

**Social Work England**  
**Annual Report and Accounts**  
**2024 to 2025**

**2024**  
**2025**



# **Social Work England**

**Annual report and accounts 2024-2025  
For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

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

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# Overview from the chair and chief executive

## Social Work England: five years of progress

Welcome to our annual report and accounts. Here we share with you our progress and achievements, and the challenges we continue to address in our role as regulator of the social work profession in England.

## Growth and professional standards

Regulation ensures that the public can expect social workers to meet clear professional standards, providing both assurance and protection to the public.

We are pleased to report that our register remains above 100,000 social workers following our most recent registration renewal period. This milestone reflects the dedication of thousands of social workers who carry out important work to serve our communities with commitment and care.

## Performance and quality improvements

We have made good progress in improving the overall quality of our work, which includes a focus on efficiency and effectiveness across the organisation. This was reflected in our latest performance report from the Professional Standards Authority, where we're pleased to have met 17 of the 18 standards of good regulation.

However, we acknowledge that we have not met standard 15, which relates to the timeliness of fitness to practise cases. We take every concern raised about a social worker seriously. We have seen improvements at various stages of our fitness to practise process, although cases are still taking too long to resolve. We recognise this is not acceptable and we continue to work tirelessly on ways we can address this.

## Education and training

This year, we completed a three-year inspection cycle of all social work education and training programmes across England. This review generated valuable insights, and we will shortly be publishing a report detailing what we've learned about the state of social work education and training.

## Building public trust

During Social Work Week, we launched a campaign to raise awareness of the positive impact social workers have on people's lives, drawing on our research into public perceptions of social work.

The campaign received an overwhelmingly positive response, both from within the profession and among the wider public. This demonstrates the value of highlighting the critical role social workers play in protecting the public.

We continue to tackle challenges and improve the way we regulate. Thank you for your continued support of Social Work England.

Dr Andrew McCulloch  
Chair of the Board,  
Social Work England

Colum Conway  
Chief Executive and  
Accounting Officer,  
Social Work England



# Performance report





## Performance overview

This section of the report explains our purpose, how we are organised and summarises our performance against objectives. Overall, our performance for 2024 to 2025 was in line with what we set out to achieve in our [!\[\]\(919a2cb85b99741a73c0c31a427236a8\_img.jpg\) business plan](#) for the year. Page 6 to page 49 provide a more detailed analysis of performance.

### Our purpose and activities

We are the specialist regulator for social workers in England, focused on enabling positive change in social work.

Part 2 of the [!\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f\_img.jpg\) Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) ('the Act') and the [!\[\]\(0f31ebba7abcd47777e178db26f29705\_img.jpg\) Social Workers Regulations 2018](#) ('the Regulations') set out our powers and obligations. Our regulations were amended in December 2022.

We operate as a non-departmental public body and are classified as a central government organisation. We agreed our [!\[\]\(e3f8612927870f2e0f9f5989e6dd3064\_img.jpg\) 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 over-arching objective is the protection of the public.

We also have the following objectives:


- 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:


- setting education and training standards and approving training courses
- setting professional standards
- maintaining a register of all social workers in England
- running a [!\[\]\(896151ec231b70900e969d67696ca48d\_img.jpg\) fitness to practise](#) system
- monitoring and reporting on continuing professional development (CPD)
- approving post qualifying courses and specialisms.

## Professional Standards Authority

The Professional Standards Authority (PSA) oversees our regulatory activities. It reviews and scrutinises our performance against the  standards of good regulation. It also reviews decisions made by our adjudicators, and can refer them to the High Court for further consideration.

In March 2025, the PSA published its review of Social Work England for the period 1 January to 31 December 2024. We were pleased to have met 17 of the 18 standards.

The review recognised that we continued to face challenges with timeliness in our fitness to practise process. It was for this reason that we did not meet one of the standards. The PSA noted the action we were taking to improve performance (see page 31 and page 32 for further details).

 Words in this report that are underlined and have a globe icon next to them show where more information can be accessed online.

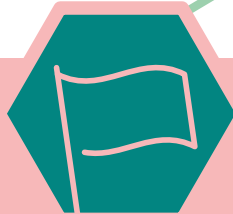
## Our values

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.

## Our leadership team



**Colum Conway**  
Chief Executive and  
Accounting Officer



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





**Philip Hallam**  
Executive Director  
Regulation




**Linda Dale**  
Executive Director  
People and Business  
Support

## Performance summary

Our  [strategy](#) sets out our ambitions for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. It builds on the achievements, challenges and learning from our first 3 years. We developed it in partnership with staff and our  [National Advisory Forum](#), including people with lived and learned experience of social work.

The strategy focuses on 3 strategic themes where we aim to have an impact on the next stage of our journey:

- prevention and impact - seeking to prevent harm as an increasing focus in how we regulate
- regulation and protection - ensuring our regulation is fair, transparent and strikes the right balance between proportionality and protection
- delivery and improvement - focusing on continuous improvement and efficiency.

For each strategy theme, we set annual  [business plan](#) objectives.

Overall our performance for 2024 to 2025 was in line with what we set out to achieve. We met all our business plan objectives (see pages 22 to 39) and most of our key performance indicator targets (see page 16 to page 20). We continue to face challenges in achieving timely resolution of fitness to practise concerns that are referred to us. This is due to the high volume of concerns we receive from social work employers and members of the public, in comparison with the resources available to investigate these. This situation is not satisfactory. We are doing all we can to make sure our processes are efficient and to secure the necessary resources. An uplift in our grant-in-aid in 2025 to 2026 provides an opportunity to commit more resources to improve our performance in this area.

### Fitness to practise

To be a social worker in England, a person must be registered with us and be 'fit to practise'. By 'fit to practise' we mean that this person can practise safely and effectively because they have the relevant:

- skills
- knowledge (including knowledge of the English language)
- character, and
- health.



## Performance summary: prevention and impact

We use communication and engagement to advance our mission to enable positive change in social work. Across the year we continued to seek out opportunities to inform, educate and influence others on the varied role social work plays within society and why it is regulated. Social workers listen to and support individuals, families, and communities, helping them find solutions to challenges and promoting their human rights and wellbeing.

We prepared to launch a second phase of our 'Change the Script' campaign building on phase 1 activity the previous year to inform and educate people about the reality and role of social work. Planning took place, in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, for new campaign activity focusing on positively reframing social work with the public and the profession. Teaser content from a new video was shared in March ahead of the second phase being launched in May.

Our fifth Social Work Week in 2025 featured 15 free online sessions with 58 presenters, attracting 6,754 attendees. The week creates an opportunity to better explain our role as the regulator and to connect with the broader system in which we operate.

We published new data and research findings, to increase transparency about our regulation and support learning across the social work sector. This included:

- a breakdown of [!\[\]\(d328bb1c8b293dce97ce8ae48fe06a23\_img.jpg\) demographics and diversity of the social work register](#)
- an update to our 2023 analysis of [!\[\]\(de0615d88b2098828c20ab3d39ea2ef6\_img.jpg\) diversity data in fitness to practise processes](#), which revealed that certain groups were overrepresented in referrals and case progression. We continue to explore the reasons for disparities
- findings from a [!\[\]\(6c3f3105811ec6ad9c7c82c1ac88875f\_img.jpg\) survey of social workers](#) in England about our regulation, professional standards and their professional role. The survey of 2,120 social workers revealed that while 86% valued the professional standards, 75% felt society undervalued their profession. These findings help us understand how we're supporting positive change in social work and give us insight into how we can better support social workers and their employers.

We worked closely with government departments to inform and influence the social care reform agenda. We hosted a series of national workforce roundtables to discuss recruitment and retention issues, and the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) in social work practice, with key stakeholders. These will form the basis for further action in the coming year.

Working with key stakeholders in the children's social care sector, we undertook scoping work for the potential professional regulation of the children's residential care homes workforce. We thank all stakeholders

who supported and informed this work, which we shared with the Department for Education in December 2024.

During 2024 to 2025, we made significant progress with our regulation of social work education and training, which is vital in making sure social workers are equipped and ready for the important work that they do.

We completed our first reapproval cycle of all social work courses in March 2025. This involved reviewing 257 courses, delivered by 79 providers in just over 3 years. Reflecting on our experience, we are reviewing our approach in partnership with key stakeholders and making improvements to our systems and processes. Our learning will ensure that the future education and training standards reflect sector needs and best practices. We continue this work as we prepare to consult on proposed changes in autumn.

In October 2024, we launched our knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) statements, which will form a central component of new 'readiness for professional practice' guidance. We continue to draft this guidance, which will also clarify the relationship between the statements and our education and training standards.

A key achievement has been our introduction of education and training standards for Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) and Best Interests Assessors (BIA). We will begin to inspect against these standards from September 2025. This work is integral to future development of regulatory frameworks for specialist social work positions.

We began to consider how regulation might support practice education, commissioning research to map the course provision landscape in England. The learning will inform development of a future regulatory model for practice education.

This preparatory groundwork positions us well for the coming year as we continue to develop tailored approaches to regulating specialised areas of practice.

Finally, we undertook some exploratory work to learn more about how social workers use continuing professional development (CPD). This will inform a wider review of our CPD requirements in 2025 to 2026.

Page 22 to page 33 provide more detail about our 2024 to 2025 objectives and performance in relation to prevention and impact.



### **Performance summary: regulation and protection**

Throughout 2024 to 2025, we made improvements to the way we support people to apply to register as a social worker. This included clearer communications with registration applicants, including those who apply from overseas.



We engaged with social workers and employers to review the registration renewals process, receiving positive feedback about the usability of our online system. Our conclusion was that our current approach to registration renewal remains proportionate and effective, successfully balancing public protection with efficiency. During 2025 to 2026, we will use lessons learned from the review to further improve guidance and standardise communications.

During the annual registration renewal period, 103,387 (98%) social workers renewed their registration.

As set out in our business plan, we reviewed options to bring some of our fitness to practise legal advocacy work in-house and selected a preferred approach. An implementation plan is now in place, and we are starting to recruit for in-house advocacy roles. The new service will be operational towards the end of 2025 to 2026, and will start to realise cost savings from 2026 to 2027.


We made progress in identifying alternative approaches to concluding cases referred for a final hearing. We considered how other regulators approach consensual panel disposal.

We sought legal advice on potential approaches to ensure fairness and consistency. Work will continue in 2025 to 2026 to design a process and draft guidance in preparation for consultation later in the year.

### **Consensual panel disposal**

This approach would involve Social Work England and the social worker under investigation agreeing on the facts of the concerns, and as to whether the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired. Independent adjudicators would then make the final decision

We also concluded our pilot for cases to be heard by 2 adjudicators, rather than 3, in some final hearings. Next steps will be identified during 2025 to 2026.

Timeliness in some parts of the fitness to practise process continued to be a significant issue, particularly at the initial  [triage](#) stage and where cases are referred to a final hearing.

This situation is far from satisfactory, and we took various steps to begin to address timeliness over the course of the year. We identified additional resources to support the triage service and put a resourcing plan in place. We established a new leadership team across the triage and investigation functions, which has provided the leadership capacity to begin delivering improvements.

We used our available resources to conclude as many cases as possible that were awaiting a final hearing. Following a mid-year review of our budget, we were able to identify additional resources to

hold more hearings than we initially planned. We concluded 70 cases through hearing and 7 by other means.

This work to improve timeliness in the fitness to practise process will continue in the year ahead. Additional grant-in-aid in 2025 to 2026 will provide an opportunity to commit more resources to improve performance in this area.

We implemented targeted training for staff on the Equality Act 2010, and on handling challenging communications. We also started work to develop a quality assurance framework for case examiners, which will further support consistent decision-making. We sought to increase social worker engagement within the fitness to practise process through clearer guidance and a new video to explain accepted disposal outcomes.

Our 'single point of contact' network improves communication between us and social work employers. It helps employers to understand regulatory requirements and enables the sharing of preventative approaches to fitness to practise issues. We further developed the network during the year, with our regional engagement leads leading regular national and regional sessions. We used our data on common themes in fitness to practise referrals, such as dishonesty and the misuse of social media, to educate and inform the profession on the challenges and risks in these areas.

Page 30 to page 37 provide more detail about our 2024 to 2025 objectives and performance in relation to regulation and protection.



## **Performance summary: delivery and improvement**

During 2024 to 2025 we continued to deliver our people strategy, with the first cohort of managers successfully completing our new manager development programme. This achieved strong participation and engagement. Positive feedback from managers highlighted increased confidence and peer connections.

A key focus was our work with an external organisation to review our organisational culture and behaviours. Our people had the opportunity to engage and contribute to this work. It culminated in an understanding of our current and desired future culture and recommendations for future leadership development.

We received the results of our latest Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) submission. We maintained our silver award and saw a 3 percentage point increase in our score compared with the previous year, up to 70%. This recognises our continued progress in building an inclusive workplace.

During the year we refreshed our hybrid working principles and approach. We made improvements to our office environment, to better meet the needs of our people and support effective working.

We continued to develop our digital services, to ensure our approach remains inclusive and intuitive for our users, while keeping data secure. In particular, we made accessibility improvements to our website and improved our case management system to support more efficient ways of working.

In December 2024, we appointed an independent organisation to review our digital, data and technology arrangements, to help us understand our current strengths, risks and areas for improvement. Based on our learning from the review, we'll finalise and begin to implement our digital, data and technology strategy in the year ahead.

Efficiency and value for money have continued to be a strong area of focus. We completed a comprehensive value for money evaluation of our first 4 years of regulation, which has informed the development of our efficiency plan for 2025 to 2026.

Ensuring that we achieve best value through our procurement and contracting is an important aspect of our efficiency work. To support this, we reviewed our commercial procedures in light of the Procurement Act 2023 and trained staff on the new requirements.

Page 37 to page 38 provide more detail about our 2024 to 2025 objectives and performance in relation to delivery and improvement. Page 76 to page 79 provide more detail about our people and people policies.

## How we measure and report performance

In addition to our strategic and business plan objectives, we set key performance indicators to monitor our performance and progress during the year.

We met most of our key performance indicator targets during 2024 to 2025. However, we did not achieve some for the fitness to practise process. High caseloads and resourcing challenges continued to affect timeliness during the triage and investigations phases of fitness to practise. The reasons for these challenges, and what we are doing to address them, are explained in more detail on page 31 to page 32.

