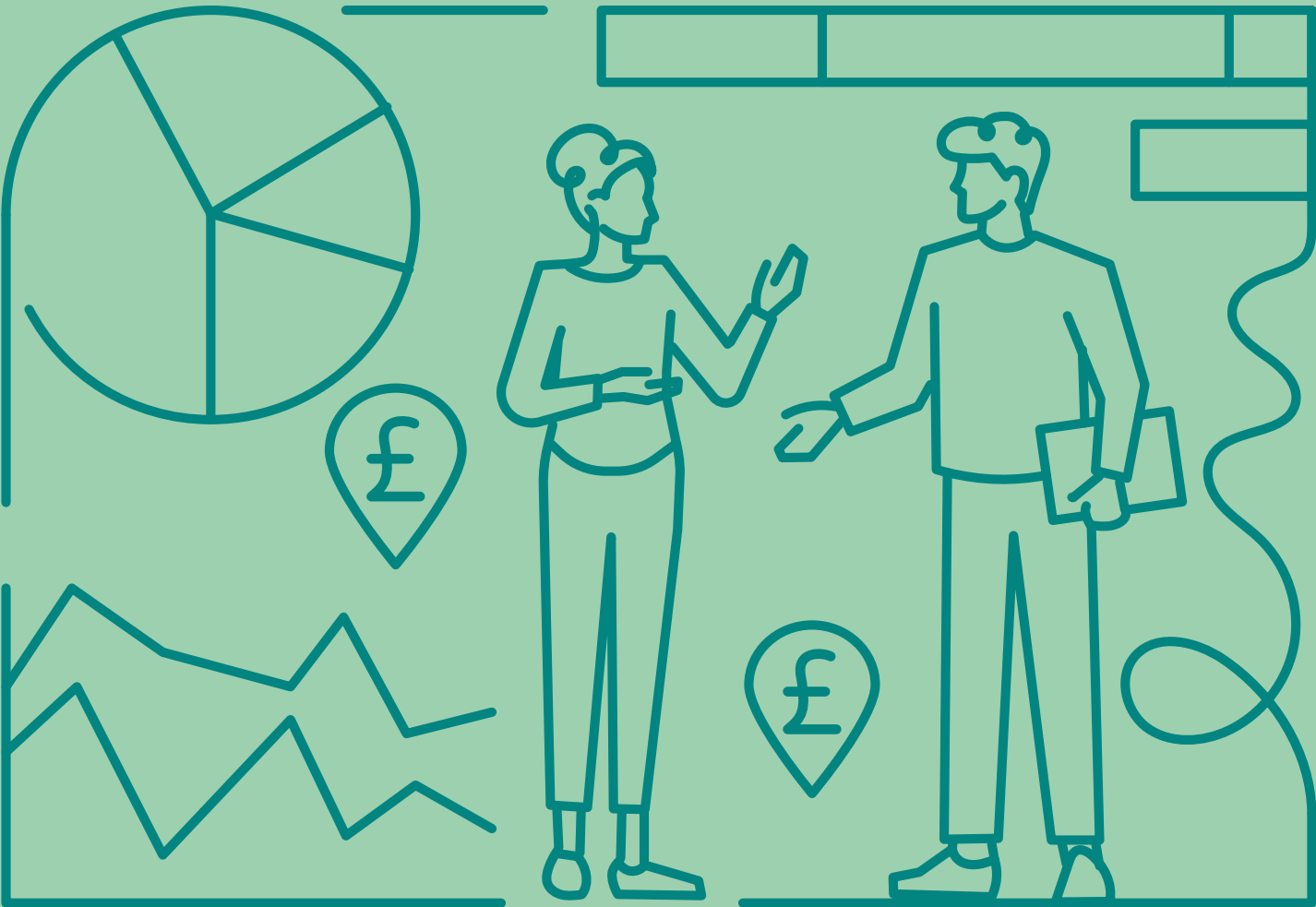
I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

Date 11 July 2023

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

Financial Statements



Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Income	2	(10,135)	(9,617)
Staff costs	3	10,541	9,206
Other expenditure	4	13,402	10,366
Net operating expenditure		13,808	9,955
Net expenditure for the year		13,808	9,955

There are no discontinued operations.

