

performance review 2020/21

SOCIAL WORK ENGLAND





ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS

We aim to protect the public by improving the regulation of people who work in health and care. This includes our oversight of 10 organisations that regulate health and care professionals in the UK. As described in our legislation, we have a statutory duty to report annually to Parliament on the performance of each of these 10 regulators.

Our performance reviews look at the regulators' performance against our [Standards of Good Regulation](#), which describe the outcomes we expect regulators to achieve. They cover the key areas of the regulators' work, together with the more general expectations about the way in which we would expect the regulators to act.

In carrying out our reviews, we aim to take a proportionate approach based on the information that is available about the regulator. In doing so, we look at concerns and information available to us from other stakeholders and members of the public. The process is overseen by a panel of the Authority's senior staff. We initially assess the information that we have and which is publicly available about the regulator. We then identify matters on which we might require further information in order to determine whether a Standard is met. This further review might involve an audit of cases considered by the regulator or its processes for carrying out any of its activities. Once we have gathered this further information, we decide whether the individual Standards are met and set out any concerns or areas for improvement. [These decisions are published in a report on our website.](#)

Further information about our review process can be found in [a short guide](#), available on our website. We also have a [glossary of terms](#) and abbreviations we use as part of our performance review process available on our website.

The regulators we oversee are:

General Chiropractic Council • General Dental Council • General Medical Council • General Optical Council • General Osteopathic Council • General Pharmaceutical Council • Health and Care Professions Council • Nursing and Midwifery Council • Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland • Social Work England



Find out more about our work
www.professionalstandards.org.uk

Social Work England performance review report 2020/21

At the heart
of everything
we do is
one main
purpose:
protection
of the public
from harm

Contents

- 01** At a glance - key facts and statistics about how Social Work England is meeting the Standards for 2020/21

- 02** Executive summary

- 04** How Social Work England has performed against the Standards of Good Regulation
 - 04** General Standards Five Standards

 - 10** Guidance and Standards Two Standards

 - 11** Education and Training Two Standards

 - 13** Registration Four Standards

 - 16** Fitness to Practise Five Standards

- 28** Useful information/links



Social Work England

key facts & stats

Social Work England regulates social workers in England.

As at 30 November 2021, Social Work England was responsible for a register of:


99,191 professionals

Registration fee is: £90

Social Work England's work includes:

- ▶ Setting and maintaining standards of conduct and practice for social workers in England
- ▶ Setting standards for the education and training of practitioners and assuring the quality of education and training provided
- ▶ Maintaining a register of practitioners ('registrants') who meet its standards
- ▶ Requiring registrants to undertake continuing professional development to ensure they maintain their ability to practise safely and effectively
- ▶ Acting to restrict or remove from practice individual registrants who are considered not fit to practise.

Standards of Good Regulation met for 2020/21 performance review

	General Standards	4/5
	Guidance and Standards	2/2
	Education and Training	2/2
	Registration	4/4
	Fitness to Practise	4/5

Meeting, or not meeting, a Standard is not the full story about how a regulator is performing. You can find out more in the full report.

Social Work England

Executive summary

How Social Work England is protecting the public and meeting the Standards of Good Regulation



This report arises from our annual performance review of Social Work England and covers the period from 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2021. Social Work England is one of 10 health and care professional regulatory organisations in the UK which we oversee. We assessed Social Work England's performance against the [Standards of Good Regulation](#) which describe the outcomes we expect regulators to achieve in each of their four core functions.

To carry out this review, we collated and analysed evidence from Social Work England and other interested parties, including Board papers, performance reports and updates, committee reports and meeting minutes, policy, guidance and consultation documents, our statistical performance dataset and third-party feedback. We also used information available through our review of final fitness to practise decisions under the Section 29 process¹ and conducted a check of the accuracy of Social Work England's register. We used this information to decide the type of performance review we should undertake. You can find further information about our review process in our [Performance Review Process guide](#), which is available on our website.

Social Work England's performance during 2020/21

Social Work England met 16 of our 18 Standards. It did not meet Standard 3, because we were concerned about the lack of EDI data Social Work England held on its registrants. It did not meet Standard 17, because we were concerned about how long it took to make decisions about interim orders.

Key developments and findings

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

While Social Work England has developed an EDI action plan, this was published after the end of this review period, and most of the activity in it is due to take place over the coming months. There was relatively limited progress against the action plan during our review period. Social Work England is also hindered by a lack of EDI data: by the end of our review period, it had EDI data for less than 5% of its registrants. We were not assured that it understands the diversity of its registrants, or ensures that its processes do not disadvantage people with protected characteristics, while the data is so limited.