We also did not achieve our key performance indicator target for year-end budget variance. Our full year expenditure, net of fee income, was below budget. This was predominantly due to a change in accounting policy for legal fees. We explain our performance in more detail in the financial statements on page 92.

This is the first year a target was set for the time taken to conclude misuse of title cases. The median time taken to conclude misuse of titles cases can fluctuate significantly due to the small number of cases and their levels of complexity. We are considering whether this provides an effective measurement of performance for the next business year.

## Education and training key performance indicator

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Completed course reapproval decisions (cumulative target for our 3-year reapproval cycle)	100% (target of 100% achieved)	74% (target of more than or equal to 70% achieved)	32% (target of more than or equal to 33% missed)

## Registration key performance indicators

### Time taken to approve registration and restoration applications

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Time taken to approve UK registration applications	3 working days median (target of less than or equal to 10 working days median achieved)	3 working days median (target of less than or equal to 10 working days median achieved)	5 working days median (target of less than or equal to 10 working days median achieved)
Time taken to approve restoration applications	6 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)	3 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)	6 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)

### Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Time taken to conclude misuse of title cases	24 working days median (target of less than or equal to 60 working days median achieved)	55 working days median (no target set <sup>1</sup> )	34 working days median (no target set <sup>1</sup> )

<sup>1</sup> For 2024 to 2025 we refined our calculation for this indicator. The 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2024 figures remain as originally calculated.

### Time taken to answer emails and phone calls

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Time taken to answer emails	2 working days median (target of less than or equal to 5 working days median achieved)	2 working days median (target of less than or equal to 5 working days median achieved)	2 working days median (target of less than or equal to 5 working days median achieved)
Time taken to answer phone calls	4 minutes median (target of less than or equal to 8 minutes median achieved)	6 minutes median (target of less than or equal to 8 minutes median achieved)	8 minutes median (target of less than or equal to 8 minutes median achieved)

### Fitness to practise key performance indicators

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Age of triage caseload	17 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 14 weeks median missed)	23 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 14 weeks median missed)	16 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 12 weeks missed)
Age of investigation caseload	77 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 54 weeks missed)	62 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 54 weeks missed)	60 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 9 months missed)
Time taken to complete the case examination process	13 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 12 weeks median missed)	10 weeks median (target of less than or equal to 12 weeks median achieved)	8 weeks median (no target set)
Time from receipt of referral to final fitness to practise outcome	113 weeks median (no target set)	110 weeks median (no target set)	109 weeks median (no target set)
Time taken to approve interim orders	18 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)	18 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)	18 working days median (target of less than or equal to 20 working days median achieved)

### Information governance key performance indicators

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Time taken to complete Freedom of Information requests	99% (target of more than or equal to 90% within deadline achieved)	100% (target of more than or equal to 90% within deadline achieved)	98% (target of 100% within deadline missed)
Time taken to complete subject access requests	100% (target of more than or equal to 90% within deadline achieved)	100% (target of more than or equal to 90% within deadline achieved)	99% (target of 100% within deadline missed)

### Corporate complaints key performance indicator

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Corporate complaints response time	91% (target of more than or equal to 80% within 20 working days achieved)	90% (target of more than or equal to 70% within 20 working days achieved)	78% (target of 100% within 20 working days missed)

### Finance key performance indicator

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Year-end variance to budget	2.8% (target of +/- 1.5% missed)	0.1% (target of +/- 1.5% achieved)	0.7% (target of +/- 1.5% achieved)

### IT key performance indicator

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
System availability excluding planned outages	99.9% (target of more than or equal to 99% achieved)	99.9% (target of more than or equal to 99% achieved)	99.8% (target of more than or equal to 99% achieved)

## People key performance indicators

Key performance indicator	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Sickness absence days lost over last 12 months	7.9 days (target of less than or equal to 8.1 days per person achieved)	8.9 days (target of less than or equal to 5.4 days per person missed)	6.0 days (no target set)
Retention rate over previous 12 months	87% (target of more than or equal to 80% achieved)	86% (target of more than or equal to 80% achieved)	85% (target of more than or equal to 85% achieved)

## Summary of key risks

As we work to achieve our strategic business objectives, effectively managing risk is paramount to our success.

In 2024 to 2025, our overall risk landscape was broadly similar to the previous year. Our most significant corporate risks related to cyber-security, financial resourcing and our ability to manage demand and achieve timeliness within key areas of our regulation.

### Financial resourcing and the hearings backlog

The risk that we would not be able to progress all fitness to practise cases referred to a final hearing in a timely way materialised in 2023 to 2024. Since then, it has been managed as an issue. A new risk was added to our risk register, relating to our ability to secure the resources we need to deliver all our regulatory responsibilities in a timely and efficient way.

In 2024 to 2025, following a change to our accounting policy, we were able to release additional resources to support fitness to practise case progression and schedule more hearings than initially planned. In March 2025, we secured an increased allocation of grant-in-aid for 2025 to 2026. We continue to focus on how we can drive efficiency improvements and maximise the impact of this additional funding. This risk is on a positive trajectory.



### **Managing demand and timeliness in key areas of regulation**

There continues to be a risk that we are unable to manage demand and achieve timely outcomes in our registration service, and also in the triage and investigations stages of fitness to practise.

We completed work in 2024 to 2025 to ensure that we have an effective and well-supported team in registration that can manage fluctuations in demand. We also increased staffing in the triage and investigations service, but large numbers of complex cases and changes in leadership impacted timeliness over the course of the year.

In 2025 to 2026 we will implement further improvements, including a review of processes within triage and investigations. We anticipate a reduction in both the likelihood and impact of this risk.

### **Cyber security**

Cyber-attacks are increasing in frequency, sophistication and impact across all sectors. Although we have robust policies, systems and procedures in place, the risk of a successful cyber, ransomware or socially engineered attack represents a major threat to our business operations and the security of personal data that we hold.

In 2025 to 2026, we will continue to strengthen our approach to monitoring and identifying suspicious activity. We expect the actions we are taking to reduce the risk of a successful cyber-attack.

For further information on our corporate risks and mitigations, see the accountability report on page 50.

## Performance analysis

In the performance overview we summarised our performance in 2024 to 2025 under each of the following strategy themes:

- prevention and impact
- regulation and protection
- delivery and improvement.

In this section of the report, we consider our performance against each of our business plan objectives. These are grouped under the strategic theme they relate to and support. After reviewing performance under each theme, we briefly set out our plans for the year ahead.

Within the performance analysis for regulation and protection, we also provide an overview of our annual fitness to practise activity and outcomes.

The performance analysis section concludes with an overview of our impact on the environment, our sustainability actions and a summary of our financial performance.

### Performance analysis: prevention and impact

A vital part of why we exist is to maintain professional standards in social work. People should have trust in their social worker and confidence that they have the skills and expertise to meet their needs. Our work aims to incrementally grow:

- confidence in the way we regulate
- social workers' understanding of how the professional standards apply to their work
- confidence in social work as a profession
- positive views of social work within society.

More information about this strategic theme is in our  [strategy](#).



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

We use communication and engagement to advance our mission to enable positive change in social work. Across the year we continued to seek out opportunities to inform, educate and influence others on the varied role social work plays within society and why social workers are regulated.

## **Social Work Week 2025**

Our fifth Social Work Week programme brought together 6,754 attendees, including people with lived and learned experience across health, social care, education and research.

The week created an opportunity to better explain our role as the regulator and to engage with the broader system in which we operate. It also enabled us to listen, gather insight and remain proactive in our response to emerging issues impacting on safe and effective practice.

We co-produced all 15 sessions with the sector. At a regional level, hundreds of employers, community groups and social workers embraced this now established national moment. Many hosted their own activities to show social work in action across digital and face to face activities, raising the profile of the profession both regionally and nationally.

### **'Change the Script'**

We aim to dispel some of the negative perceptions that too often undermine confidence in the profession. Following the launch of our 'Change the Script' campaign in March 2024, we began preparing for a second phase of the campaign, building on our earlier success in informing and educating people about the reality and role of social work. Through the second phase we want to influence wider societal narratives and understanding of social work as a regulated profession.

In March 2025, we shared behind the scenes footage of a new film featuring social workers and people with lived experience of social work, in advance of the full campaign launch in May 2025. We worked with a range of stakeholders to develop a guide on how to talk and write about social work.

### **Engagement with the profession**

We took a more targeted approach to our regional engagement activity this year. Our regional engagement leads listened to the experiences of professionals on the ground and used targeted interventions to improve understanding of our fitness to practise process. Using data and insight we proactively shared emerging areas of regulatory risk in our regional conversations, shining a spotlight on how to avoid prevalent themes such as dishonesty and poor or inappropriate communication. This 2-way dialogue ensures that we continue to raise standards in social work, in collaboration with professionals and their employers as a key intermediary.

As well as Social Work Week, we had a meaningful presence at key sector events such as Community Care Live and the National Children and Adult Services Conference to discuss workforce issues. In addition to this, our regional engagement leads connected with 1,092 stakeholders across all types of social work practice. We reached a

total of 126 new organisations, which is evident of the growing and diverse settings that employ social workers.

We held a leadership summit on AI in social work practice and this will form the basis of future work in this area, alongside research we have commissioned.

### **Benchmarking our impact**

We carried out our first survey of social workers to understand how they feel about our regulation, about professional standards and the status of the profession. By repeating the survey and recording comparable data year on year about social workers' perceptions, we hope to stay in touch with any shifts in sentiment.

The survey of 2,120 social workers revealed that:

- 86% felt that professional standards were important to them
- 90% understood how the standards applied to their work
- 75% felt that society did not value their profession
- 42% would not recommend social work as a career.

We continue to build and nurture relationships with our stakeholders, acknowledging that these are central to helping us fulfil our mission. To better understand stakeholder sentiment and current perceptions we gathered feedback through a stakeholder survey. This has established a benchmark and given us information to help target, structure and plan our engagement activities in the coming year.

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



### **Data and insight approach**

Over the past year, we've continued to analyse diversity data to give us greater insight into our fitness to practise processes (more information on page 34 to page 37). Our goal is to improve fairness in these processes where we identify that it is needed.

In referrals received by us and cases referred for a hearing, we found an overrepresentation of:


- people aged 40 and over
- males
- people of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British ethnicity.

These groups also had higher progression rates from triage to investigation, and from case examination to hearing.

In response, we have:

- shared findings with local authorities and started to co-produce some fair referral principles
- collaborated with Skills for Care on the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard
- delivered equality training to staff
- revised our internal guidance on equality and decision-making.

We continue to explore the reasons for the initial findings. We expect it will take time for us to identify the causes of overrepresentation in our processes.

Our  website provides further details of the analysis and the work we have undertaken.

We completed our analysis of timeliness in processing applications to register as a social worker from overseas. This explored the potential impact of different factors on the time taken to conclude applications. Learning from the data, we improved our guidance and engagement with employers and agencies. We have raised awareness of the need for applicants to apply for registration in advance of any potential employment opportunities, rather than leaving it as a final employment step. These findings provided us with a benchmark for ongoing monitoring, which will in turn inform future development work.

## **Policy research**

We grew our research capacity to help shape our research strategy which we will be developing in 2025 to 2026. As part of our new focus on research, we planned and commissioned 4 independent research projects that will conclude in 2025 to 2026, to help us better understand key areas and inform future policy, including:

- what we understand by 'seriousness' in the fitness to practise concerns that are referred to us
- mapping the practice education landscape
- understanding the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence in social work and social work education.



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

We worked closely with both the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care to support positive policy actions for the profession.

Following the recommendations of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), we were asked to scope possible approaches for the professional regulation for the children's residential care homes workforce. We established a stakeholder advisory group with key sector leaders and collaborated with key stakeholders including Ofsted and Ofqual, as well as drawing on the expertise and experience of regulators in the devolved nations. We submitted our scoping report to the Department for Education in December 2024.

We were also involved in an expert writing group, which drafted the post qualifying standards for the Social Work Induction Programme (formerly the Early Career Framework). This work was included in the Department for Education's consultation, launched in March 2025.

Complex challenges face the social work workforce including recruitment, retention, resources and morale issues. Recognising the need for shared action and commitment, we hosted a national workforce roundtable at our Sheffield office. Here, key sector stakeholders identified priority issues and developed collective actions aimed at creating positive and meaningful long-term change.



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

Over the course of the year, we explored and established the tools at our disposal for regulating specialist and advanced practice roles. We published our education and training standards for approved mental health professionals (AMHP) and best interests assessors (BIA) courses, and we continue to prepare to quality assure these courses from next summer (see objective 4.1).

We have begun initial scoping work on future regulation of practice education. As per objective 2.1, we have commissioned an independent provider to map the practice education landscape to deepen our understanding of this workforce and inform our next steps.



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

We explored our continuing professional development (CPD) requirements through engagement with social workers, people with lived experience and employers. Our aim was to understand how they felt about our CPD requirements. We also sought insight into how social workers meet these requirements, and what they would like us to consider in the future. This work included a literature review and a public survey with 1,058 responses.

Among our key findings were that:

- Social workers are completing CPD submissions efficiently and in detail on a wide variety of topics. Safeguarding being the most common focus.
- Though they shared that they are carrying out CPD year round, most social workers only record with us the required 2 pieces each year.
- Some feel our requirement to only record 2 pieces of CPD indicates that we don't value the breadth of CPD social workers do throughout the year.
- Social workers see the CPD they do as essential but advocate for a longer cycle to ease the burden of recording it.
- Some shared that they don't always feel supported by their employer to complete CPD. They argued for a greater role for employers in managing and monitoring CPD.
- Our current requirements are flexible, more so than most other regulators.

While we carried out this work, individual social workers' CPD records were not selected for review by independent assessors. However, we continued to conduct compliance checks.



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

During the year, we collaborated with stakeholders including employers and education providers, to help shape our inspection model for approved mental health professionals (AMHP) and best interests assessors (BIA). We published the education and training standards for these courses and will begin a cycle of reapproval inspections from September 2025.

We recruited 24 additional inspectors with AMHP and/or BIA experience to support the new inspections.