There are no other recognised gains or losses.

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Statement of financial position

Statement of financial position as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Non-current assets			
PPE	9	1,880	784
Intangibles	10	7,986	6,159
Trade and other receivables	5	0	0
Total non-current assets		9,866	6,943
Current assets			
Receivables	5	630	609
Cash and cash equivalents	6	6,251	6,042
Total current assets		6,881	6,651
Total assets		16,747	13,594
Current liabilities			
Payables	7	(6,733)	(6,048)
Total current liabilities		(6,733)	(6,048)
Total assets less current liabilities		10,014	7,546
Non-current liabilities			
Payables	7	(833)	(186)
Provision	8	(136)	0
Total non-current liabilities		(969)	(186)
Assets less liabilities		9,045	7,360
Taxpayers' equity			
General fund		9,045	7,360
Total taxpayers' equity		9,045	7,360

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive, Social Work England

11 July 2023

Statement of cash flows

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating cost	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,808)	(9,955)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	834	563
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	5	(21)	180
Increase/(decrease) in non-lease payables	7	595	476
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(12,400)	(8,736)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of PPE	9	(440)	(87)
Purchase of Intangibles	10	(2,217)	(1,559)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(2,657)	(1,646)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Exchequer supply from sponsor department	Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity	15,493	11,210
Payments of lease liabilities	11	(227)	-
Net cash inflow from financing activities		15,266	11,210
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts)			
		209	828
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at beginning of the year		6,042	5,214
Cash and cash equivalents (net of overdrafts) at end of the year		6,251	6,042

The notes on page 99 to page 117 form part of these accounts.

Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For the 12-month period ending 31 March 2023

	Note	General Fund £000's
Balance at 31 March 2021		6,105
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		11,210
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(9,955)
Balance at 31 March 2022		7,360
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		15,493
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,808)
Balance at 31 March 2023		9,045

The notes on page 99 to page 117 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 (FReM) 2022 to 2023 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 2022 to 31 March 2023.

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 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 2023 to 31 March 2024 has been confirmed by the DfE.

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

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.

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:

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 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:

- 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 opinion of management, version 1 of our internally generated software is complete and we have begun amortising during the 2022 to 2023 financial year.
- An estimated amount is provided for accrued but untaken staff holiday.
- Dilapidations recognition involves 2 key judgements by management. The first is the likelihood that a requirement to pay dilapidation costs would arise. The second judgement is the identification of the potential cost of dilapidations.

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 Pensions

Social Work England has adopted IAS 19 Employee Benefits (IAS 19) to account for its pension scheme. All eligible employees are auto enrolled into Social Work England's defined contribution pension scheme (NEST). Social Work England contributes 6% of gross salary, an increase of 1% compared to 2021 to 2022 and this contribution is recorded as expenditure in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

1.8 Provisions

Social Work England recognises provisions in accordance with IAS 37 'Provisions, contingent liabilities and contingent assets'.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimation of the expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the statement of financial position date.

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. Where assets have short useful lives or low values the asset value is held at cost as a proxy for fair current value.

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 value of 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:

- Computer equipment 3 years
- Fixtures and fittings 10 years
- Leasehold improvements 10 years

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.

Recognised Intangible assets have finite useful lives and are measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses. The cost for internally generated intangible assets has been assessed as the direct labour attributable to the development of the intangible asset as well as the cost of work undertaken by external suppliers.

The assets' net book values are reviewed annually for impairment, and adjusted if appropriate, at the date of each statement of financial position. The assets are valued at depreciated historical cost. Intangible assets are carried at fair value that is determined by reference to an active market where possible. As there is no active market, we use depreciated historical cost as a proxy fair value. Assets under construction are not amortised but are assessed for impairment annually.