¹ Each regulator we oversee has a 'fitness to practise' process for handling complaints about health and care professionals. The most serious cases are referred to formal hearings in front of fitness to practise panels. We review every final decision made by the regulators' fitness to practise panels. If we consider that a decision is insufficient to protect the public properly we can refer them to Court to be considered by a judge. Our power to do this comes from Section 29 of the [NHS Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 \(as amended\)](#).

Social Work England has started to make some encouraging progress in this area, and we will continue to monitor how it carries out its action plan. But for this year, in light of its limited progress on the plan and the absence of data to enable it to understand its registrants' diversity, Standard 3 is not met.

Fitness to practise timeliness

Social Work England's ability to progress fitness to practise cases continues to be significantly affected by the impact of the cases transferred from the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). This was a challenge unique to Social Work England as a new body and progressing these cases was a challenge that could not be resolved in the first year.

Social Work England's focus on clearing these legacy cases is appropriate and it has made good progress this year, whilst avoiding creating significant problems for future years. Therefore, we are satisfied that Standard 15 is, for this year, met. However, it is important that we see the resolution of the vast majority of remaining legacy cases, as well as progress in timeliness and triage, over the next year.

Interim orders (IOs)

We are pleased to see the progress that Social Work England has made in relation to risk assessments at the triage stage. We are also encouraged by the progress that Social Work England has reported in relation to the application of its risk assessment policy. However, we are concerned that Social Work England has been taking longer to make IO decisions this year, particularly on new cases.

While Social Work England has made some progress, and faces some specific challenges, taking action promptly to assess risk and decide on an IO is important to protect the public from risk of harm. Social Work England is taking too long to achieve this. Therefore, we determined that Standard 17 is not met.

Education and Training Standards

Social Work England implemented new education and training standards, a significant development in its oversight of education and training providers, which it had put back a year because of the pandemic. It liaised with course providers in advance to ensure they could make any necessary changes.

It has also worked on education and training standards for two groups of professionals carrying out roles under the Mental Health Act, commissioning research and consulting with experts to inform those standards. It took a sensible and proactive approach overall and we are satisfied that Standard 8 is met.

How Social Work England has performed against the Standards of Good Regulation

General Standards

Standard 1: The regulator provides accurate, fully accessible information about its registrants, regulatory requirements, guidance, processes and decisions.

- 1.1 Social Work England continues to provide a range of information, principally through its website. We did not have any concerns about this information last year, and there have not been any significant changes to its approach this year.
- 1.2 Social Work England publishes board papers before its board meetings. It withholds some of these papers from publication, such as policy under development. This is reasonable and in line with the approach it described to us last year.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 1.3 There have been no significant changes since last year, and we have no concerns related to this Standard, so we are satisfied that it is met.

Standard 2: The regulator is clear about its purpose and ensures that its policies are applied appropriately across all its functions and that relevant learning from one area is applied to others.

- 2.1 Social Work England published its business plan² for 2021/22 in April 2021, the next stage of its strategic plan. It sets out priorities in five areas, with measures for each, and links the priorities with Social Work England's duty to protect the public.
- 2.2 The business plan emphasises Social Work England's collaborative approach, much of which remains focused on registrants and the wider sector. As we noted last year, this is understandable and necessary for Social Work England to be able to perform its functions effectively. However, it also highlighted specific areas where Social Work England is engaging, and will continue to engage, with people with experience of social work.
- 2.3 One of the key areas for this is the National Advisory Forum (NAF). Social Work England published an evaluation of the NAF in October. The NAF has 17 members from different backgrounds, including academics and people with lived experience of social work. The NAF's contribution to Social Work England's work included:
 - co-producing 53 pieces of work

² <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/4001/business-plan-2021-to-2022-final-accessible-version-june-21.pdf>

- contributing to Social Work Week
 - attending Social Work England’s Decision Review Group, and
 - contributing to the Social Work in England report, published in early 2022.
- 2.4 Social Work England has sought new members for the NAF, encouraging people with experience or characteristics which were underrepresented. It also took forward 11 recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the NAF. We consider the NAF to be a good initiative, and we are pleased to see the level of involvement the NAF has in Social Work England’s work and Social Work England’s commitment to improving its effectiveness.
- 2.5 Beyond the NAF, Social Work England published research into the roles of Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) and Best Interests Assessors (BIAs), which included the experience of service users. Social Work England said it would take the research into account when developing new standards for AMHPs and Approved Mental Capacity Professionals (AMCPs).³ Social Work England also engaged with people with lived experience for a consultation on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and commissioned research into public perceptions and experiences of raising fitness to practise concerns.
- 2.6 We have also seen examples of information sharing between Social Work England’s teams. A learning report on its renewal exercise included feedback across various teams. The regional engagement team has supported the fitness to practise team through offering social work expertise in decision-making groups. An internal review of Social Work England’s corporate feedback and complaints process found that information raised with other teams was being appropriately shared with the internal quality team.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 2.7 Social Work England publishes information about its priorities and objectives, which it links to its duty to protect the public. It has engaged with the public and people with experience of social work, particularly through the NAF, whilst maintaining engagement with registrants and the wider sector. We have also seen examples of cross-team working within Social Work England and do not have any concerns about this. Therefore, we are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 3: The regulator understands the diversity of its registrants and their patients and service users and of others who interact with the regulator and ensures that its processes do not impose inappropriate barriers or otherwise disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

- 3.1 This Standard was not met last year, as Social Work England had made limited progress in developing and implementing its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, and it had only gathered limited EDI data on its registrants.