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

We concluded our first 3-year cycle of inspections by the end of March 2025, which means:

- all course providers have evidenced that their courses meet our standards, and where they haven't been able to evidence this, conditions have been applied or courses haven't been approved.
- students who successfully complete a course can meet our professional standards

In 2024 to 2025, we completed the following inspection decisions:

Total re-approval decisions: 66

- not approved: 2
- approved: 13
- approved with conditions: 51

Total approval decisions: 35

- not approved: 0
- approved: 7
- approved with conditions: 28

Our feedback survey of course providers received responses from 37 course providers, with 86% scoring the inspection experience as good or better. We are using this feedback to inform our future approach.

## **Learning from education quality assurance inspections**

As well as seeking feedback from course providers about their experience of the inspection process, we continue to consider wider learning from inspections. This will help to shape our future strategic approach to education and training, and identify data and insights that contribute to sector-wide knowledge. We have engaged with key stakeholders, including inspectors and course providers. We will share high-level outcomes of this work with the sector during 2025 to 2026.

## **Review of our education and training standards**

Following an internal scoping review of the education and training standards, we held workshops with external stakeholders. We gathered their feedback on both the standards and supporting guidance.

Discussions with inspectors, our [!\[\]\(4f6bf54ae7e4144a72d78316053e412d\_img.jpg\) Education and Training Advisory Forum](#) and course providers are informing our development of proposed changes, which we will consult on in 2025 to 2026.



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

Following extensive engagement with our Education and Training Advisory Forum (ETAF), we published our knowledge, skills and behaviours statements (KSBs) in October 2024. These statements will be a core component of new 'readiness for professional practice' curriculum guidance. As part of our education and training standards review, we continue to draft this guidance.

We also completed a successful recruitment round for the Education and Training Advisory Forum, where we were overwhelmed with interest from the sector. We recruited 15 additional members, who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the group. This brings ETAF membership up to 28.

### **Looking ahead**

In 2025 to 2026, we will continue to inform, educate and influence others on the varied role social work plays within society. As part of the next phase of the 'Change the Script' campaign, we're creating a reframing guide with sector stakeholders. This guide will ensure language accurately portrays the profession and highlights social workers' positive impact on the people they support.

Drawing on the learning from our review of CPD, during 2025 to 2026 we will collaborate more extensively with employers to understand their existing arrangements and aspirations for CPD. We will also engage further with social workers and people with lived experience to understand their thoughts on our future CPD requirements.

We will have a better understanding of key areas of social work practice through completion of the research we've commissioned. We'll share findings and next steps with the sector as we begin to consider where we should focus our research in the year ahead. Looking further ahead, we'll be setting out our longer-term research ambitions that align with our wider objectives later in 2025 to 2026.

During 2025 to 2026, we will publish a report that shares learning from our inspections of qualifying education and training courses. The report will outline our unique perspective as the regulator of social work courses in England.


We will also be preparing for a consultation on changes to our education and training standards and rules in 2025 to 2026. These preparations will include significant pre-consultation engagement with course providers, teaching partnerships, placement providers, students and people with lived experience. These changes will allow

us to bring our new knowledge, skills and behaviours statements into regulation, as part of readiness for professional practice guidance.

We will continue our work on recruitment and retention issues in the profession, alongside key partners, and will play a leadership role in considering the impact of AI for the social work profession.


## Performance analysis: regulation and protection

Protecting the public starts with our professional standards, which apply to every social worker. Our regulation embeds the principles of professionalism to support safe and effective practice. We strive to ensure that all of our regulatory activity strikes the right balance between protection and proportionality and that it is fair, transparent, efficient and in the public interest.

More information about this strategic theme is in our  [strategy](#).



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

We require social workers to renew their  [registration](#) and demonstrate that they meet our professional standards on an annual basis. This way they show that they are capable of safe and effective practice, ensuring public protection and increasing public confidence. As part of this process, we set annual continuing professional development (CPD) requirements that social workers must meet to maintain their registration. As such, we encourage a culture of learning and development that is ongoing, sustained and embedded in practice.

In 2024 to 2025 we reviewed our approach to registration renewal, in parallel to our review of CPD (see objective 3.3). We analysed qualitative responses from an initial public survey. We used the results to inform our approach and discussion topics for workshops held in November 2024. We obtained feedback directly from social workers about our current renewals and CPD approach. We also sent a survey to employers in December 2024.

The outputs from the review indicated that our registration renewals approach required no significant changes.



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

During the year we scoped options for bringing elements of our preparatory and advocacy work for mandatory hearings activity in-house. This work included meeting with other regulators to understand their approaches, and identifying options for team structures and costs for an in-house advocacy service.

We have now selected a preferred approach. A 2-year implementation plan is in place and we recruited the service manager. If recruitment for other advocacy roles proves successful, the service will be operational towards the end of 2025 to 2026.



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

We have made good progress in exploring alternative ways to conclude fitness to practise cases that are referred for a hearing. We will use learning from research that we undertook, to design and consult on our approach to consensual panel disposal in 2025 to 2026. This approach would involve Social Work England and the social worker under investigation agreeing on the facts of the concerns, and as to whether the social worker's fitness to practise is impaired. Independent adjudicators would then make the final decision. Consensual panel disposal would enable us to hold shorter hearings in some cases. This is because the evidence is not disputed by either party. It would bring benefits to all parties involved, reduce cost and increase capacity for more hearings to be held.

During 2024 to 2025, we concluded our pilot for holding some final fitness to practise hearings with 2 adjudicators rather than 3. In 2025 to 2026, we will review and evaluate the findings from the pilot to see if the approach maintains decision-making quality while supporting efficiency.




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

Timeliness in some parts of the fitness to practise process continued to be a significant issue for us to address, particularly at the triage stage, and where cases have been referred for a final hearing.

We identified additional resources to support the triage service and put a resourcing plan in place. We used our available resources to conclude as many cases as possible via a final hearing. Following a mid-year review of our budget, we were able to identify additional resources to hold more hearings than initially planned. We reviewed our 50 oldest cases, concluding 10 and referring 11 for specialist review. Across the year, we concluded 70 cases via hearing and 7 by other means.

We delivered targeted training to improve fitness to practise operations. Staff received training on the Equality Act 2010 and handling challenging communications, enhancing confidence in managing interactions with social workers, witnesses and complainants. We also began developing a quality assurance framework for case examiners to further ensure consistent decision-making.

We began a project to increase engagement from social workers under investigation and to provide clearer guidance on engaging with the regulator. By increasing engagement and ensuring social workers understand what information they should provide during an investigation, this project should create more opportunities to close cases by way of an  accepted disposal, where appropriate.

Changes in our fitness to practise leadership team limited capacity to progress some improvement activities during the year. Despite these challenges, we continued to focus on effective case progression and improvements to support early engagement, including improved data collection forms for social workers.

We strengthened our triage and investigations team by recruiting additional legal support, including a new fitness to practise lawyer and paralegal. We re-established a complete management team in February 2025.



### **Objective 7.1: develop our Single Point of Contact (SPOC) network and explore local resolution pathways**

The network improves communication between us and employers, helping them understand regulatory requirements and sharing preventative approaches to fitness to practise issues. We use our data on common themes in fitness to practise referrals to educate and inform the profession on the challenges and risks in these areas.

In September 2024, we relaunched our forum for network members, with 75 attendees. We discussed our analysis of diversity data in fitness to practise. We also explored the impact of the network and how it can play a pivotal role in supporting preventative responses to resolve concerns locally, where appropriate.

Regional engagement leads proactively connected with network members and wider stakeholders to share learning, data and insight about fitness to practise. During the year, we supported 139 fitness to practise engagement activities, 9 national fitness to practise sessions (266 attendees) and 61 regional fitness to practise sessions (1,722 attendees). Content and case studies at these sessions were focused on dishonesty, which internal quality assurance identified as the highest concern type raised by employers. (see also objective 1.1).

We redesigned our national online fitness to practise workshop which aims to provide an overview of our fitness to practise process. The workshop also outlines the information we need to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible for people involved. We originally aimed this workshop at employers and managers and have now expanded it to all social workers.

### Looking ahead

Timeliness in triage and at the hearings stage, continues to be a significant issue. In addition to a new resourcing plan to support the triage service to improve performance in 2025 to 2026, we will review processes to improve efficiency. We will use additional funds to progress as many cases awaiting a final hearing as possible.

We're also developing an extensive training programme for a new in-house advocacy service. The aim is for the team to commence mandatory work including interim order and final order reviews, by the end of 2025 to 2026. We expect to see cost savings from 2026 to 2027.


During our review of our registration renewal approach several improvements were identified to support operational effectiveness and improve engagement with the sector. We will be developing plans to deliver these improvements in 2025 to 2026.

Additionally in 2025 to 2026, we plan to establish additional regional forums to support understanding of regulatory requirements and review our information pack for employer single points of contact.


## Fitness to practise

It is our responsibility to investigate concerns about social workers' fitness to practise. We take this action to protect the public, maintain public confidence in social workers and uphold professional standards.

It's vital that we investigate such concerns in a fair and transparent way, and in line with our legal framework.

Information about how to raise a concern about a social worker and how we deal with  [concerns](#) is available on our website.

## Fitness to practise data

During the year, we published more  [monthly data relating to our social work register and fitness to practise cases](#). Our yearly summary below shows the overall volume of activity and the proportion of cases that progressed to each stage of the fitness to practise process.


On 31 March 2025, there were 2,533 open fitness to practise cases.

The numbers below are based on decisions that we made on cases at each stage of fitness to practise during the year. They include cases that we opened in previous years.

We made 1,420 assessment decisions across the pre-triage and triage stages of our fitness to practise process. Of these decisions:

- 74% (1,044) were to close cases with no further action
- 26% (376) were to progress cases to the investigations stage

Case examiners made 423 decisions, of which:

- 48% (202) were to close with no impairment
- 27% (114) were to close cases by means of  [accepted disposal](#)
- 25% (107) were to refer to a hearing

Of the cases that were closed at the case examination stage with no impairment, we applied the following outcomes:

- 54% (110) no further action
- 20% (40) advice
- 26% (52) warning



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

- 0% (0) no further action
- 1% (1) advice
- 51% (58) warning orders
- 18% (21) conditions of practice orders
- 6% (7) suspension orders
- 24% (27) removal orders

We decided 70 cases at hearings, finding:

- 77% (54) of cases where the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired
- 23% (16) of cases where no impairment was found

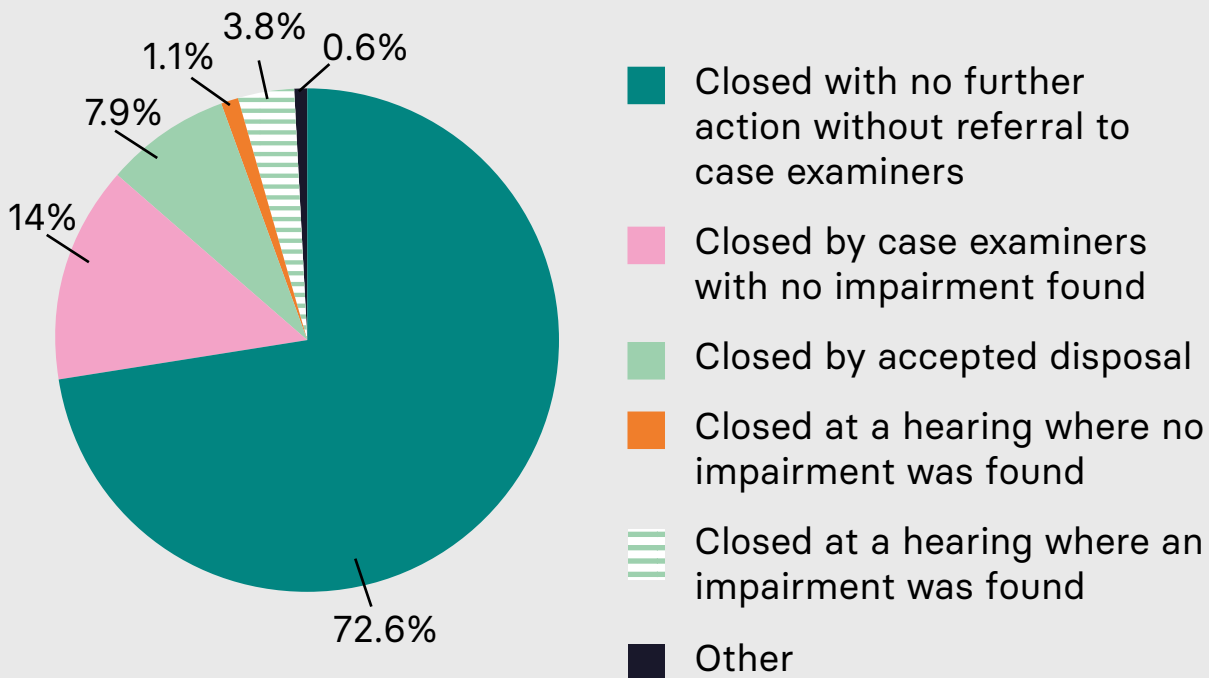
Where we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following sanctions:

- 0% (0) no further action
- 15% (8) warning orders
- 7% (4) conditions of practice orders
- 26% (14) suspension orders
- 52% (28) removal orders

Where we found that the social worker's fitness to practise was not impaired at the hearings stage, we applied the following outcomes:

- 75% (12) no further action
- 25% (4) warning

## Fitness to practise case outcomes



During the year, 1,439 cases reached a final outcome, of which:

- 72.6% (1,044) were closed with no further action, without referral to case examiners
- 14.0% (202) were closed by case examiners with no impairment found
- 7.9% (114) were closed by accepted disposal
- 3.8% (54) were closed at a hearing where impairment was found
- 1.1% (16) were closed at a hearing with no impairment found
- 0.6% (9) cases were closed for other reasons. For example, voluntary removal from the register or removal from the register on another fitness to practise case.

## Reflecting on fitness to practise referrals

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


This year we received 1,854 referrals (1,617 in 2023 to 2024), of which 1,138 have a known source. Of these:

- 228 (337 in 2023 to 2024) were from employers of social workers
- 730 (641 in 2023 to 2024) were from members of the public
- 180 (194 in 2023 to 2024) were from other sources

Members of the public made 64% of referrals, up from 55% in 2023 to 2024. These referrals were primarily from people who use the services of social workers.