Amortisation is recognised in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure on a straight-line basis over the useful life of intangible assets from the date that they are available for use. This most closely reflects the expected pattern of consumption of the future economic benefits embodied in the asset. The expected useful life is 5 years.

1.12 Leases

IFRS 16 Leases were implemented from 1 April 2022 introducing a single lessee accounting model, removing the previous IAS 17 distinction between operating and finance leases. IFRS requires a lessee to recognise right-of-use assets (RoU asset) and financing liabilities for all leases, apart from a number of exemptions including low value assets.

1.13 Implementation and assumptions

Social Work England has applied IFRS 16 using the modified retrospective approach for 2 property leases relating to the property occupied at 1 North Bank, Sheffield, S3 8JY. The cumulative effect of adopting the standard is included as an adjustment to taxpayers equity at the beginning of the reporting period at implementation (1 April 2022).

The leases were modified in March 2023 and these changes have been reflected in the value of the right-of-use asset and financial liability.

Social Work England has elected not to recognise right-of-use assets and lease liabilities for low value assets or leases with a term of 12 month or less.

1.14 Policy applicable from 1 April 2022

At inception of a contract, Social Work England assesses whether a contract is, or contains, a lease. A contract is, or contains a lease, if the contract conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time.

The policy is applied to contracts entered into, or changed, on or after 1 April 2022.

At inception, or on reassessment, of a contract that contains a lease component, Social Work England allocates the consideration in the contract to each lease component on the basis of the relative standalone prices. Social Work England assesses whether it is reasonably certain to exercise break options or extension options at the lease commencement date. Social Work England reassesses this if there are significant events or changes in circumstances that were not anticipated.

Social Work England recognises a right-of-use asset and lease liability at the commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the amount of the lease liability adjusted for direct costs, prepayments or incentives, and costs related to restoration at the end of a lease.

Right-of-use assets are subsequently measured at either fair value or current value in existing use in line with property, plant and equipment assets. The cost measurement model in IFRS 16 is used as an appropriate proxy for current value.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of the right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis of those of property, plant and equipment assets. Social Work England applies IAS 36 Impairment of Assets to determine whether the right-of-use asset is impaired and to account for any impairment loss identified.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be readily determined, the rate provided by HM Treasury. HM Treasury discount rates were 0.95% for leases entered into prior to 31 December 2022 and 3.51% in calendar year 2023.

The lease payment is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. It is re-measured when there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in the rate, or a modification to the lease terms, or a reassessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option.

1.15 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.

1.16 Receivables

Trade and other receivables are recognised at carrying value and under IFRS9 these are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less provision for impairment.

1.17 Cash and cash equivalents

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

1.18 Payables

Trade and other payables are recognised at carrying value. At 31 March 2023, the value of payables predominately consisted of prepayments for fee income.

1.19 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.

1.20 IFRSs in issue but not yet effective

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.

1.21 IFRS 17 insurance contracts

Effective for annual periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. It has not yet been decided when the government financial reporting manual (FReM) will adopt the standard for government financial reporting and what amendments or interpretations may be necessary.

The standard makes changes to how insurance contracts are accounted for and may in certain circumstances widen the scope of which financial positions are judged to be in-scope for the standard than those caught by IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts (IFRS 4). However,

prior to adoption by the government financial reporting manual the final version for the standard applicable to Social Work England has still to be decided.

Social Work England currently has a single commercial insurance contract relating to damage to our leased property, so we do not expect a material impact once IFRS 17 is introduced.