³ AMCPs are replacing BIAs in April 2022.

EDI data

- 3.2 As we acknowledged in our performance review last year, Social Work England started from a low base in relation to EDI data, as it did not receive any data from the HCPC.
- 3.3 As of January 2022, shortly after the end of our review period, Social Work England held EDI data for 4,054 registrants. This amounts to less than 5% of its register. This low level of data makes it difficult for Social Work England to identify and address where people who share protected characteristics may be experiencing its processes unequally.
- 3.4 Social Work England launched voluntary⁴ diversity data collection activity in June 2021, just over halfway through the review period. It has attempted to obtain this data by asking registrants through various channels, including social media, trade press and its own direct communications. It has a communication plan for its EDI activities, which includes encouraging social workers to share this data. The EDI action plan also includes a commitment to review the ways in which Social Work England seeks data from social workers, and it is engaging with other health and social care regulators to understand their processes. We recognise that Social Work England has been making significant efforts to obtain more EDI data, but it had made limited progress by the end of our review period. We consider it very important that it continues to encourage its registrants to provide their EDI data, to support its work in this area.
- 3.5 In terms of its understanding of those people who are studying to be social workers, it has received EDI data from 41 of 81 education providers. As mentioned at Standard 9 below, Social Work England will be reapproving all education providers against its standards by September 2024. These standards include requirements for providers to implement and monitor equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants. As a result, Social Work England expects to develop a more detailed and up-to-date understanding over the course of the reapproval process.

EDI strategy and action plan

- 3.6 Social Work England published its statement of intent on EDI⁵ in February 2021. Social Work England's action plan,⁶ published in December 2021,⁷ outlined the work completed up to that point, which included:
- Appointing an EDI lead to Social Work England's Senior Leadership Team
 - Expanding the NAF to increase its diversity
 - Introducing the UK social work/care regulators' EDI forum

⁴ Like other regulators we oversee, Social Work England does not have a legal power to require its registrants to provide this information.

⁵ <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/publications/statement-of-intent-on-equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

⁶ <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-action-plan/>

⁷ Whilst this was published outside the review period, it outlined the EDI work which had been done up to that point and the planning would largely have been taking place during the review period.

- Introducing new education and training standards which include a requirement to embed EDI
 - Co-producing a new approach to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and training staff.
- 3.7 Social Work England has attempted to find sources of data and intelligence in relation to EDI, including via its regional engagement team, membership bodies, regulatory partners and other stakeholders. It commissioned two relevant pieces of research. One of these was a study on education and training, focusing on the experiences and perceptions of students and newly qualified social workers based on their protected characteristics, as well as the inclusion of anti-discriminatory practice in their training. The other focused on perceptions and experiences of raising fitness to practise concerns, with specific EDI questions. Social Work England also conducted a survey on the prevalence, impact and awareness of racism in social work, with the outcome published in March 2022.
- 3.8 It has also sought other routes to understanding the diversity of those studying to be social workers. This included events at Social Work Week 2021 which were specifically related to social work students and diversity, anti-racism and anti-oppressive practice. It commissioned research into the experiences and perceptions of social work students who share protected characteristics. It is also developing learning outcomes to provide a framework for the knowledge, skills and experience expected of social workers qualifying from initial education and training, which includes a specific focus on EDI and anti-oppressive practice.
- 3.9 Social Work England's action plan contains 45 actions, across three different objectives, broadly relating to: its regulatory activities; its culture as an inclusive organisation; and its engagement activity. There are clear timeframes for when the actions are expected to be completed, unless they are appropriately considered to be ongoing actions, such as an annual thematic review at the Decision Review Group of cases with EDI factors.
- 3.10 Social Work England has built in clear, regular reporting arrangements for its action plan. The action plan sets out the evidence or measure for each action, although some are more specific than others. Social Work England has an EDI action plan tracker, which will be reviewed monthly by the EDI steering group. There will also be updates on the action plan at Social Work England's collaborative hub for staff networks, as well as at quarterly senior leadership team business meetings, in its quarterly performance report to the Board and in its annual report.
- 3.11 The action plan includes a range of positive steps that Social Work England will take. It is less clear from the plan how Social Work England will address any disproportionality in its processes, though some of the planned activities may inform further work to address any disproportionality identified. As noted above, Social Work England does not yet have the data to identify whether some of its processes may be having unequal effects on groups of people who share protected characteristics.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 3.12 Social Work England's development and publication of the action plan is a positive step. However, the plan was published after the end of this review period, and most of the activity in it is due to take place over the coming months. There was relatively limited progress against the action plan during our review period.
- 3.13 Furthermore, Social Work England is hindered by not having EDI data on the vast majority of registrants. We were not assured that it understands the diversity of its registrants, or ensures that its processes do not disadvantage people with protected characteristics, while the data is so limited.
- 3.14 Social Work England has started to make some encouraging progress in this area, and we will continue to monitor how it carries out its action plan. But for this year, in light of its limited progress on the plan and the absence of data to enable it to understand its registrants' diversity, this Standard is not met.