At the triage stage, we referred 66% of the referrals we received from employers into our investigation process (79% in 2023 to 2024). 96% of referrals from members of the public were not appropriate for us to investigate as the regulator (93% in 2023 to 2024). For example, we cannot:

- 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](#).

### **Fitness to practise internal quality standards**

In 2024 to 2025, we undertook quality assurance audits on our risk assessment and interim order processes and decisions. This activity provided assurance that the quality of decision making in this area was a strength.


We also reviewed the effectiveness of case progression within triage, investigation and case examination. This showed us that compliance with our policies and process was high, and enabled us to identify ways to continue to strengthen our processes.

We examined a sample of fitness to practise cases, alongside our ongoing numerical analysis, to try to gain a deeper understanding of what causes overrepresentation in our fitness to practise processes.

We continued to receive learning points from the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). These points related to cases that it considered through its ability to refer our final decisions to the High Court (the Section 29 process). We have reviewed these learning points and shared them internally and with our partners.

### **Performance analysis: delivery and improvement**

To deliver our ambitions, we are focused on continuously improving the approaches and systems which underpin our work. Key to this are our people, and also our digital services through which so much of our engagement with the public and the profession takes place.

More information about this strategic theme is in our  [strategy](#).



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

During 2024 to 2025, we introduced our new management development programme, to support managers in their roles and build confidence and consistency in applying our policies and managing our people.

We received excellent engagement and feedback from managers was positive. Managers particularly valued the opportunity to establish connections with peers and reported increased confidence in their understanding of policy and preparing for difficult conversations.

We also relaunched our buddy scheme and managers' forum to enable the sharing of advice and peer support.



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

During 2024 to 2025, we worked with a specialist partner organisation to review our organisational culture and behaviours (linked to objective 9.1). All our people were given the opportunity to engage and contribute to this work, in a variety of ways, at different stages of the process. It included usability testing of the behaviours framework, which 101 people engaged in. This work culminated in a clear understanding of our current and desired future culture, a new behaviours framework and recommendations for future leadership development.

Alongside developing the behaviours framework, we continued to support and nurture our staff networks. We have set up an internal taskforce to consider ways to strengthen their impact. We've seen a positive increase in people joining the networks and engaging with network events.

We reviewed our approach and principles of hybrid working and launched our hybrid working hub on the staff intranet. This provided new guidance and resources for staff in one place.

We also received the results of our latest Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) with our overall score increasing by 3 percentage points to 70%. For the second time we received the silver award, recognising our continued progress in building an inclusive workplace. We have started to review our progress against the latest TIDE questionnaire in preparation for our submission next year.

For more information about our people policies, see page 76.

## **Supporting continuous improvement**

During the year, we continued to develop our digital services to ensure our approach remains inclusive and intuitive for our users, while keeping data secure. Key digital achievements included the delivery of new functionality to store and manage contact information within our case management system, to support efficient working practices and reduce the risk of data incidents. We also completed accessibility improvements to our public website and implemented a cookies manager. Extensive testing of the registration renewal system provided assurance that over 100,000 social workers would be able to complete the annual registration renewals process successfully.

In December 2024, we appointed an external specialist organisation to work with us, to carry out an independent review of our digital, data and technology architecture and resourcing. The review took place between January and March 2025. Based on our learning, we'll finalise and begin to implement our digital, data and technology strategy in the year ahead.

Efficiency and value for money continued to be a strong area of focus. We completed an evaluation of our first 4 years of regulation, focusing on the value for money we had been able to achieve (efficiency, effectiveness, economy and equity). This has informed the development of our efficiency plan for 2025 to 2026.

Ensuring that we achieve best value through procurement and contracting is important in being able to optimise our efficiency and effectiveness. In 2024 to 2025, we reviewed our commercial procedures following the Procurement Act 2023 and trained staff on the new requirements.

## **Looking ahead**

Our new behaviours framework will launch in spring 2025, alongside a package of leadership development to enable our people to adapt and embed these ways of working. We will also be preparing an evaluation of the first full manager development programme and getting ready for the next cohort of managers.

In 2025 to 2026, we'll finalise and start to deliver our digital, data and technology strategy. This will help us to ensure that we deliver excellent digital services for social workers and members of the public, and to be as efficient as possible in the way we work. We'll also review our commercial pipeline, in order to manage future procurements more strategically, and strengthen contract management for key supplier relationships.

## Sustainability reporting

### Sustainability and the environment


We've reported on climate-related financial disclosures consistent with HM Treasury's Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) aligned disclosure application guidance. This guidance interprets and adapts the framework for the UK public sector.


Social Work England does not consider climate to be a principal risk, and has therefore complied with the TCFD recommendations and recommended disclosures around:

- governance: all recommended disclosures
- risk management: all recommended disclosures
- metrics and targets: recommended disclosures (b)

This is in line with the central government's TCFD-aligned disclosure implementation timetable. We have considered the likely impact of climate change, and the risks and opportunities this presents to our organisation and our role. We have identified that it could affect our operations, for example the cost of energy, new technology and the increasing risk of severe weather events such as flooding. We have not identified climate to be a principal risk for our organisation in the near-term but will continue to monitor this through our ongoing horizon-scanning and risk identification processes.

We aim to be a sustainable organisation that contributes positively to challenges facing society and the environment. We're committed to sustainable development as a guiding principle within our work. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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 30% of the building. This multi-occupancy office building has a BREEAM7 (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) very good rating. Its Energy Performance Certificate was upgraded from grade E to C in 2021.

Our  sustainability plan for 2023 to 2026 combines both of the following:

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

The plan aligns with the greening government commitments and focuses on near-term areas that we can most influence and build upon in future years. These commitments include action by our people within local communities, procurement, decarbonisation and waste minimisation.

## **Governance**

The executive director for people and business support sponsors our sustainability plan. The executive leadership team is responsible for all of the following:

- assessing climate-related risks and opportunities within strategy development, business planning and risk appetite
- approving the sustainability plan and annual action plan
- how we need to respond and adapt to climate-related risks
- monitoring delivery and ensuring we mitigate risks
- ensuring we maximise opportunities.

Our board provides strategic oversight of the sustainability plan with support and advice from the audit and risk assurance committee (ARAC). ARAC is responsible for both of the following:

- reporting to our board on the sustainability plan development and implementation
- providing oversight of our approach to managing sustainability risks.



## Reporting

We report our progress bi-annually to ARAC and our board.

Our report on sustainability performance for 2024 to 2025 follows statutory requirements. It is in accordance with HM Treasury's Government Financial Reporting Manual, subject to the information we can fully disclose.

## Mitigating climate change: working towards Net Zero by 2050

### Greenhouse gas emissions

We've calculated carbon emissions for our energy related activities and business travel using the Greenhouse Gas Protocol's corporate standard. All our energy emissions fall under scope 3 of the UK greenhouse gas emissions reporting.

- Scope 1 direct emissions, is not applicable as we don't own energy sources or hire or lease car fleets.
- Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy. Our lease agreement doesn't give us operational control over our energy, gas and water suppliers and therefore scope 2 is not applicable to our organisation.
- Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions not included in scope 2, that occur as a consequence of our activity but aren't owned or controlled by us.

## Consumption

Following the lifting of the COVID-19 guidance to work from home in early 2022, hybrid working became our norm. This shift provides context to the year to year changes reported below.

We started to report our electricity usage from 2021 to 2022. We calculated our electricity consumption from information provided by our landlord.

The cost of electricity was significantly higher in 2022 to 2023 as the landlord issued invoices based on estimated usage. The landlord subsequently carried out a reconciliation and issued us a credit against 2023 to 2024 spend. In 2024 to 2025 the total cost of electricity is based on meter readings provided by our landlord including monthly standing charges.

In 2024 to 2025 our landlord was able to provide gas meter readings. As there is one meter for the building our usage has been apportioned based on the floor space we occupy. The total cost of gas is based on meter readings provided by our landlord including monthly standing charges.

Category	Unit	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023	2021 to 2022	% movement since 2022
Electricity	Kilowatt hours	96,134	116,234	143,319	135,180	-28.90%
Gas	Kilowatt hours	193,776	not available*	not available*	not available*	not available*
CO <sub>2</sub> (electricity)	Tonnes	22.4	27.3	29.9	26.1	-14.2%
CO <sub>2</sub> (gas)*	Tonnes	35.7	not available*	not available*	not available*	not available*
Expenditure (electricity)	£	26,976	50,889	104,086	26,534	1.7%
Expenditure (gas)	£	14,234	not available*	not available*	not available*	not available*

\*CO<sub>2</sub> gas data has been included for 2024 to 2025. Previously, the landlord was unable to provide this information, however it has now been included to improve data quality and completeness.

We have reduced electricity usage and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions since 2021 to 2022.

To increase energy efficiency, we use LED lights that switch on and off according to room occupancy. We have adjusted light sensor timings

in meeting rooms to prevent unnecessary energy usage. Fixtures and fittings we purchased during the year had a high energy efficiency rating.

To highlight energy use within our organisation and become more sustainable, we continued to deliver our 'Turn Teal' internal campaign. This campaign supports the actions laid out in our sustainability plan.

### Business travel

We're committed to hybrid working and the work/life balance it brings people. This commitment supports our efforts towards net zero by 2050. Travel is minimised by using video conferencing for hearings, board meetings and other stakeholder meetings where appropriate. Through our travel and expenses policy, we promote the use of public transport as the more environmentally friendly and economically viable option. We've seen a shift in 2024 to 2025 towards car journeys which we are investigating further. Despite this, emissions have stabilised in the past year and we have achieved a slight reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>e for travel.

Means of transport	2024 to 2025 £	2024 to 2025 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2023 to 2024 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2022 to 2023 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2021 to 2022 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2020 to 2021 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Car	6,208	3.71	2.92	3.55	2.15	1.46
Taxi, rail and bus	29,348	3.59	6.46	6.49	0.21	0.15
Air	2,342	2.50	2.60	2.47	0.11	0.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,898</b>	<b>9.80</b>	<b>11.98</b>	<b>12.51</b>	<b>2.47</b>	<b>1.83</b>

Breakdown of air travel	2024 to 2025 distance travelled (miles)	2024 to 2025 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2023 to 2024 distance travelled (miles)	2023 to 2024 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)	2022 to 2023 distance travelled (miles)	2022 to 2023 (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e)
Domestic short Haul (economy)	5,472	2.40	5,257	2.31	3,050	-
International short haul (economy)	328	0.10	974	0.29	3,198	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>6,231</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>6,248</b>	<b>2.47</b>

## **Waste management**

We changed our waste contract this year and our supplier now collects mixed recycling, general waste and food waste.

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, we produced 0.34 tonnes of mixed recycling and 0.94 tonnes of general waste; a 17% reduction from last year. There has been a 48% reduction in mixed waste as we proactively reduced packaging in our purchases. We have also increased the use of refillable and reusable products.

No waste goes to landfill. 100% is sorted for re-use and recycling. Any waste that cannot be re-used or recycled is incinerated to generate energy. The total cost of waste management during the year 2024 to 2025 was £1,276.

## **Single-use plastics**

We're committed to reducing consumer single-use plastics in line with the government's 25 year environment plan, and use plastic-free packaging wherever possible. 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.

## **Paper use**

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. In 2024 to 2025 we procured one ream of A4 pink paper and no white paper as supplies from the previous year were available.

## **Reducing our water use**

Our water is part of our utilities service charge. 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 effective procurement and contract management delivers value for money, minimises our environmental impact and promotes sustainability and social value. 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.

When undertaking new procurement, we ensure that business cases include an analysis of modern slavery risks. We apply best practice to identify high risk areas as described in the government modern slavery guidance and use the Home Office's Modern Slavery Assessment Tool.

### **Nature recovery and biodiversity**

We do not have any natural capital or landholdings. Our sustainability plan includes a commitment to raise awareness of opportunities to protect and restore biodiversity.

### **Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and digital**

During 2024 to 2025, we continued to enable reuse through our buy back scheme for depreciated laptops. We recycled other network equipment through an accredited third party organisation. Doing so ensures that items are repurposed or sold, extending their useful life and maintaining value.

### **Communities and partnerships**

As part of our sustainability plan, we've developed a volunteering policy in line with our values and status as a public body. This policy links to our sustainability objectives and local charities. Employer supported volunteering gives employees the chance to build connections with their local communities, give back to society and develop new skills. At the same time, it contributes to the achievement of our sustainability priorities. The scheme entitles all employees to one day of paid volunteering leave each year.

### **Adapting to climate change**

We have no natural capital or landholdings. As a tenant of a multi-occupancy building, we do not have direct control of decisions about energy supply. Nor do we have direct control over measures to protect the building and its surroundings from the impact of climate change. The main climate risk we've identified that may affect our operations is the increased risk of local flooding to our offices in North Bank, Sheffield. Our business continuity arrangements address this risk and enable us to quickly move to a model of home-based working.

In 2024 to 2025, we reviewed our risk register to ensure it appropriately considers climate change and sustainability, in line with the Task Force on Climate-related Disclosures (TCFD) reporting requirements. We added climate change as an aggravator to our financial resources corporate risk. We identified that climate change may potentially increase business continuity incidents, reduce efficiency and lead to higher costs.

## Financial commentary

The following commentary summarises our net expenditure and financial position as at 31 March 2025. Further detail is available 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. The Department for Education will therefore consolidate them into its 2024 to 2025 annual accounts.

### Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

During the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, we received income in the form of fees from social workers of £10.17m (£10.09m 2023 to 2024). Further detail is available in note 2 of the financial statements.

We also received £12.11m (£13.22m 2023 to 2024) 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 2024 to 31 March 2025 was £23.24m (£22.61m 2023 to 2024), an increase of £0.63m.

Expenditure is inclusive of staff and other staff related costs, IT and telecommunications costs, legal and professional fees, and depreciation.

Further detail is available below and in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements.

Total expenditure

**£23.24m**

(£22.61m 2023 to 2024)



**Staff and staff related costs:**  
£11.98m (£11.16m 2023 to 2024)  
Consists of staff costs £11.54m and other staff related costs including board fees and travel and subsistence of £0.44m.

**Other operating expenditure:**  
£9.26m (£9.71m 2023 to 2024)  
Consists of professional fees of £5.59m, depreciation and amortisation of £2.05m, provisions of £0.90m and other operating costs of £0.72m.