2. Fee income

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Income	10,135	9,617
Donations in kind (other income)	0	0
Total	10,135	9,617

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 2022 to 2023 fee year was £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. 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 ending 31 March 2023

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	Total £000's
Wages and salaries	8,901	180	9,081
Social security costs	946	0	946
Pension costs	514	0	514
Total	10,361	180	10,541

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022

	Permanently employed staff £000's	Others £000's	Total £000's
Wages and salaries	7,832	140	7,972
Social security costs	855	0	855
Pension costs	379	0	379
Total	9,066	140	9,206

4. Operating expenditure

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Staff related costs	197	203
Legal and other professional fees	10,089	7,353
Premises costs	291	273
IT and Telecommunications costs	1,232	1,191
Travel and subsistence	96	25
Research and development	36	76
Advertising and marketing	0	20
Cash items relating to leases	55	0
Lease interest	13	0
Building rent	0	182
Board fees	134	131
Utilities	101	33
External audit fees	56	53
Internal audit fees	9	17
Bank charges	86	91
Other expenditure	173	155
Total	12,568	9,803

The increase in legal and other professional fees relates to 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 OBE and the non-executive directors as disclosed in the remuneration and staff report.

Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges

	2022 to 2023 £000's	2021 to 2022 £000's
Amortisation	390	0
Depreciation	467	563
Non-cash items relating to leases	(23)	0
Total	834	563

Depreciation is charged on all property, plant and equipment expenditure as shown in note 9 property plant and equipment. All intangible asset expenditure is shown in note 10.

5. Receivables

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade receivables	0	0
Other receivables	0	0
Prepayments	630	609
Total	630	609
Amounts falling due after one year	0	0

6. Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Balance at 1 April	6,042	5,214
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balances	209	828
Balance at 31 March	6,251	6,042

The balances were held at Government Banking Service.

7. Payables

	2023 £000's	2022 £000's
Amounts falling due within one year		
Trade and other payables	304	518
Accruals and deferred income	6,052	5,130
Lease liabilities as a result of IFRS 16	90	0
Capital accruals	287	400
Total	6,733	6,048
Amounts falling due after one year		
Lease liabilities as a result of IFRS 16	833	0
Other liabilities	0	186
Total	833	186

Deferred registration fee income of £3.12m relating to the registration year December 2022 to November 2023 is included within accruals and deferred income.

8. Provisions

	Dilapidations £000's
At 1 April 2022	0
Arising in the year	136
Amounts utilised	0
At 31 March 2023	136
Amounts falling due within one year	0
Amounts falling due after more than one year	136

The provision for dilapidations represents the estimated settlement cost to Social Work England in relation to the dilapidation clauses included in a property lease. These costs are expected to be incurred on the termination of the property lease. The provision has been calculated based on our best estimate considering independent professional assessments of the wider market.

9. Property, plant and equipment

	Land & Buildings £000's	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000's	IT Equipment £000's	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000's	Total £000's
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2022	1,265	319	951	1,329	3,864
Additions	0	0	440	0	440
Disposals	0	0	(198)	0	(198)
Adjustments	0	0	0	(206)	(206)
At 31 March 2023	1,265	319	1,193	1,123	3,900
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	(774)	(319)	(658)	0	(1,751)
Depreciation charge	(73)	0	(197)	(197)	(467)
Disposals	0	0	198	0	198
At 31 March 2023	(847)	(319)	(657)	(197)	(2,020)
Carrying value:					
31 March 2023	418	0	536	926	1,880
31 March 2022	491	0	293	0	784

The inclusion of a right-of-use asset reflects the recognition of the fair value of leases as required by IFRS 16. Social Work England leases two floors at North Bank, Sheffield. Irrecoverable VAT has been excluded in the recognition of right-of-use asset value and has been recognised as an expense.

On transition, hindsight was applied in the preparation of the financial statements when recognising the initial right-of-use value. The lease was modified at 10 March 2023, removing a break clause, resulting in a decrease to the right-of-use asset value. This adjustment was the result of lease payments made during the year 2022 to 2023 and of incentives provided by the landlord for future periods.

The modification to the property lease extended the lease by a period of 60 months. The land and buildings assets are made up of leasehold improvements and have useful economic lives that reflect the lease period. The extension in lease period therefore caused the depreciation charge for the year to 10 March 2023 to decrease to £73k compared to £253k in the prior year.

Social Work England has amended the estimation for the useful economic life for fixtures and fittings from 3 years to 10 years. As this change has been applied prospectively and the opening balance was nil, there is no impact on the assets already owned.

