

Paper for the Board

This paper is for

- **Discussion and Advising**
- **Assurance and Noting**

Author

Colum Conway, Chief Executive

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1. Introduction

This paper is set out in a different format from previous reports. The first section is looking back at the period since the last meeting and highlighting the key areas where good progress has been made and some of the key areas that require greater focus. The second section has a more forward-looking approach highlighting key areas that present opportunities and challenges for the months ahead. The last section is a dashboard overview for the month of November which is not intended to be a performance review or update, we will continue to focus performance reporting on a quarterly basis, but a snapshot of the activity of the organisation in some key areas that will go on to form the basis for monitoring trends over time. Feedback on the presentation of the report would be very welcome.

2. Looking Back - Areas of progress

Annual Registration & CPD

Our first annual registration renewals period ended on 30 November. For the first time social workers in England were required to complete an annual renewal and submit evidence of the continuing professional development (CPD) they had carried out during the year.

Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, overall, the process was successful, the vast majority of social workers renewed their registration and uploaded their CPD by the deadline, and our new 'Forge' CRM system proved resilient and passed a major test without

any major issues. The end result is a credit to our staff across the organisation who undertook a wide range of activities, e.g., social media, RELS CPD workshops, segmented direct contact, text messages, regular engagement with Community Care, encouraging ambassadors, and strong internal collaboration. We have learnt lessons which will help us in the future. Details are at agenda items 7 and 8.

The successful completion of our first renewal process is in some ways the beginning for us as a regulator, it gives us a strong platform for our key aim of public protection by raising standards and improving practice through regulation.

Education and Training

The first annual monitoring exercise of Education and Training providers of all social work programmes has been completed as planned and is currently being reviewed. While we have developed good communications with the providers through the Education Quality Assurance Team and the Regional Engagement Leads, the review will give us a good indication of how well the providers have responded.

Following an inspection of the BA Honours Social Work course provided by Ruskin College it has been decided to withdraw approval for this course.

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/3584/20201126-ruskin-college-report-v9-final-regulatory-decision.pdf>.

Brexit

The consultation on amendments to registration and fees rules as a result of EU exit is currently under way and will close on 22 December.

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/what-we-do/consultations/eu-exit-consultation/>.

Further work is being undertaken in relation to other areas in relation to EU exit, in particular, information governance and data sharing, and contracts and procurement. We are not anticipating any major issues for us in this regard.

3. Areas for focus

Fitness to Practise

The number of new cases into Fitness to Practise (FtP) continues at a higher level than originally expected and while I am confident that the planned restructure within the FtP teams alongside the addition of resources, will manage caseloads well over an appropriate timescale, it is not sustainable for the longer term. We have therefore planned to undertake further analysis on the nature of the complaints coming to us and determine how we can influence the landscape that is currently producing this level of complaints.

Financial Forecasting

This has been a challenging year for financial forecasting and we still have no real benchmark for what could be termed 'business as usual'. We are currently planning for our next budget period and working to find the right balance for the allocation of resources.

Our income on fee projections will assist with the information from this year's renewals process and we are working with DfE on the grant in aid for 21/22.

Risk

We are still working on the development of a risk management process that will improve the coherence and synergy across operational and strategic risks. The planned workshops with Board members in the new year on risk appetite and risk strategy should make a significant contribution.

A significant amount of work has focused on the development of 'Forge' CRM system to ensure that it delivered on renewals and CPD. This solid foundation now provides us with the opportunity to further develop the system, so it fully reflects operational business processes which continues to impact on workload.

4. Forward look

Professional Standards Authority (PSA)

We have begun the first performance review process with the Authority which will last well into the new year to complete. A first review will always be challenging; however, we are keen to see this as an opportunity to build on the relationship we have developed with the PSA through the set-up phase, helping both organisations gain valuable insight and knowledge on their respective roles and contexts.

Central systems project

The project to introduce a new system to manage our People, Finance and Commercial functions is progressing well and staff teams are well engaged in the process. The project is being tightly managed, and we have adjusted timescales to be aligned with annual reporting and the financial year end.