**Infrastructure costs:**  
£2.00m (£1.74m 2023 to 2024)  
Consists of IT and telecommunications costs of £1.51m and building related costs of £0.49m.



## **Statement of financial position**

Non-current assets obtained during the year cost a total of £2.14m (£2.19m 2023 to 2024).

Further development of our registration and case management system incurred costs of £1.94m (£2.18m 2023 to 2024). Other non-current assets cost £0.20m (£0.01m 2023 to 2024).

As at 31 March 2025, the cash and cash equivalent balance was £4.21m (£3.05m 2023 to 2024).

## **Going concern**

The board has reviewed and approved the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2026. Funding for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 has been confirmed in writing by the Department for Education.

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.

## **Colum Conway**

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer  
2 July 2025

# Accountability report



## Corporate governance report

Here we explain our governance structure and how it supports us to achieve our objectives.

This section of the report 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 Board and Accounting Officer's responsibilities
3. Governance statement

The report on personal information breaches is on page 61.

## 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.

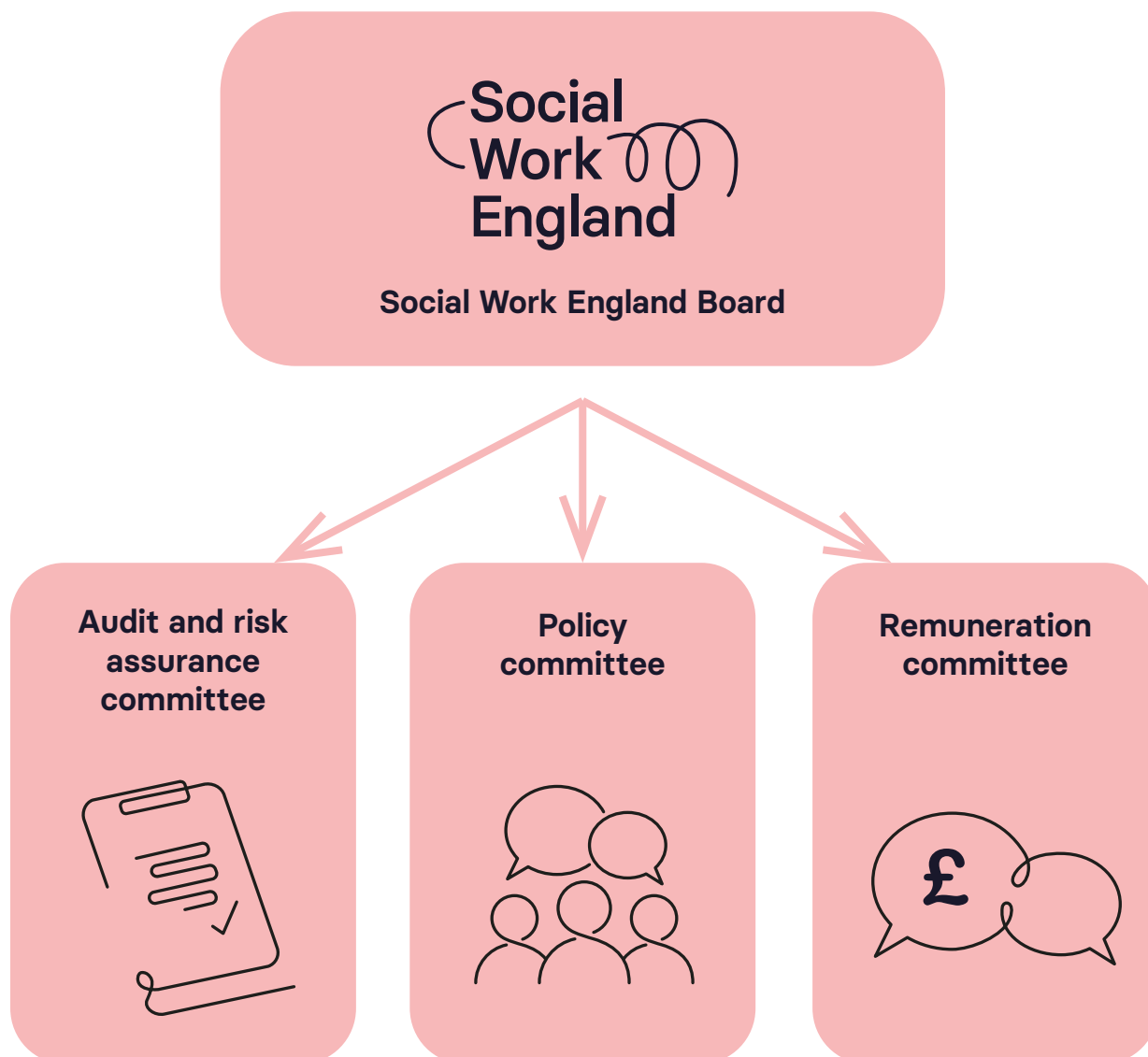
### Board and committee structure as of 31 March 2025

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

- 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 our sponsor the Department for Education, in consultation with the Department of Health and Social Care. It also works in accordance with  [Managing Public Money](#) published by HM Treasury.

This diagram shows our corporate governance structure for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.



### Board composition

On 31 March 2025, the membership of the board comprised:

- the chair, Dr Andrew McCulloch
- the deputy chair, Dr Adi Cooper
- 3 non-executive directors including a senior independent director, Ann Harris OBE CPFA
- the chief executive, Colum Conway.



Dr Andrew McCulloch



Colum Conway



Dr Adi Cooper



Ann Harris OBE CPFA



Simon Lewis




Dr Sue Ross

Dr Andrew McCulloch was appointed to the role of chair of our board on 20 September 2024, by the Secretary of State for Education. This followed his earlier appointment as interim chair from 1 March 2023. He is serving as chair until 19 September 2027.

In January 2025, our board agreed to reinstate the deputy chair role, and approved the appointment of Dr Adi Cooper as deputy chair. Our board made minor amendments to its terms of reference to clarify the responsibilities associated with this role.

## 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 2024 to 31 March 2025. They did so for the purposes of ensuring full disclosure regarding related party transactions.

See page 115 in the financial statements.



## Statement of the Board and Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the board is required to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis determined by the Secretary of State with the consent of the HM Treasury.

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 board and Accounting Officer are required to comply with the requirements of the *Government Financial Reporting Manual* and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Secretary of State 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 in the accounts;
- prepare the accounts on a going concern basis; and
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Accounts and the judgements required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.


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

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

As the Accounting Officer, I confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable and that I take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

## Governance statement

The purpose of the governance statement

Our governance statement describes the corporate governance, risk management and assurance frameworks we used in the 2024 to 2025 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 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
- holding a register of social workers in England.

Our board holds the chief executive and executive leadership team to account and provides our strategic steer. It oversees our performance and use of resources and ensures a sound system of internal control and risk management.

We provide our board with quarterly performance reports and data that track our performance against business objectives. Publishing quarterly enables our board to see trends and performance within the year and against previous years. This year, our 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, risk management, law and business planning.

Our governance arrangements

Our board met regularly and kept the effectiveness of our system of risk management and internal control under review. Our 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 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Audit and risk assurance committee	
<p>Membership: 3 non-executive directors</p> <p>Ann Harris (chair)</p> <p>Jonathan Gorvin (until 9 August 2024)</p> <p>Sue Ross</p> <p>Simon Lewis (from 9 August 2024)</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> chief executive, executive director, people and business support and internal and external audit teams, boardroom apprentice</p> <p>Met: 5 times</p>	<p>The audit and risk assurance committee provides assurance to our board in the areas of audit, risk management, governance and internal control. It acts only in an advisory capacity and has no executive or decision making powers.</p>
Remuneration committee	
<p><b>Membership:</b> 3 non-executive directors</p> <p>Sue Ross (chair)</p> <p>Adi Cooper</p> <p>Simon Lewis</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> chief executive and chair of our board as requested, executive director, people and business support</p> <p><b>Met:</b> 3 times</p>	<p>The remuneration committee provides assurance to our board in the areas of remuneration, performance, people and culture. It acts only in an advisory capacity and has no executive or decision making powers.</p>

Policy committee	
<p><b>Membership:</b> 2 non-executive directors, 2 executive directors, 2 National Advisory Forum members and 1 co-opted member (from 31 January 2025)</p> <p>Adi Cooper (chair from 9 August 2024)</p> <p>Jonathan Gorvin (until 9 August 2024, current vacancy)</p> <p>Phil Hallam – executive director, regulation</p> <p>Sarah Blackmore – executive director, professional practice and external engagement</p> <p>Rachael Clawson – National Advisory Forum member</p> <p>Isaac Samuels – National Advisory Forum member (until 7 June 2024, current vacancy)</p> <p>Lynn Romeo – co-opted member (from 31 January 2025)</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> chief executive and chair of our board as requested, boardroom apprentice</p> <p><b>Met:</b> 4 times</p>	<p>The policy committee provides assurance to our board with regard to the process and content of our policy programme. It acts only in an advisory capacity and has no executive or decision making powers.</p>

Reports  
to

Social Work England board	
<p><b>Membership:</b> 5 non-executive board members and chief executive</p> <p>Andrew McCulloch - chair</p> <p>Sue Ross</p> <p>Jonathan Gorvin (until 9 August 2024)</p> <p>Ann Harris – senior independent director</p> <p>Adi Cooper – deputy chair</p> <p>Simon Lewis (appointed 1 March 2024)</p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> boardroom apprentice</p> <p><b>Met:</b> 5 times for regular board meetings, plus an additional awayday.</p>	<p>Our board provides leadership, direction and a steer on our overall strategy. It ensures effective arrangements are in place to provide assurance on risk management, governance and internal control.</p>

## Performance of our board and its committees

We hold our board meetings in public using videoconferencing. 6 members of the public and 16 of our employees observed a board meeting during 2024 to 2025.

In accordance with high standards of corporate governance good practice, our board conducted an annual self-appraisal of its performance through an internal self-evaluation. The findings from this exercise highlighted that board functionality and delivery of governance and strategic oversight were working well. The size and capacity of our board was an area of development that will be addressed through current non-executive recruitment.

Our board continued to implement recommendations from the independent review of board effectiveness in 2023 to 2024. This included:

- the development of an annual forward look for board and committee meetings
- scheduling of regular board strategy sessions
- the opportunity for board members to have regular contact with the chair in between meetings
- reviewing and refreshing the role and operation of the policy committee.

In October 2024 the board reviewed its terms of reference and agreed an approach to co-opting advisory members to board committees on a fixed-term basis. In January 2025, the terms of reference were further updated to reinstate the position of deputy chair. Our board approved all of the following:

- code of conduct policy
- board declarations of interest and conflict resolution policy
- gifts and hospitality policy
- travel and expenses policy
- whistleblowing (prescribed person) policy and role of our board.

In accordance with its training plan, our board received bespoke training on the following areas:

- risk appetite
- information governance
- cyber security.

In January 2025, our board welcomed a new apprentice into its boardroom for 12 months. This is part of a national boardroom apprenticeship scheme sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The scheme aims to enable more people to play a part on public boards.

## **Audit and risk assurance committee**

The committee's terms of reference were updated in October 2024, to reflect the agreed approach for co-opting advisory members on a fixed term basis. Key areas of focus for the audit and risk assurance committee during 2024 to 2025 were all of the following:

- oversight and assurance of digital development
- finance and commercial activity
- internal and external audits
- scrutiny of the annual report and accounts
- internal quality assurance, feedback and complaints
- overview of the assurance framework
- corporate risk review, deep dives and risk appetite
- data protection and information governance
- evaluating and improving our governance
- oversight of our sustainability plan
- cyber-security.

As part of ongoing good practice, the committee chair produced a year-end report. The committee is carrying out an effectiveness review in 2025 to 2026.

## **Remuneration committee**

Over the course of 2024 to 2025, the committee has taken a key role in advising on all of the following:

- remuneration and pay remit
- delivery of our people strategy
- culture and employee engagement
- broader workforce issues and risks, including sickness absence, recruitment and retention.

## **Policy committee**

Over the course of 2024 to 2025, the committee terms of reference were updated following a review of effectiveness, and to reflect the agreed approach for co-opting advisory members on a fixed term basis. The committee also implemented a new approach to the structure of meetings. It now carries out one 'deep dive' at each meeting to enable detailed exploration of key policy areas. Within this new approach, the committee advised on topics such as:

- the implications of the government social care reform agenda for our role and regulation
- education and training priorities, including our learnings from our first round of inspections of social work courses and our plans for regulating specialist and advanced practice

- social work workforce challenges
- our social worker and stakeholder survey results
- our scoping proposal for the professional regulation of the children's residential care workforce
- Social Work Week 2025.

## Board member attendance in 2024 to 2025

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

Name and role	2024 to 2025 meetings attended			
	Board	Audit and risk assurance committee	Policy committee	Remuneration committee
Dr Andrew McCulloch Chair	5/5			2/3*
Colum Conway Chief Executive Officer	5/5	5/5*	2/4*	3/3*
Dr Adi Cooper Non-executive director	4/5		4/4	3/3
Jonathan Gorvin Non-executive director	2/2	2/2	1/1	
Ann Harris Non-executive director	4/5	4/5	3/4*	
Dr Sue Ross Non-executive director	5/5	5/5	1/4*	3/3
Simon Lewis Non-executive director	5/5	1/2* 3/3	2/4*	3/3

\*Attended the meeting to observe or contribute, not as a committee member

Board members also attended 5 private strategy meetings. They participated in 1 strategic planning session.


## 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 our board for leading the organisation on an everyday 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. The executive leadership team works with our board to discharge duties as a collective.

The executive leadership team meets weekly to provide strategic and operational oversight of progress and performance. They also hold monthly business performance review meetings, which heads of function join on a quarterly basis. The executive leadership team reviews risks monthly, agreeing to escalate to our board when appropriate.

Last year, we started to implement our assurance framework across our regulatory departments. This year, all regulatory functions and some non-regulatory functions assessed themselves against the self-evaluation framework. We will complete implementation of the assurance framework and carry out a full evaluation by the end of 2025 to 2026.

## Whistleblowing policy

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. One concern that qualified for investigation under the Public Interest Disclosure Act was recorded in 2024 to 2025. This related to commercial tender processes. We completed our investigation and did not find any instances of wrongdoing or a breach of any of our legal obligations. We reviewed our processes and found areas for improvement which are being implemented.