Standard 4: The regulator reports on its performance and addresses concerns identified about it and considers the implications for it of findings of public inquiries and other relevant reports about healthcare regulatory issues.

- 4.1 Social Work England amended its performance reporting over the year in response to requests from its Board. It now reports on performance every quarter. Its performance reports contain KPIs, an associated narrative, and detailed statistics on performance. It has KPIs across the organisation, which it reviewed in the middle of the year and slightly amended to make them clearer.
- 4.2 Reports to the Board clearly identified concerns, both urgent and for the future, and possible mitigations. An example of this is a report identifying high levels of sick leave, and the Board considering how to support staff and promote a healthy workplace. The Board also agreed changes to its structure, to further improve its engagement and ability to challenge, which we will monitor.
- 4.3 The Board received regular updates on relevant inquiries and developments in the sector, and there is evidence of Social Work England responding to them. An example of this is the Wessely review of the Mental Health Act and the government's response, which affected Social Work England's plans to develop new education and training standards for AMHPs and AMCPs. Social Work England also developed an action plan in response to our performance review last year.
- 4.4 Social Work England produced a report on corporate complaints activity from April 2020 to March 2021⁸. This showed that it received 267 corporate complaints and 101 pieces of feedback, which was largely in line with its

⁸ This only covers four months of our review period.

expectations. There was a good level of compliance with its targets for responding to complaints and feedback.⁹

- 4.5 Social Work England identified 51 'corrective or improvement actions' as a result of complaints or feedback and reported on its progress. This demonstrates Social Work England's commitment to addressing concerns and learning from them.
- 4.6 In March and April 2021, Social Work England reviewed its corporate feedback and complaints process, including benchmarking against other organisations. It was satisfied that people were able to raise concerns, and information was shared appropriately to promote learning.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 4.7 Social Work England reports on its performance and takes account of relevant public inquiries and developments in the sector. It acts on concerns raised through the corporate complaints and feedback process. We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 5: The regulator consults and works with all relevant stakeholders across all its functions to identify and manage risks to the public in respect of its registrants.

- 5.1 Last year, Social Work England was unable to report on how many referrals it made to other organisations. We considered that this should be addressed. It also said it would use its research reports to inform policy development.
- 5.2 Social Work England has not yet updated its case management system to allow it to report on referrals to other organisations. This is because there were more urgent improvements needed to the case management system, and it considered there was sufficient assurance in place that referrals were being made appropriately. Social Work England takes assurance from its guidance to staff and managerial approval of referrals.
- 5.3 We have not received any evidence to suggest Social Work England is not sharing information appropriately with other organisations. We received positive feedback from another UK regulator of social care about Social Work England's responsiveness and proactivity. Therefore, while there remains room for improvement in Social Work England's ability to report on referrals to other organisations, we do not have serious concerns about its performance in this area.
- 5.4 There is evidence of Social Work England using research when developing policy. Its consultation on CPD built on the findings of research it had conducted. As noted at paragraph 2.5 above, it published research into the roles of AMHPs and BIAs, which it will use in developing its education and training standards for AMHPs and AMCPs. Social Work England also consulted an expert advisory group, and other regulators of AMHPs and AMCPs, as part of developing these standards.

⁹ It acknowledged 98% of complaints and 96% of feedback within three working days. It sent substantive responses within 20 working days for 91% of complaints and 92% of feedback.