People

While the timescales are still uncertain it seems reasonable that we should begin planning for a post Covid-19 working environment, which, while presenting an opportunity to affirm new ways of working, will have to be carefully managed. We continue to be focused on keeping people connected through the formal and informal support networks we have established and will ensure this remains a priority over the coming months.

Social Work Week

Planning for our Social Work Week is now in full flow and presents a great opportunity to build on the relationships we have established in the sector in the past year, ensuring we promote the profession and underpin standards, professionalism and regulation. Preparations for the event will have a high priority in the new year with collaboration inside and outside the organisation.

Policy

The implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards with the new role of Approved Mental Capacity Professional (given the timeframe for introduction has been confirmed as April 2022) and the imminent launch of the Children's Social Care Review will be priorities for our policy work, as will work on developing professional learning outcomes in initial education and training for social work students and trainees.

The agenda today includes a discussion on regulation of students, something which is generally supported in the sector, but which presents risks and challenges that we will need to mitigate and overcome if we are to move forward with the proposal (more at agenda item 9).

As mentioned above with these opportunities we need to consider our capacity and resources and ensure that we strike the right balance. I am content with our plans to the end of this year and the forecasts we have in place, the work of the next couple of months will focus on the development the business plan and budget for 21/22.

5. Dashboard Overview

Registration

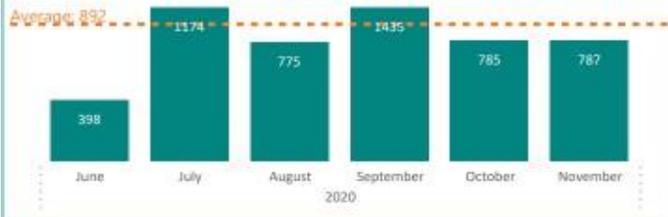
Registered Social Workers

99,702

Open applications
end of month

442

Registration Application cases opened



Education

84

Course Providers



289

Courses

Communication

121,605

website users visited our website
40.26% increase compared to October.



Increased by 463
bringing our total to
11,091 followers

14

positive articles in 11
different publications.



Increased by 687
bringing our total to
12,096 followers

3.31m

potential readers
reached.

£166k

total value of
media coverage.

Fitness to Practise

Cases opened



Open caseload at end of month

Compared to previous 6 month average



Finance

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance	Full Year Original Budget	Full Year Forecast	Variance
Fee Income	-5,946,575	-6,018,150	-71,576	-9,027,226	-8,862,000	-165,226
Expenditure						
Pay	5,130,978	5,436,430	305,452	8,256,693	8,238,827	17,866
Non-Pay (exc depreciation)	4,965,718	5,632,064	666,346	8,174,028	7,956,359	217,669
Capital	1,315,154	1,592,107	276,953	2,377,000	2,079,198	297,802
Total Expenditure	11,411,850	12,660,601	1,248,751	18,807,721	18,274,384	533,337
Grand Total	5,465,275	6,642,451	1,177,175	9,780,495	9,412,384	368,111

People

211

Headcount

8

Vacancies

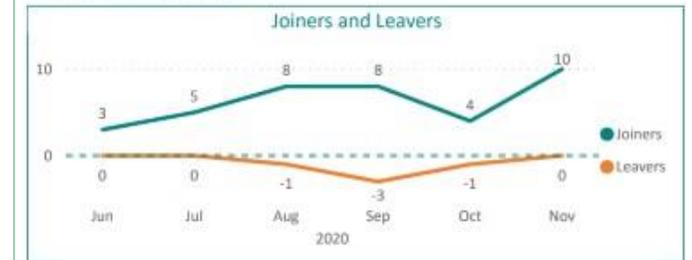


3



Internal Promotions

● Recruiting ● Planned recruitment

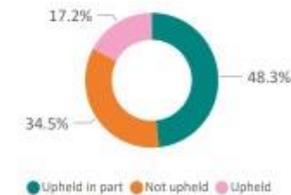


Governance

Complaints received



Complaint outcome



100%

Met 20 day service standard