

## Agenda Item 9

### Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Report

#### Author

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#### Summary

Following successive consultations in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2019, Social Work England broke new ground by setting out an approach to CPD that was entirely digital and required all social workers to record at least one piece of learning in our bespoke system within the first registration year. Now, as we enter the first registration renewal period, this paper sets out our activity around CPD, our communications to social workers and our work to refine an approach befitting the specialist nature of our regulation.

#### Purpose

This paper will cover the following areas:

- Status update
- Renewal activity
- Validation
- Our future approach

#### Status update

As of 7 September 2020, the online account has been activated by 85.1% of registrants and 25.9% have recorded at least one piece of CPD. We would like the numbers of social workers who have recorded CPD to be closer to the numbers who have activated an online account. However, a look beyond the absolute numbers gives greater insight and cause for optimism as we move through the renewal period.

We reached an average rate of 130 new social workers per day recording CPD with us in February. This dropped to a low of just 59 during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic in April and we only began to return to the sustained recording averages pre-Covid-19 response in August. We anticipated a drop recording such as this, as social workers supported vital local delivery in response to the pandemic. Importantly, however, we have made up this ground and

are now seeing an increased average daily recording rate. More encouragingly, on average each registrant is recording three pieces of CPD, which shows engagement far beyond our minimum requirements.

The table below illustrates this in more detail and indicates our target mapping until the close of the renewal period on 30 November.

	Online account creation target	Actual Online	CPD Target	Actual CPD
<b>15 July</b>	67,000	69,984	17,000	16,285
<b>31 July</b>	68,500	77,274	18,500	18,889
<b>15 August</b>	70,000	79,849	20,000	20,481
<b>31 August</b>	71,500	83,000	21,500	23,276
<b>07 September</b>	78,000	84,618	38,300	26,188
<b>30 September</b>	83,000		46,880	
<b>15 October</b>	87,000		56,240	
<b>31 October</b>	90,000		61,310	
<b>15 November</b>	93,000		72,152	
<b>30 November</b>	96,000		97,000	

*The forecast for CPD submissions and online account creation pre-1 September is based on average completion rates from May to July. The milestones for September to November for account creation, CPD submission and renewal application completion were based on the experiences of our people who have worked in similar roles at other regulators, factoring in periods of increased compliance following planned bulk communications.*

## Renewal activity

Over the next two months our primary focus will be on supporting social workers to meet our registration renewal requirements. The CPD team, which is now made up of six members of dedicated staff, will continue to monitor the needs of the sector in complying with our requirements. In preparation for renewal the team and colleagues across the organisation have:

1. Actively engaged with sector leaders, such as the Chief Social Workers and the Principal Social Workers Network, as well as with employers and representative bodies, to ensure that key messages about CPD are understood and disseminated.
2. Published a step-by-step instructional video on recording CPD which is available on our website and through our social media channels.
3. Updated guidance developed case studies in collaboration with a wide range of social workers and recently created a two-page 'quick guide'.
4. Run engagement sessions across the country, including online events, organised and led by the Regional Engagement Leads.
5. Recruited two temporary members of staff to answer enquiries and handle more detailed and complex requests around CPD.

6. Streamlined the CPD webpage, recording functionality and system performance to improve social workers' experiences.
7. Published blogs and reflective pieces from our regional engagement leads and National Advisory Forum members on aspects and examples of CPD and why it is important

In addition, the registration renewal process has been designed to remind social workers of our CPD requirement and support them to meet it. Where social workers renew their registration and do not record CPD by 30 November, we will contact them and advise that they have a further 21 days. It is at this stage their continued registration is at risk if they do not record CPD. Where there are exceptional mitigating circumstances, these will be considered, with an option of conditional registration available under our rules.

## Validation

In parallel to supporting key activity to drive up recording figures, the CPD Team will also be preparing for our first validation exercise which will commence in December. A team of 10 assessors (five registrant and five lay) has been recruited to assess the records of approximately 2,500 social workers. The assessment framework used to undertake validation will be presented to Executive Leadership Team in September. Training for assessors will take place in October.

## Refining our future approach

Our immediate priority is to support the organisation's first successful renewal exercise. This falls within our approach for year one which was established through our consultation activity in 2019:

1. establish a straightforward approach that requires all registrants to demonstrate that they are maintaining their CPD.
2. Put in place an online account that enables registrants to record their CPD digitally.
3. Check 100% of registrants' records at the renewal period to see if they have met the requirement.
4. Randomly select 2.5% of registrants to carry out a validation check of their record(s).
5. Publish findings of our first year of CPD activity and use research and engagement activity to further develop our approach.

We committed to learning from our first year of requiring online recording and to refining our approach to CPD by understanding better how social workers learn and what they record. In order to do this we are currently procuring the support of a research organisation to look into how social workers are engaging in CPD activity, what the barriers they face, and how they have reflected on global events like Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter. This is due to be evaluated in September with a view to being delivered in January 2021. We are also exploring the value of seeking advice from behavioural insights experts to better understand how to introduce changes in a way that is as straightforward as possible for social workers to adopt.

The culmination of these projects and our own internal analysis will help inform and refine our approach to CPD and we will return to the public and profession with a consultation to test our thinking and any proposed changes.

## Conclusion

This report has set out the considerable progress made to date in developing and introducing to the sector a new approach and requirement to the completion of CPD. It has outlined our intended activity to inform the evolution of our approach over the period of our corporate strategy.

The board is asked to note our activity and approach.