- 5.5 Social Work England undertook two consultations in this review period. In November to December 2020, it consulted on changes to its registration rules following the UK leaving the EU. It published a response, describing how the feedback had been considered. Similarly, it published a response following its consultation on CPD (discussed in more detail at Standard 13) and outlined how it had taken the feedback into account. The CPD consultation followed engagement workshops, and included further engagement activity as part of the consultation.
- 5.6 Social Work England has conducted a range of other engagement activity throughout our review period. As well as the engagement described at Standard 2, this included Social Work Week, which was a week-long online event with a variety of sessions. Social Work England conducted an evaluation which considered it a success, with 6,000 attendees, positive feedback from respondents and a modest increase in CPD submitted during the week.
- 5.7 Social Work England also worked with stakeholders in other ways:
- It signed up to the Care Quality Commission’s emerging concerns protocol.¹⁰ This is an agreement between regulators to share information that may indicate risks, to promote a collaborative approach.
 - Its regional engagement team conducted workshops with employers on the fitness to practise referral process,
 - It has continued to hold its education and training advisory forum.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 5.8 Our review last year identified that Social Work England could not easily report on the referrals it made to other organisations, which we expected it would want to address. It has not done so, but as outlined above, this does not give us any major cause for concern. We have seen evidence of Social Work England using research to inform policy development, responding to feedback received as part of consultations it has conducted, and conducting significant engagement activity with external stakeholders. We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Guidance and Standards

Standard 6: The regulator maintains up-to-date standards for registrants which are kept under review and prioritise patient and service user centred care and safety.

- 6.1 Social Work England introduced new professional standards for registered social workers when it began operating in December 2019. We have not received any information this year to suggest the standards have become outdated since then.

¹⁰ Available at: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/themed-work/emerging-concerns-protocol>.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 6.2 We have seen no evidence that Social Work England's standards have become out of date, and we are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 7: The regulator provides guidance to help registrants apply the standards and ensures this guidance is up to date, addresses emerging areas of risk, and prioritises patient and service user centred care and safety.

- 7.1 Social Work England continues to publish guidance to help registrants apply the standards via its website. We have not seen any evidence to suggest it is out of date.
- 7.2 Last year, we noted that Social Work England produced guidance for registrants and students about practice and training in the context of the pandemic. This guidance continues to be available this year. Social Work England has also published guidance for registrants about how to meet its renewal and CPD requirements.
- 7.3 In October 2021, Social Work England launched a series of podcasts about its professional standards. These podcasts included Social Work England staff members, members of the NAF and registrants. They focused on the standards or particular aspects of them, such as the use of social media, and transcripts were published on Social Work England's website. We considered this a good initiative to support registrants' understanding of the standards.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 7.4 Social Work England provides a range of guidance for registrants, which we have no evidence to suggest is out of date. We are satisfied this Standard is met.

Education and Training

Standard 8: The regulator maintains up-to-date standards for education and training which are kept under review, and prioritise patient and service user centred care and safety.

- 8.1 Social Work England had originally planned to introduce new education standards in 2020, but this was appropriately delayed to 2021 as a result of the pandemic. It liaised with training providers several months before the standards came into effect in September 2021, to ensure they could incorporate any necessary changes, and communicated the launch via various channels.
- 8.2 Social Work England published its annual monitoring report for 2020 in May 2021. The report included responses from training providers about their preparation for the new standards. Social Work England found that providers had confidence in local and regional teaching partnerships and training

networks. There had been mixed feedback on technology and the extent to which courses actively assessed applicants' competence. There was also a wide variation in how courses planned to involve people with lived experience of social work.

- 8.3 As mentioned above, Social Work England worked with a group of experts to develop education and training standards for AMHPs and AMCPs. It was delaying consultation on these standards until the government launched its consultation¹¹ on the regulations which give Social Work England the power it requires to implement the new standards. These regulations are only relevant to AMCPs, but the work for AMHPs is being kept alongside this because the work is closely related. We consider this approach to be pragmatic and reasonable.
- 8.4 Social Work England began its work on the AMCP standards prior to the regulations being approved in order to maximise the time available for course providers to prepare AMCP courses and get them approved. It did this after approaching the Department of Health and Social Care and its partner regulators in this area, the NMC and the HCPC. We consider this to have been a sensible and proactive approach.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 8.5 Social Work England implemented new education and training standards and liaised with course providers in advance to ensure they were prepared. It has also worked on education and training standards for AMHPs and AMCPs, consulting with experts and taking a sensible approach overall. We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 9: The regulator has a proportionate and transparent mechanism for assuring itself that the educational providers and programmes it oversees are delivering students and trainees that meet the regulator's requirements for registration, and takes action where its assurance activities identify concerns either about training or wider patient safety concerns.

- 9.1 Social Work England's annual monitoring report confirmed that 75 providers delivering 290 courses declared that they continued to meet the standards. The report noted that all providers had adapted to the pandemic, using increased flexibility and a wide range of approaches to blended learning. Providers noted challenges in maintaining the rigour of assessment processes; Social Work England would continue to engage with them about this. Social Work England received limited information from providers on students' protected characteristics and planned to work with providers to improve its understanding.
- 9.2 Social Work England's approvals and inspections continued throughout the year, with a total of 13 inspections taking place during the review period. Two courses were approved with conditions in the review period. Internal auditors

¹¹ The government's consultation was launched on 17 March 2022, after the end of our review period.

at Social Work England reported substantial assurance in relation to its educational quality assurance in April 2021.