	Land & Buildings £000's	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000's	IT Equipment £000's	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000's	Total £000's
Cost or valuation					
At 1 April 2021	1,265	319	799	0	2,383
Additions	0	0	152	0	152
Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2022	1,265	319	951	0	2,535
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2021	(521)	(240)	(427)	0	(1,188)
Depreciation charge	(253)	(79)	(231)	0	(563)
At 31 March 2022	(774)	(319)	(658)	0	(1,751)
Carrying value:					
31 March 2022	491	0	293	0	784
31 March 2021	744	79	372	0	1,195

10. Intangible assets

	Assets under construction £000's	Internally generated software £000's	Total intangibles £000's
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2022	6,159	0	6,159
Additions	2,217	0	2,217
Transfers	(7,808)	7,808	0
At 31 March 2023	568	7808	8,376
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2022	0	0	0
Amortisation charge			
At 31 March 2023	0	(390)	(390)
Carrying value:			
31 March 2023	568	7418	7,986
31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159

Intangible assets at 31 March 2023 relate to a suite of digital services that have been developed 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.

During the year 2022 to 2023, management deemed the development of version 1 of our suite of digital services to be fully operational from 1 January 2023. The related development cost was transferred from assets under construction to internally generated software and amortised from that date.

Further development of the suite of digital services is ongoing and continues to be categorised as assets under construction.

	Assets under construction £000's	Internally generated software £000's	Total intangibles £000's
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2021	4,418	0	4,418
Additions	1,741	0	1,741
At 31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159
Amortisation			
At 1 April 2021	0	0	0
Amortisation charge			
At 31 March 2022	0	0	0
Carrying value:			
31 March 2022	6,159	0	6,159
31 March 2021	4,418	0	4,418

11. IFRS 16 – Leases

	31 March 2023 Property Lease £000's	1 April 2022 Property Lease £000's
Leases for which IFRS 16 applies in full		
Not later than one year (cash flows)	92	240
Later than one year and not later than five years (cash flows)	761	734
Later than five years (cash flows)	180	420
Total	1033	1,394
Less future interest charges	110	46
Present value of obligations	923	1,348
Analysed as:		
Payables: amounts falling due within 1 year	90	239
Payables: amounts falling due after more than 1 year	833	1,109
Total	923	1,348

Social Work England adopted IFRS 16, as interpreted and adapted in the the government financial reporting manual, with effect from 1 April 2022. The lease was recognised as a right-of-use asset, adjusted by the accrued rent payments, and had a corresponding lease liability.

The building lease obligation at 31 March 2022 was disclosed under IAS 17 with a carrying value of £325K.

On transition, at 1 April 2022, hindsight was applied in the preparation of the financial statements. The lease liability was calculated by discounting the future cashflows using an interest rate at 0.95%, which was the then applicable HM Treasury rate.

The lease was modified at 10 March 2023, removing a break clause, with future cash flows discounted at 3.51%, the applicable HM Treasury interest rate at that date. The decrease in the present value of obligation at 31 March 2023, compared to the value at 1 April 2022, was due to payments made during the year 2022 to 2023 and incentives provided by the landlord for future periods. The interest liability for the remaining lease period has increased due to the change in discount rate.

12. Capital commitments

Contracted capital commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these accounts	31 March 2023 £000s	2021 to 2022 £000s
Property, plant and equipment		
Leasehold improvements	0	0
Furniture and fittings	0	0
Intangible assets		
Assets under construction	1,600	1,403
Total	1,600	1,403

Assets under construction relate to the remaining work undertaken by an external supplier required to continue development on Social Work England's suite of digital services.

13. Related party transactions

Related party transactions	2022 to 2023 £000s	2021 to 2022 £000s
GMC Services International	0	25
Mental Health First Aid England	0	4

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, and the secondment of staff. In addition, Social Work England is co-sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care, with which there were no financial transactions.

There were no other related financial transactions during the year 2022 to 2023.

14. 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 2023 and the date of certification.

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