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 and board, respectively. Everyone working with and for us has mandatory anti-fraud, anti-bribery and anti-corruption training.

## Report on personal information breaches

As a non-departmental public body, we are 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 our board and the audit and risk assurance committee.

We had 52 personal data related incidents this financial year (2023 to 2024: 92). None of these incidents met the threshold of risk that required us to report them to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (a reduction from 3 in 2023 to 2024).

Most of our data incidents relate to errors in our communications. We made improvements to our systems and to the training provided to employees in order to address this. We continue to look for opportunities to improve both our systems and employee training.

## Risk management

### Context

Our risk management approach 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 HM Treasury's Orange Book.

Our approach involves all of the following:

- identifying and managing risks at 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 highlights risks for the audit and risk assurance committee to discuss and challenge. We also apply shared learning from the Department for Education arm's length body risk lead meetings.

## Risk appetite statement

Our board and executive leadership team decide the level of risk we are 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 each risk with the impact of it being realised.

Our risk appetite is reflective of all of the following:

- our role as a regulator
- our 2023 to 2026 strategy
- the controls and assurances we have in place
- our resources
- external factors.

Our risk appetite for 2025 to 2026 will reflect the parameters above. The new risk appetite statement comes into effect in May 2025.













# 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 alter risk in another area.






## Our risk categories

<b>Financial governance</b>		<b>Reputation and credibility</b>	
<b>Strategic approach</b>		<b>Cyber security</b>	
<b>Processes</b>		<b>People and culture</b>	
<b>Regulatory functions</b>		<b>Governance and compliance</b>	
<b>Innovation and change</b>		<b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	

## Corporate risks

Outlined below are the most pertinent risks to our regulatory role for the period ending 31 March 2025. We have taken action to mitigate these risks and expect to see the impact of our actions in the future.

Risk title	Risk description	Trend since April 2024	What we have done to mitigate this risk in the 2024 to 2025 business year
Education provision	Our work in policy and standards does not lead to improvement in social work education.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed and refined our approach to course inspections</li> <li>Began work to review our education and training standards</li> </ul>
External environment	We fail to be ready to respond to strategic, political or workforce changes.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed and developed our communication and engagement strategic approach</li> <li>Reviewed and updated our crisis communications plan</li> </ul>
Registration demand	We are unable to meet registration demand and process renewals and applications within reasonable timescales with existing resources.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened our approach to induction and training tools to better support new employees. This helps people to complete their probation period and become confident and competent in their roles</li> <li>Used data to identify workload patterns throughout the year. This has helped us to anticipate spikes in renewal applications, enabling us to plan more effectively and to recruit temporary staff to support the team during these periods</li> </ul>
Timeliness and quality within triage and investigations	We cannot achieve quality and timeliness within triage and investigations.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied learning from the past year to improve efficiency and effectiveness of our processes</li> <li>Allocated additional staffing resource</li> <li>Focused on optimising early engagement with social workers</li> </ul>
Our people and capacity	We do not have the capacity and resources, skills set, talent development and sustainable people strategy that we need to effectively deliver our business and strategic objectives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed our recruitment and induction approach and identified improvements</li> <li>Analysed our current sickness absence position and reviewed our overall approach</li> </ul>

Risk title	Risk description	Trend since April 2024	What we have done to mitigate this risk in the 2024 to 2025 business year
Cultural shift	As we continue to evolve and develop as an organisation, we inadvertently lose aspects of our culture that we consider to be positive and important.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed our culture and behaviours</li> <li>Implemented our second cohort of peer mentoring</li> <li>Implemented actions from our people engagement survey 2024</li> <li>Implemented our revised approach to hybrid working</li> </ul>
Cyber security	A cyber, ransomware or socially engineered attack that reaches beyond our business continuity programme and prevents us from operating.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented regular reporting to improve visibility and knowledge of cyber threats and how they potentially impact us</li> <li>Completed procurement for a Security Operations Centre.</li> <li>Implemented improvements identified from our 2023 to 2024 cyber security audit</li> </ul>
Misjudged decision	We seriously misjudge a decision we make in exercising our regulatory responsibilities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered Equality Act training to our staff</li> <li>Delivered a training day for adjudicators.</li> </ul>
Managing our budget	We are unable to plan and manage our annual budget effectively.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued to improve our monthly budget forecasting and management review.</li> <li>Targeted additional funds released as a result of an accounting policy change to support fitness to practise case progression</li> </ul>
Financial resources	We are unable to secure the financial resources that we need to achieve efficient and timely delivery of all our regulatory functions, notably hearings.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched a consultation on our fee levels.</li> <li>Delivered our business plan objectives to explore further efficiency improvements.</li> <li>Engaged with our board and sponsor, the Department for Education, to regularly discuss our resourcing position.</li> </ul>

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 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 subject to oversight by the Department for Education and provide the department with regular reporting on risk, performance and budget monitoring.

Internal audit

Out of the 6 audits conducted this financial year, 4 received substantial assurance or good progress, 1 received reasonable assurance and 1 was not assigned an overall assurance level (in line with internal auditors’ policy). Internal audit reports to our board and audit and risk assurance committee were as follows.

Internal audit	Level of assurance
Information governance	n/a
Registration (fee income decisions and waivers)	Substantial
Budgetary control	Substantial
Procurement	Substantial
Joiners movers and leavers process	Reasonable
Follow up audit	Good progress

RSM UK conducted our internal audit in 2024 to 2025. Based on their reviews during the year, their end of year report stated that we have an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. RSM UK identified further enhancements to ensure that the framework remains adequate and effective. During 2024 to 2025, we agreed management actions to address the findings from internal audit.

## 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 2024 to 2025. The systems for risk management and internal control have been in place during 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 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 June 2025.

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

This report sets out our remuneration policy for all staff and board members and details actual costs.

## Remuneration policy

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

As a non-departmental public body, we must adhere to the pay guidance the Cabinet Office sets each year. The Secretary of State for Education also requires us to submit a pay remit business case for approval. In 2024 our approved pay award included a salary increase of 5% across all pay bands. We awarded a one off £650 non-consolidated pay award to eligible employees below executive leadership level, in recognition of people’s contributions to our achievements overall.

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

Executive leadership team	Salary £000	Non-consolidated performance award £000	Benefits in kind (to the nearest £100)	Pension benefit (to the nearest £1,000)	2024 to 2025 total £000	2023 to 2024 total £000
Colum Conway	165 - 170	0 - 5	0	13	185 - 190	170 - 175
Sarah Blackmore	100 - 105	0 - 5	0	7	110 - 115	105 - 110
Philip Hallam	100 - 105	0 - 5	0	6	110 - 115	105 - 110
Linda Dale	100 - 105	0 - 5	0	8	110 - 115	105 - 110

Separate disclosures relating to pension entitlements are not applicable. We operate an unfunded multi-employer defined contribution pension scheme provided by the National Employment Savings Trust. There are therefore no value or lump sum increases.

The chief executive determines executive leadership team performance awards, taking account of advice from the remuneration committee. Performance awards for the chief executive are based upon the recommendation of the chair of our board. They are subject to remuneration committee approval to our board.

## Board members' remuneration (audited)

Name	Position	Appointment term	2024 to 2025 fees £000	2023 to 2024 fees £000
Dr Andrew McCulloch	Chair	10 August 2018 to 19 September 2027	45 - 50	60 - 65
Dr Adi Cooper	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2027	5 - 10	5 - 10
Jonathan Gorvin	Non-executive director	10 August 2021 to 9 August 2024	0 - 5	5 - 10
Full year equivalent (FYE)			5 - 10	
Ann Harris	Non-executive director	19 July 2019 to 18 July 2025	10 - 15	10 - 15
Dr Sue Ross	Non-executive director	4 October 2021 to 3 October 2027	5 - 10	5 - 10
Simon Lewis	Non-executive director	1 March 2024 to 28 February 2027	5 - 10	0 - 5
Full year equivalent (FYE)				5 - 10

A reduction in the number of days attached to the role of chair was agreed with the Department for Education, now that the organisation is well-established. This resulted in a reduction in the chair's remuneration for 2024 to 2025.

Members of our 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 £2,007 (2023 to 2024: £1,102).

## Fair pay disclosure (audited)

Reporting bodies must disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the organisation's highest paid director and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

In 2024 to 2025, nil employees (2023 to 2024: nil) received remuneration in excess of the highest paid director. Total remuneration ranged from £25,815 to £175,000 (2023 to 2024: £24,688 to £165,000). 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 2025 was £170,000 to £175,000. This reflects an increase of 6.2% since 2023 to 2024 (£160,000 to £165,000) based upon the mid-point of the bands which is solely attributable to an increase in salary and allowances. There was no change to the rate of performance pay and bonuses of the highest paid director.

The remuneration of the highest paid director was 4.8 times the median employee remuneration (2023 to 2024: 4.75). The median pay ratio is consistent with our pay, reward and progression policies.

Pay ratios at the 25th and 75th percentile have also increased in 2024 to 2025. The remuneration of the highest paid director was 5.59 times the remuneration at the 25th percentile (2023 to 2024: 5.53). It was 3.6 times the remuneration at the 75th percentile (2023 to 2024: 3.37).

The average salary and allowances per employee in the year ended 31 March 2025 was £42,650, an increase of 2.40% from 2023 to 2024 (£41,652). The movement in the total average remuneration is a result of an annual pay increase effective from September 2024. Average performance pay and bonuses increased by 6.7%, compared to 2023 to 2024.



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

2024 to 2025	25th percentile	Median (50th percentile)	75th percentile
Pay ratio	5.59:1	4.80:1	3.60:1
Annual salary	£30,205	£35,285	£47,303
Non-consolidated performance award	£650	£650	£650
<b>Total pay</b>	<b>£30,855</b>	<b>£35,935</b>	<b>£47,953</b>

2023 to 2024	25th percentile	Median (50th percentile)	75th percentile
Pay ratio	5.53:1	4.75:1	3.37:1
Annual salary	£28,767	£33,605	£47,682
Non-consolidated performance award	£600	£600	£600
<b>Total pay</b>	<b>£29,367</b>	<b>£34,205</b>	<b>£48,282</b>

### Pension scheme (audited)

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 38 in 2024 to 2025. This increase is reflective of the overall increase in headcount across 2024 to 2025.

We continue to operate a salary exchange pension scheme. Our minimum contribution is set at 4% employee and 6% employer contribution. There are options to increase contributions to 7% employee contribution and 9% employer contribution from 1 April 2025.

Employers' pension contributions made during the year ending 31 March 2025 were £654,082 (2023 to 2024: £576,000)

No one retired early on the 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**

For 2024 to 2025 our budgeted non-consolidated performance award was 2% of the total salary bill. The non-consolidated performance award figures include awards paid or agreed in the 12 months up to 31 March 2025.

## **Reporting of exit and other compensation packages (audited)**

There were no exit, compensation, special severance or non-contractual packages in the year ending 31 March 2025. This was the same for the year ending 31 March 2024.

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) article 21 staff disclosure**

No staff members asked for their entitlements not to be disclosed in the year ending 31 March 2025. This was also the case for the year ended 31 March 2024.

## Staff report

### Part A (audited)

#### Analysis of staff costs

Category	Permanently employed staff £000	Others £000	2024 to 2025 total £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Wages and salaries	9,745	623	10,368	9,610
Social security costs	1,017	30	1,047	1,034
Pension Costs	661	18	679	576
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,423</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>12,094</b>	<b>11,220</b>
Less:				
Capitalised staff costs	(470)	(82)	(552)	(460)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,953</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>11,542</b>	<b>10,760</b>

Others refers to contingent labour, which are staff employed on a fixed-term basis or engaged via short-term contracts, 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 (including social security and pension) of inward secondments.

Total staff costs include an element of capital expenditure relating to employees who work solely on the development of our internally generated software.

Staff composition

In 2024 to 2025, our average full-time equivalent number of employees was 236.3 (compared with 230 in 2023 to 2024).

Staff composition analysis	2024 to 2025 total	2023 to 2024 total (re-presented)
Social Work England permanent	226.5 (95.8%)	221.6 (96.3%)
Social Work England fixed term	8.5 (3.6%)	7.9 (3.4%)
Agency/temp	0.7 (0.3%)	0 (0%)
Secondment	0.6 (0.3%)	0.5 (0.2%)
Total	236.3 (100%)	230.0 (100%)

The 2023 to 2024 financial year has been re-presented from an average at 31 March 2024 to an average across the financial year, consistent with the method applied in 2024 to 2025.

We recruited additional fixed term resource in 2024 to 2025 to provide capacity in critical areas, in response to business risk.

## Part B (unaudited)

### Staff by level and gender

On 31 March 2025, our full-time equivalent (FTE) was 263.1, split as per the following table.

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	1.0
Executive leadership team	1.0	0	2.0	0	0	0	3.0
Assistant directors	2.0	0	3.0	0	0	0	5.0
Heads of functions	7.0	1	7.7	1	0	0	16.7
Other levels	57.6	10.8	158.9	10.1	0	0	237.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>171.6</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>263.1</b>

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

## Average headcount

Staff composition analysis	2024 to 2025 total	2023 to 2024 total (re-presented)
Social Work England permanent	238 (95.9%)	234 (96.4%)
Social Work England fixed term	9 (3.6%)	8 (3.4%)
Agency/temp	1 (0.3%)	0 0%
Secondment	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b> <b>100%</b>	<b>242</b> <b>100%</b>

This table represents the average headcount across the year. Due to rounding, not all percentages add to 100%. The 2023 to 2024 financial year has been re-presented from average full time equivalent to average headcount.

There was a 13.5% turnover of staff during the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 (2023 to 2024: 14.2%).

## Our people

### Our staff policies and practices

We continued our work to benchmark against the charters we're signed up to; the Race at Work Charter, Mindful Business Charter and Disability Confident Scheme.

We developed a check-in tool for teams and individuals to assess how our workplace experience aligns with these external diversity charters. It enables us to check our progress against the schemes we're part of, and identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. Our 70% Disability Confident score reflects our commitment to equality and diversity and highlights our progress in embedding inclusion.