- 9.3 Social Work England's new standards for education and training only came into effect in September 2021, so there was limited evidence about how they have been implemented within this review period. This is an area we will be closely monitoring in our next performance review.
- 9.4 Social Work England is required to reapprove courses every six years, whether it or the HCPC first approved them. It has a KPI to complete 36 reapprovals by March 2022 and must reapprove all courses by September 2024. It has informed providers of where their reapproval falls in the period to September 2024 and engaged with providers to ensure they are at the most appropriate times, as well as ensuring they understand the requirements of the process.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 9.5 We have seen evidence of Social Work England undertaking inspection activity and acting when concerns are identified. It is confident in its progress for reapprovals and has engaged with providers, which should assist it in making good progress. We will monitor the effect of the 2021 education standards in the next review period, but this year, we are satisfied that the Standard is met.

Registration

Standard 10: The regulator maintains and publishes an accurate register of those who meet its requirements including any restrictions on their practice.

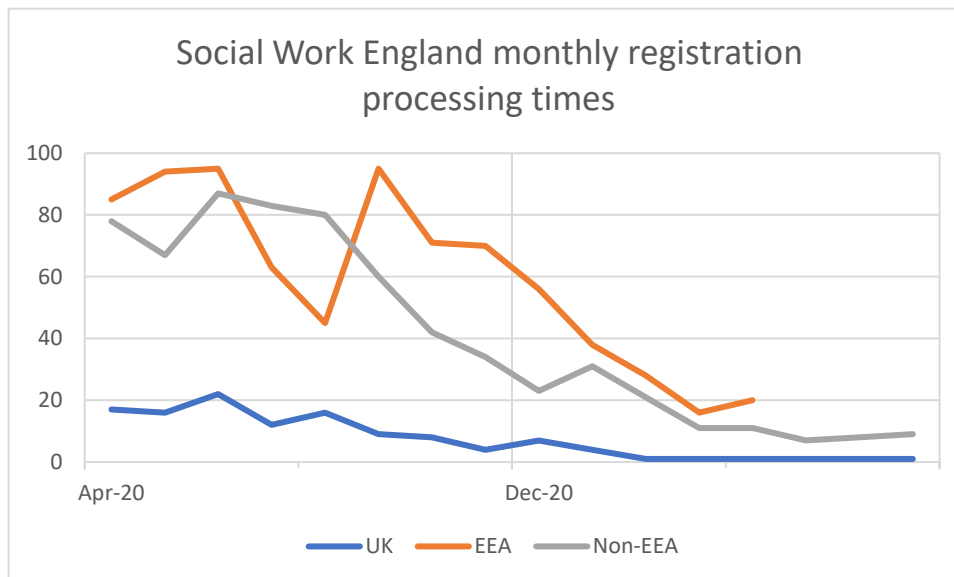
- 10.1 We conducted a check of Social Work England's register against published outcomes of fitness to practise cases and did not identify any issues. We also did not receive any concerns about the information Social Work England publishes on its register.
- 10.2 Social Work England's temporary register remains open and all registrants who did not renew their registration as part of Social Work England's first renewal exercise were automatically added to this register.
- 10.3 In September 2021, there were 13,219 people on the temporary register, but this was reduced to around 6,500 in November 2021. Social Work England contacted people on the temporary register to confirm whether they were practising and began work to remove people who had not been fully registered for over two years. It also encouraged social workers practising with temporary registration to inform their employers and apply for restoration if they intended to continue practising. We considered these to be sensible and proportionate actions to take.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 10.4 We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 11: The process for registration, including appeals, operates proportionately, fairly and efficiently, with decisions clearly explained.

11.1 Last year, Social Work England did not meet this Standard as it was taking too long to process applications. We noted that its performance improved over the year. Social Work England has sustained this improvement, as per the graph below, and we no longer have concerns about the time it takes to process registration applications.



11.2 Social Work England reviewed its performance in registration and identified factors affecting its first year:

- a higher-than-expected number of applications transferred to it from the HCPC
- the impact of the pandemic (including setting up a temporary register)
- high turnover in the team, and
- a lot of general enquiries, which took up capacity.

11.3 This has been addressed by an increase in resource for the team, as well as improvements to processes. Social Work England has also seen a reduction in general enquiries.

11.4 Annual registration renewal was a new requirement for social workers, with the first renewal period running from September to November 2020. Following this renewal period, Social Work England received 700 restoration applications in December 2020. The second-highest month, November 2021, saw just 153 restoration applications, and seven months in the review period saw less than 100 restoration applications.

11.5 This peak in restoration applications was a result of two factors: applicants failing to renew during the renewal period; and a large return to social work course which completed at the end of November 2020. Social Work England took various steps to mitigate the risk of registrants failing to renew, including:

- messaging all registrants about the process

- directly messaging subsets of the register based on where they were in the renewal process
 - engaging with employers, and
 - using social media and publishing articles in trade publications.
- 11.6 Social Work England's attempts to ensure as many registrants as possible renew appear reasonable. We do not have any concerns about Social Work England's approach to the renewal process.
- 11.7 In early 2021, Social Work England conducted a review of its renewal process. Some areas for improvement were identified, including its online system (particularly, some technical issues with the system), guidance for registrants, and communication with registrants, particularly around the volume and frequency of communications.
- 11.8 Social Work England received 14 registration appeals during the review period and concluded 17. Four of the appeals were upheld, all where the appellant provided new information. The median time taken to conclude appeals is significantly reduced compared to last year. We do not have any concerns about Social Work England's data on registration appeals.
- 11.9 We received a few concerns about Social Work England's registration processes. These included three registrants who had concerns about recording CPD, which was consistent with the learning identified by Social Work England's own review. None of the concerns we received suggested that there were problems with its overall performance against this Standard.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 11.10 Social Work England's performance on registration and the renewal process has improved this year. Its data on appeals does not give us any reason to be concerned and nor do the concerns we have received. We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 12: Risk of harm to the public and of damage to public confidence in the profession related to non-registrants using a protected title or undertaking a protected act is managed in a proportionate and risk-based manner.

- 12.1 Performance reports to Social Work England's board include the number of cases of people using the protected title of 'social worker' without being registered that it received each month, and the median time taken to resolve them. Social Work England received a total of 72 cases in the review period, averaging 6 per month. The median time to resolve misuse of title cases fluctuated, as would be expected with a small number of cases, and the data did not give us concerns about Social Work England's performance.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 12.2 We are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 13: The regulator has proportionate requirements to satisfy itself that registrants continue to be fit to practise.

- 13.1 During this review period, Social Work England consulted on changes to its CPD requirements, which we broadly supported. Following this, Social Work England made changes to its CPD requirements, effective from December 2021. Social workers must submit at least two pieces of CPD, at least one of which must involve peer reflection. Social Work England will also look to set a mandatory theme for one of the pieces of CPD from December 2022.
- 13.2 Social Work England's team of ten assessors¹² reviewed a sample of 2.5% of CPD submissions after the renewal period ended in 2020 (2,205 registrants). It gave advice to 89 registrants on improving their CPD, and these registrants were automatically included in the sample for review after the 2021 renewal period. Therefore, the assessors did not identify issues in 96% of CPD records.
- 13.3 At the end of the 2020 renewal period, and after a 21-day extension, 256 registrants were removed for not submitting any CPD. The number of registrants removed for not submitting CPD was reduced by more than half for the 2021 renewal period. We will monitor the effect of the changes to CPD requirements, as well as the removal of an extension period, in the 2022 renewal period.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 13.4 Social Work England has kept its CPD requirements under review, and consulted on changes which we broadly supported. We are satisfied that Social Work England's requirements for CPD and its process for reviewing CPD are proportionate, and therefore we are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Fitness to Practise

Standard 14: The regulator enables anyone to raise a concern about a registrant.

- 14.1 Social Work England continues to receive a high volume of referrals, averaging 194 per month over the review period. This is significantly higher than the average of around 160 per month in the last review period and higher still than its expectation of about 120 referrals a month based on the HCPC's experience. We have not heard from anyone that they found it difficult to raise a concern with Social Work England.
- 14.2 The main source of referrals continues to be members of the public, accounting for 64.9% of referrals. Employers account for 20.6% of referrals, 7.5% are self-referrals, and the remainder is made up of referrals from other social workers or other agencies.

¹² Five social workers and five lay assessors.

- 14.3 Social Work England has identified that it receives a high number of referrals which do not amount to concerns about a registrant's fitness to practise. This is contributing to a heavy caseload at triage (discussed under Standard 15 below). It has begun work on a project focused on understanding and responding to this issue, which we consider reasonable. However, we will be monitoring the outcomes of this project closely to ensure that members of the public are not dissuaded from making legitimate referrals.
- 14.4 Social Work England's regional engagement team are registered social workers, working across England to build relationships with all stakeholders that have an interest in social work. The team has continued to run workshops with employers about its fitness to practise process, which supports the referral process. We have not seen any evidence to give us concerns about its process for raising concerns.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 14.5 We will be monitoring Social Work England's work on addressing the high number of referrals it receives but have not seen any cause for concern during this review period. It is clear that members of the public are able to raise concerns about social workers with Social Work England. Therefore, we are satisfied that the Standard is met.

Standard 15: The regulator's process for examining and investigating cases is fair, proportionate, deals with cases as quickly as is consistent with a fair resolution of the case and ensures that appropriate evidence is available to support decision-makers to reach a fair decision that protects the public at each stage of the process.