We also received the results of our latest Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) submission. We maintained our silver award and saw a 3 percentage point increase in our score to 70% from the previous year.

We applied our recruitment and equality, diversity and inclusion policies to support and provide adjustments to applicants, where necessary, throughout the recruitment process. We used our policies, including 'keeping us safe at work', 'how we work', 'absence' and 'leave', as well as our health and wellbeing provision, to identify specific needs of our employees, providing training, adjustments and support.

During the year, we carried out a holistic review of our recruitment approach. This review considered how we describe our roles, how we fill different types of roles and inclusive recruitment. It also looked at the candidate experience, interview structure and our approach to onboarding and training. We identified recommendations for improvements that we look forward to implementing as part of our continuing work in this area.

Our people engagement survey took place in May 2024. Our overall engagement score, which measures how positive people feel about working here was 70%, the same as the previous year. Our leadership score was 48% compared to the public sector benchmark score of 40%. The benchmarking data for 2024 comprised organisations from the public sector, whereas for 2023, this data also included organisations in the charity sector. Following the 2023 survey, our work to target 'Experience' and 'Tools' resulted in an increase in scores in both areas.

### **Sickness absence**

We benchmark our sickness absence against Civil Service absence figures, as a comparable measure. In 2022 to 2023, the Civil Service figure was 8.1 days per employee. This figure as at 31 March 2023 was published in February 2024, and was used as our benchmark for 2024 to 2025. In 2024 to 2025 we lost the equivalent of 7.9 days per employee over the rolling 12 months (2023 to 2024: 8.9 days). Our figure of 7.9 days per employee was below the Civil Service benchmark.

We continue to support our people who are experiencing ill health. We've focused on analysis of our absence and also conducted a review of our health and wellbeing offer.



## Diversity statistics (unaudited)

### Gender data

Gender identity for whole workforce	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Female	70%	69%	69%
Male	30%	31%	31%
Non-binary	0%	0%	0%

Gender split for executive leadership team	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Female	67%	67%	67%
Male	33%	33%	33%
Non-binary	0%	0%	0%

Gender split for assistant directors	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Female	60%	67%	67%
Male	40%	33%	33%
Non-binary	0%	0%	0%

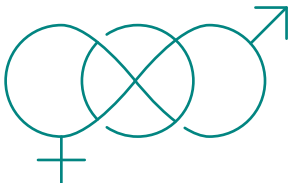
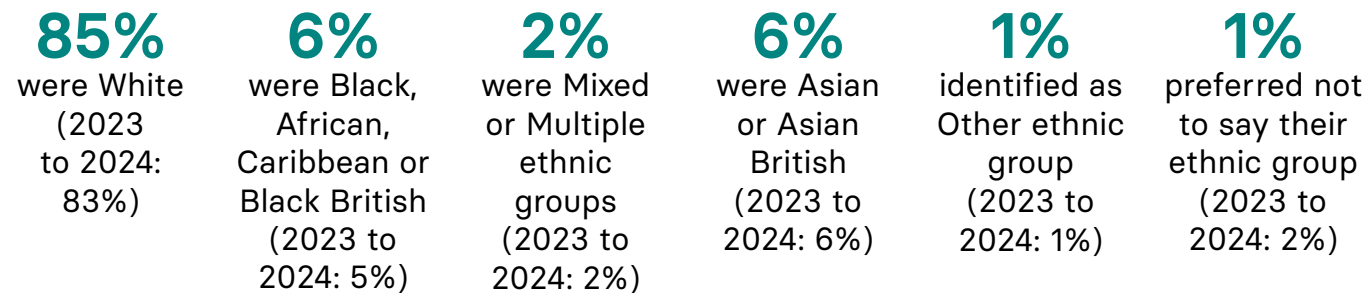
Gender split for heads of functions	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024	2022 to 2023
Female	53%	40%	55%
Male	47%	60%	45%
Non-binary	0%	0%	0%

Diversity data

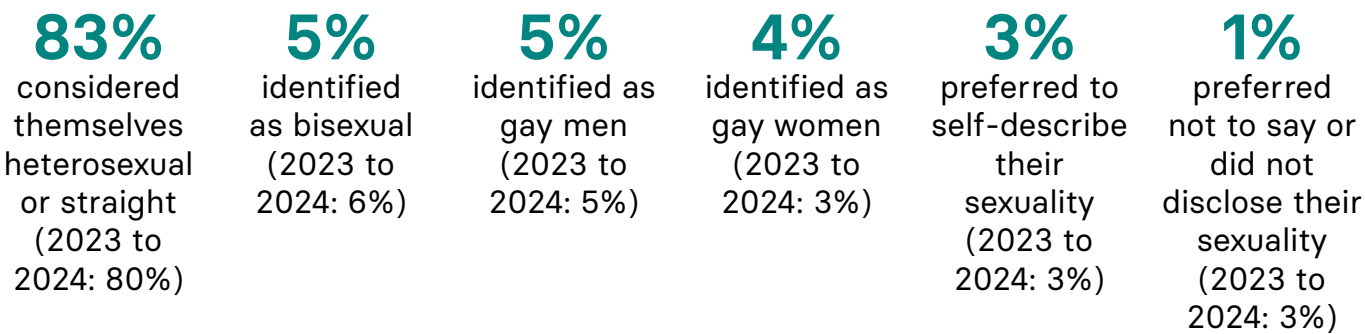
We encourage staff to upload their diversity data into our human resources system Enable, though it is not mandatory. Due to rounding, not all percentages add to 100%.



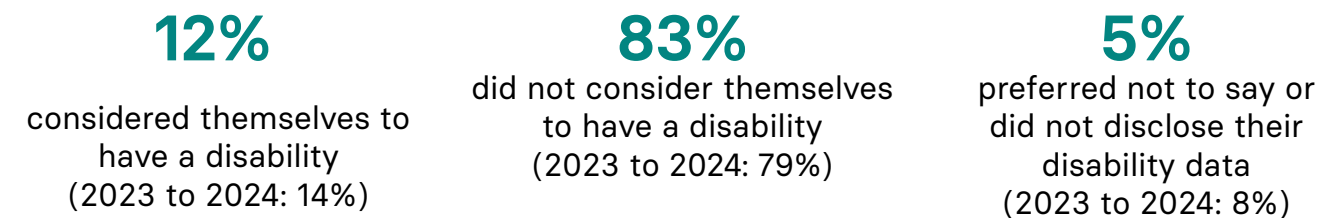
Of the 72% of employees who shared their data, for ethnicity:



Of the 72% of employees who shared their data, for sexual orientation:



Of the 71% of employees who shared their data, for disability:



## Consultancy spend

During the year ending 31 March 2025, we incurred £0.08m consultancy expenditure in order to address key commitments in our people strategy.

This included the engagement of an independent partner organisation, to work with us to review our organisational culture and co-create our new behaviours framework with staff. We recognise the importance of keeping these relevant to us as an organisation, to support employee engagement and business performance.

We also engaged a third party provider to refresh our pay benchmarking, which was last completed in 2022. This enabled us to identify that pay remained broadly aligned to comparable organisations.

## Off-payroll engagements

Reporting bodies must publish information regarding their highly paid and/or senior off-payroll engagements. The table below contains details of off-payroll engagements as at 31 March 2025 who were paid a day-rate of more than £245.

There were no individuals assessed as within the scope of IR35.

Off-payroll engagements	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024
<b>Number (No.) of existing engagements as at 31 March 2025</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Of which, no. that existed:</b>		
Less than one year	3	1
Between one and two years	0	0
Between two and three years	0	0
Three or more years	0	0

The table below outlines off-payroll engagements of board members and senior officials with significant financial responsibility.

Engagements by category	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024
Number of off-payroll engagements of board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility	1	0
Number of individuals deemed board members or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, including both off-payroll and on-payroll engagements	12	12

We consider that all board members, executive directors and the head of finance and commercial have significant financial responsibility and reimburse them through payroll.

There was one off-payroll engagement of a senior official with significant financial responsibility during the year ended 31 March 2025 due to interim cover for staff absence. This interim cover was for a period of 6 weeks in the 2024 to 2025 financial year.

## Parliamentary accountability report

### Parliamentary accountability disclosures

#### A1 Losses statement (audited)

Losses statement	2024 to 2025	2023 to 2024
Number of fruitless payment cases	41	176
Number of special payments	0	1
Number of losses	2	22
Value		
Fruitless payments	£187,094	£53,399
Special payments	£0	£8,000
Losses	£3,648	£1,692

A fruitless payment is one the recipient is legally entitled to even though we receive nothing of use in return. During 2024 to 2025 they included payments we made to partners in relation to cancelled fitness to practise hearings. They also included payments made to a third party supplier relating to a discontinued software development project.

#### A2 Special payments (audited)

There were no special payments made during the 12-month period ending 31 March 2025. (Period ending 31 March 2024: one).

#### A3 Fees and charges (audited)

Income of £10.17m was received in the form of registration fees (£10.09m 2023 to 2024).

Further analysis is available in note 2 of the financial statements on page 104.

Total expenditure for 2024 to 2025 was £23.24m (2023 to 2024: £22.61m); net expenditure for the year was £13.07m (2023 to 2024: £12.53m). More analysis is available in notes 3 and 4 of the financial statements on page 105 to page 106.

#### **A4 Remote contingent liabilities (audited)**

Social Work England is involved in ongoing legal cases. No further statement has been made so as not to compromise the outcome of proceedings.

#### **A5 Government functional standards (unaudited)**

The Government functional standards are used to guide our activity and promote continuous improvement, as relevant and proportionate to our size and arrangements.

#### **A6 Regularity of expenditure (audited)**

The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring the regularity of expenditure.

To discharge this responsibility the following activities are in place:

- Formal delegation of budget
- Detailed monitoring of expenditure
- Monthly management reporting against budget

To the date of this statement, there have been no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or non-compliance discovered during the financial year.

**Colum Conway**

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer  
2 July 2025

# 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 2025 under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The financial statements comprise Social Work England's:

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2025;
- 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 2025 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 (2024)*. 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 2024*. 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 requires 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 information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial statements and my auditor's certificate and report thereon. 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 Accountability and Performance Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

## Matters on which I report by exception

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

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 Board and Accounting Officer for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Board and Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Board and the Accounting Officer are 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 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 statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the Children and Social Work Act 2017;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with Secretary of State directions issued under the Children and Social Work Act 2017; 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
- inquired of management, internal audit 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, internal audit, 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 and internal IT audit specialists, 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 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, Managing Public Money, relevant employment law and pensions legislation.

### **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 and in-house legal counsel concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board and internal audit reports;
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud in revenue recognition; and used analytical procedures to identify any unusual transactions or movements. I 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](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of my certificate.

## **Other auditor's responsibilities**

I am required to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence 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**

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

**07 July 2025**



# Financial statements



## Statement of comprehensive net expenditure

For the year ending 31 March 2025

Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	Note	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Income	2	(10,169)	(10,088)
Staff costs	3	11,542	10,760
Other expenditure	4	11,695	11,854
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>		<b>13,068</b>	<b>12,526</b>
<b>Net expenditure for the year</b>		<b>13,068</b>	<b>12,526</b>

There are no discontinued operations.

There are no other recognised gains or losses.

The notes on page 97 to page 115 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of financial position

As at 31 March 2025

Statement of financial position	Note	31 March 2025 £000	31 March 2024 £000
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
PPE	9	1,187	1,418
Intangibles	10	8,755	8,606
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>9,942</b>	<b>10,024</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Receivables	5	823	695
Cash and cash equivalents	6	4,205	3,050
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>5,028</b>	<b>3,745</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>14,970</b>	<b>13,769</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	7	(8,031)	(6,602)
Provision	8	(900)	(42)
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>(8,931)</b>	<b>(6,644)</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>6,039</b>	<b>7,125</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Payables	7	(639)	(764)
Provision	8	(138)	(136)
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>(777)</b>	<b>(900)</b>
<b>Assets less liabilities</b>		<b>5,262</b>	<b>6,225</b>
<b>Taxpayers' equity:</b>			
General fund		5,262	6,225
<b>Total taxpayers' equity</b>		<b>5,262</b>	<b>6,225</b>

The notes on page 97 to page 115 form part of these accounts.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 29 June 2025, and were signed on its behalf by:

**Colum Conway** 2 July 2025  
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, Social Work England.

## Statement of cash flows

### For the year ending 31 March 2025

Statement of cash flows	Note	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 re-presented* £000
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net operating expenditure	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,068)	(12,526)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	4	3,125	2,077
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	5	(128)	(65)
Utilisation of provision	8	(42)	0
Increase/(decrease) in non-lease payables	7	1,211	(3,637)
<b>Net cash outflow from operating activities</b>		<b>(8,902)</b>	<b>(14,151)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	9	(28)	(28)*
Purchase of intangibles	10	(1,921)	(2,187)*
<b>Net cash outflow from investing activities</b>		<b>(1,949)</b>	<b>(2,215)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Exchequer supply from sponsor department	Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity	12,105	13,219
Payments of lease liabilities	11	(99)	(54)
<b>Net cash inflow from financing activities</b>		<b>12,006</b>	<b>13,165</b>
<b>Net increase /(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>1,155</b>	<b>(3,201)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year	6	3,050	6,251
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year	6	4,205	3,050

\*The purchases of property, plant and equipment and intangibles have been re-presented, removing the separate line showing the movement in capital payables.

The notes on page 97 to page 115 form part of these accounts.

## Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity

For the year ending 31 March 2025

Statement of changes in taxpayers' equity	Note	General Fund £000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>		<b>5,532</b>
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		13,219
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(12,526)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2024</b>		<b>6,225</b>
Grant-in-aid from sponsor department		12,105
Comprehensive expenditure for the year	Statement of comprehensive net expenditure	(13,068)
<b>Balance at 31 March 2025</b>		<b>5,262</b>

The notes on page 97 to page 115 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) 2024 to 2025 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 2024 to 31 March 2025.

### 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 by way of grant-in-aid.

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, in accordance with the definition set out in Table 2 of 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. We do not expect any change to either our funding arrangements or the value of registrant fee income, for the next financial year as well as the 12 month period from the approval date of these annual accounts, that would negatively impact our going concern assessment.

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.

### 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 its 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.

Social Work England has adopted IFRS 15 "Revenue from Contracts with Customers" with fees accounted for as described below.

### 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.

Under IFRS 15, performance obligations can be satisfied, and therefore revenue can be recognised, either at a point in time or over time. As Social Work England fulfils its performance obligation by maintaining a social worker's registration over the annual registration period, registration and renewal fees are therefore recognised over the same period. The balance at the end of the financial year is shown in the statement of financial position as deferred income and 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 but has left the register for a period and wishes to restore to the Social Work England register. Restoration fees are paid by a social worker prior to their application being considered and are recognised immediately within the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

Restoration fees are non-refundable and represent the time and resources involved in assessing 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 prior to an application to join Social Work England's register being submitted. The scrutiny 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 critical judgements by management. Further information is set out in paragraph 1.11.
- 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.
- We have recognised provision amounts in accordance with our accounting policy for provisions as described in note 1.8 below.



## 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 reported to the chief operating decision-maker and in compliance with the financial reporting manual, it has not been produced in these accounts.

## 1.7 Pensions

Social Work England has adopted IAS 19 Employee Benefits 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's contribution varies dependent on the level of employee contribution. For the year ended 31 March 2025, the maximum level of employer contributions was 8% of gross salary. This has increased from 7% in 2023 to 2024. The 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.

Provisions are recognised when there is a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events, and it is more likely than not that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation and the amount can be reliably estimated.

Provisions are reviewed annually and adjusted to reflect the current best estimate. If it is no longer probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation, the provision shall be reversed.

## 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. Bulk assets are those with an individual purchase value of £500 or lower. The location of bulk assets is not tracked where it is not economical to do so.

The asset value on capitalisation is measured as all direct cost, including 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.

Gains and losses on disposal of an item of property, plant and equipment are determined by comparing the proceeds from disposal with the carrying amount of property, plant and equipment, and are recognised within other administrative expenses in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure.

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.

Asset lives are in the following ranges:

1. Computer equipment      3 years
2. Fixtures and fittings      10 years
3. Leasehold improvements 10 years

### **1.11 Intangible assets**

Development costs that meet IAS 38 intangible asset recognition criteria where the assets are intended to be used internally or otherwise, are capitalised as an intangible asset. Capitalisation will only occur when management are satisfied that each of the following criteria have been met:

- There are probable economic benefits arising from the project.
- There is an intention to complete the project.
- Resources are available to complete the project.
- Social Work England is able to use the item.
- The project is technically feasible
- Expenditure on the project can be identified

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

Assets under construction and other intangible assets are tested annually for impairment with an assessment undertaken as to whether the asset will be, or continues to be, technologically and economically viable. The useful economic life of intangible assets is also reviewed annually.

Assets under construction are not depreciated whilst assets judged as in use are amortised on a straight-line basis over the expected useful economic life of the asset, which is between 5 and 7 years.

## 1.12 Leases

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

Social Work England has chosen to apply the low value exemption for leases relating to office printers.

Social Work England recognises a right of use asset and lease liability at the commencement date of a contract. 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.

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.

## 1.13 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.

### 1.14 Receivables

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

### 1.15 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is the current balance at the bank and Social Work England does not have any cash equivalents. Social Work England is permitted by its sponsor department, the Department for Education, to maintain a cash balance sufficient to cover its working capital requirements.

### 1.16 Payables

Trade and other payables are recognised at carrying value. At 31 March 2025, the value of payables predominantly consists of fee income received in advance and recognised as deferred income.

### 1.17 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.

### 1.18 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.

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts was effective for accounting periods on or after 1 January 2023. Adoption in the Public Sector will be within the financial year beginning 1 April 2025. This will have no impact on Social Work England's Financial Statements as Social Work England does not issue insurance finance or insurance contracts. IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements is effective for

accounting periods on or after 1 January 2027. The standard is not yet UK-endorsed and not yet adopted by the FReM. Early adoption is not permitted.

IFRS 19 Subsidiaries without Public Accountability: Disclosures is effective for accounting periods on or after 1 January 2027. It is not yet adopted by the FReM and early adoption is not permitted.

## 2. Fee income

Fee income	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Registration fees	9,489	9,217
Scrutiny fees	509	676
Restoration fees	171	195
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,169</b>	<b>10,088</b>

Registration fees for 2024 to 2025 include £3.46m of deferred income from 2023 to 2024. Registration fees for 2023 to 2024 include £3.12m of deferred income from 2022 to 2023.

Further information regarding fee income can be found in section 1.4 of the notes to the financial statements.

### 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 2024 to 2025 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 and the fee is a non-refundable amount of £495 which represents the time and resources it takes to assess this type of application.

## 3. Staff costs

### For the financial year ending 31 March 2025

Staff Costs	Permanently Employed Staff £000	Others £000	Total £000
Wages and salaries	9,344	540	9,884
Social security costs	974	30	1,004
Pension costs	635	19	654
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,953</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>11,542</b>

Staff costs represent the cost recognised in the statement of comprehensive net expenditure and exclude staff costs which form part of intangible assets. 'Others' relates to the cost of short-term agency staff, those employed on fixed-term contracts and inward secondments during the year.

### For the financial year ending 31 March 2024

Staff Costs	Permanently Employed Re-presented* £000	Others Re-presented* £000	Total £000
Wages and salaries	8,899*	316*	9,215
Social security costs	965*	26*	991
Pension costs	539*	15*	554
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,403*</b>	<b>357*</b>	<b>10,760</b>

For the year ended 31 March 2024, staff costs classified under 'Others' have been re-presented to include those employed on fixed term contracts. These were previously reported as permanently employed.

#### 4. Operating expenditure

Operating expenditure	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Staff related costs	268	156
Legal and other professional fees	5,593	7,105
Premises costs	368	308
IT and Telecommunications costs	1,505	1,337
Travel and subsistence	80	129
Research and development	121	119
Advertising and marketing	72	93
Irrecoverable VAT on lease payments	25	17
Lease interest	28	31
Board fees	87	110
Utilities	70	51
External audit fees	92	56
Internal audit fees	57	34
Bank charges	109	115
Other expenditure	95	116
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,570</b>	<b>9,777</b>

The decrease in legal and other professional fees relates to a reduction in the amount of legal advocacy expenditure and a reduction in expenditure relating to payments made to partners. IT and Telecommunications have increased due to a rise in digital development revenue expenditure.

Board costs relate to the fees paid to the chair of the board, Andrew McCulloch and the non-executive directors as disclosed in the remuneration and staff report.

### Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges

Amortisation, depreciation and other non-cash charges	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Amortisation	1,613	1,562
Depreciation	436	473
Provision	900	42
Impairment	176	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>2,077</b>

Depreciation is charged on all property, plant and equipment expenditure as shown in note 9. Amortisation is charged on internally generated software as shown in note 10.

## 5. Receivables

Receivables	2025 £000	2024 £000
Other receivables	24	19
Prepayments	799	676
<b>Total</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>695</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after one year</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## 6. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents	2025 £000	2024 £000
Balance at 1 April	3,050	6,251
Net change in cash and cash equivalents balances	1,155	(3,201)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>4,205</b>	<b>3,050</b>

The balances were held at Government Banking Service.



## 7. Payables

Payables	2025 £000	2024 £000
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>		
Trade and other payables	876	307
Accrued Expenditure	2,888	2,462
Deferred Income	3,679	3,463
Lease liabilities	131	105
Capital accruals	457	265
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,031</b>	<b>6,602</b>
<b>Amounts falling due after one year</b>		
Lease liabilities	639	764
<b>Total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>764</b>

Deferred income has increased compared to 2024 due to an increase in the number of registered social workers. Trade and other payables has increased due to an increase in payroll related liabilities. This relates to the unwinding of a vacancy pause in the latter part of 2023 to 2024. It is linked to the increased headcount during the year, as well as the increase in employers' pension contributions.

Social Work England recognises financial liabilities when it becomes party to the contracts that give rise to them.

Financial liabilities include trade and other payables, lease liabilities under IFRS 16 and accruals, for the year-ended 31 March 2025, there were financial liabilities of £4.35m (2023 to 2024: £3.14m).

## 8. Provisions

Provisions	Litigation Cost £000	Dilapidations £000	Worker Status £000	Total £000
<b>At 1 April 2023</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>136</b>
Arising in the year	42	0	0	42
Amounts utilised	0	0	0	0
<b>At 1 April 2024</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>178</b>
Arising in the year	0	2	900	902
Amounts utilised	(42)	0	0	(42)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,038</b>
Amounts falling due within one year	0	0	900	900
Amounts falling due after more than one year	0	138	0	138

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 and the amount forms part of the right of use asset.

The legal fees provision related to a legal case which was settled during the 2024 to 2025 financial year and has been fully released upon settlement.

The provision for worker status represents the estimated costs in changing the employment terms relating to Social Work England Partners. The value reflects our best estimate of the costs to settle the obligation during the 2025 to 2026 financial year.

The provision is based on various assumptions which leads to a level of uncertainty in the valuation of the provision. The level of uncertainty, however, is not material.

## 9. Property, plant and equipment

Property, plant and equipment	Land & Buildings £000	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000	IT Equipment £000	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2024	1,265	327	1,173	1,123	3,888
Additions	0	10	193	2	205
Disposals	0	0	(167)	0	(167)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>1,199</b>	<b>1,125</b>	<b>3,926</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2024	(920)	(319)	(871)	(360)	(2,470)
Depreciation charge	(73)	(1)	(199)	(163)	(436)
Disposals	0	0	167	0	167
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>(993)</b>	<b>(320)</b>	<b>(903)</b>	<b>(523)</b>	<b>(2,739)</b>
<b>Carrying value</b>					
<b>31 March 2025</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>1,187</b>
<b>31 March 2024</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>1,418</b>

Property, plant and equipment	Land & Buildings £000	Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings £000	IT Equipment £000	Right-of-use Asset (Lease) £000	Total £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	1,265	319	1,193	1,123	3,900
Additions	0	8	3	0	11
Revaluation	0	0	0	0	0
Disposals	0	0	(23)	0	(23)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,123</b>	<b>3,888</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 April 2023	(847)	(319)	(657)	(197)	(2,020)
Depreciation charge	(73)	(0)	(237)	(163)	(473)
Disposals	0	0	23	0	23
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>(920)</b>	<b>(319)</b>	<b>(871)</b>	<b>(360)</b>	<b>(2,470)</b>
<b>Carrying value:</b>					
<b>31 March 2024</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>1,418</b>
<b>31 March 2023</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>1,880</b>

## 10. Intangible assets

Intangible assets	Assets under construction £000	Internally generated software £000	Total intangibles £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2024	2,750	7,808	10,558
Additions	1,938	0	1,938
Transfers	(3,581)	3,581	0
Impairment	(176)	0	(176)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>11,389</b>	<b>12,320</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2024	0	(1,952)	(1,952)
Amortisation charge	0	(1,613)	(1,613)
<b>At 31 March 2025</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,565)</b>	<b>(3,565)</b>
<b>Carrying value</b>			
<b>31 March 2025</b>	<b>931</b>	<b>7,824</b>	<b>8,755</b>
<b>31 March 2024</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>5,856</b>	<b>8,606</b>

Intangible assets at 31 March 2025 relate to a suite of digital services that has been developed to enable Social Work England to carry out its regulatory role.

During the year 2024 to 2025, management deemed the development of part of our assets under development as fully operational. The related development cost was transferred from assets under construction to internally generated software and amortised over their useful economic life. The impairment amount relates to a software development project which was judged in 2024 to 2025 as no longer being technologically and economically viable.

Further development of the suite of digital services is ongoing and continues to be categorised as assets under construction. During the year additional development costs of £257,000 were recognised as an expense (2023 to 2024: £111,000)

Intangible assets	Assets under construction £000	Internally generated software £000	Total intangibles £000
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 April 2023	568	7,808	8,376
Additions	2,182	0	2,182
Transfers	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>7,808</b>	<b>10,558</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>			
At 1 April 2023	0	(390)	(390)
Amortisation charge	0	(1,562)	(1,562)
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,952)</b>	<b>(1,952)</b>
<b>Carrying value:</b>			
<b>31 March 2024</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>5,856</b>	<b>8,606</b>
<b>31 March 2023</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>7,418</b>	<b>7,986</b>

### Carrying value of material intangible assets

Carrying value of material intangible assets	2024 to 2025 Net book value £000	2024 to 2025 Average remaining useful life years	2023 to 2024 Net book value £000	2023 to 2024 Average remaining useful life years
Case management	3,908	6.26	2,166	3.75
Registration and renewals	2,364	3.17	2,469	3.75
Public facing website and register	1,008	3.52	479	3.75
My Account and CPD	544	2.75	742	3.75

The assets have multiple components with different remaining useful lives, and so the average remaining life has been reported.

## 11. IFRS 16 – Leases

IFRS 16 - Leases	31 March 2025 Property Lease £000	31 March 2024 Property Lease £000
<b>Leases for which IFRS 16 applies in full</b>		
Not later than one year (cash flows)	155	133
Later than one year and not later than five years (cash flows)	667	815
Later than five years (cash flows)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>948</b>
Less future interest charges	(52)	(79)
<b>Present value of obligations</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>869</b>
<b>Analysed as:</b>		
Payables: amounts falling due within 1 year	131	105
Payables: amounts falling due after more than 1 year	639	764
<b>Total</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>869</b>

## 12. Commitments

Commitments are the value of non-cancellable contracts not already on the statement of financial position, which commit Social Work England to expenditure in future periods.

### 12.1 Capital commitments

We had no capital commitments in the year ending 31 March 2025 (31 March 2024; nil)

## 12.2 Other financial commitments

Contracted financial commitments at 31 March not otherwise included in these accounts	31 March 2025 £000	31 March 2024 £000
Software licenses	269	539
<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>539</b>

The financial commitment at 31 March 2025 relates to the committed cost for the use of software licenses where a non-cancellable contract exists.

## 13. Related party transactions

Related Party Transactions	2024 to 2025 £000	2023 to 2024 £000
Department for Education	12,105	13,219

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

Compensation paid to management, expense allowances and similar items paid in the normal course of business are disclosed in the remuneration report. There were no other related financial transactions during 2024 to 2025.

## 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-adjusting events between 31 March 2025 and the date of certification.







**If you would like a copy of this report in a different language or format, please contact us.**

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