- 15.1 In our review last year, we were satisfied that this Standard was met, considering the exceptional circumstances faced by Social Work England in its first year of operation. It received over 1,500 cases from the HCPC, the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted plans just a few months after it started operation, and it was receiving a significantly higher referral rate than it had anticipated based on the HCPC's data. We expected to see improved performance in this review period.
- 15.2 This year, the legacy cases continue to have a significant effect on Social Work England's performance. Similarly, the rate of referrals in this review period was higher than in the last review period, and much higher overall than the anticipated level of referrals. We looked carefully at Social Work England's performance.

Legacy cases

- 15.3 When Social Work England began operating in December 2019, it received 1,270 open investigations from the HCPC, the equivalent of over two years' worth of investigations.¹³ It started this review period with the equivalent of almost 18 months' worth of investigations. Social Work England targeted the

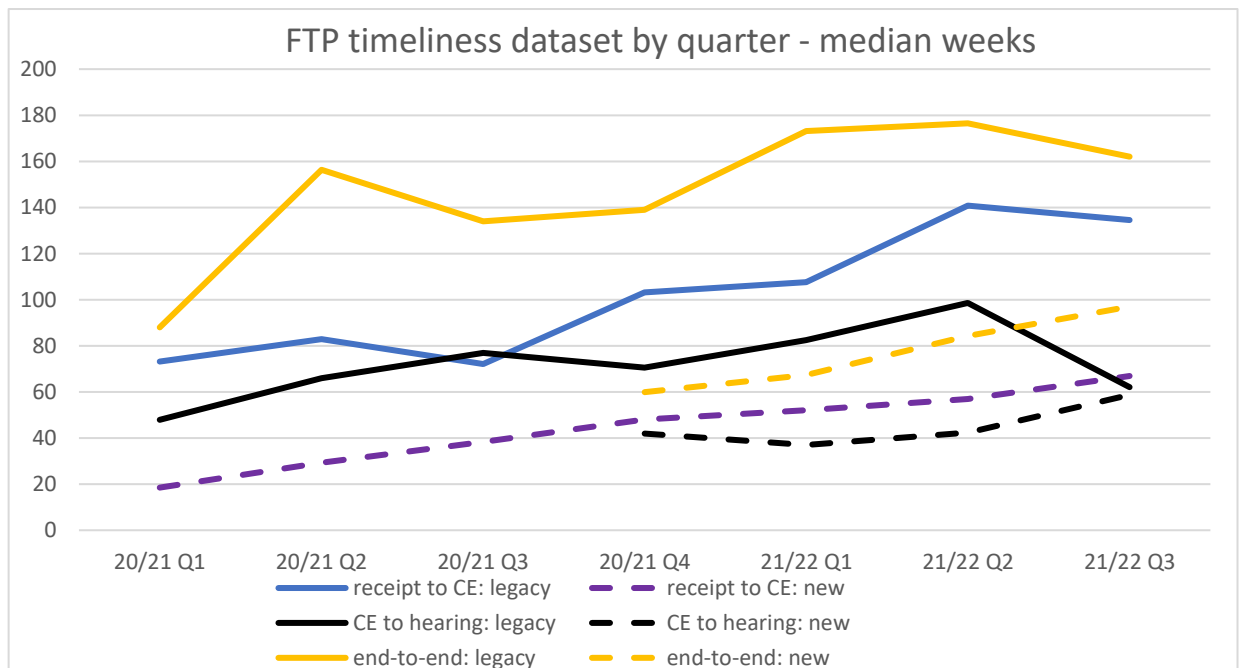
¹³ Based on the average of 52 new investigations a month Social Work England opened between April 2020 and December 2021.

resolution of this caseload for 2021/22, as it would not be possible to improve the rest of its service without first reducing the excess caseload.

- 15.4 Social Work England has taken various steps to address the legacy caseload. It has devoted 50% of its casework service to legacy cases and gave those teams specific training on dealing with them. It set a target of 80% of legacy cases being progressed beyond investigations by March 2022, based on the number of staff working on legacy cases and those staff members' likely performance, including benchmarking their performance against other regulators. This was a reasonable approach. It also demonstrates the scale of the challenge posed by the legacy caseload, in that a reasonable target based on half of Social Work England's casework resources would not result in all legacy cases progressing beyond investigations after over two years.
- 15.5 Social Work England has made good progress on legacy cases. The number of open legacy investigations has reduced by more than half during our review period, from 909 to 448. Social Work England has planned how it will manage the flow of these cases so that they do not cause a backlog later on in the process. It has received further funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to help progress the remaining legacy cases through the hearings service by significantly increasing capacity and we expect to see very few open legacy cases by the end of 2022/23.

Timeliness

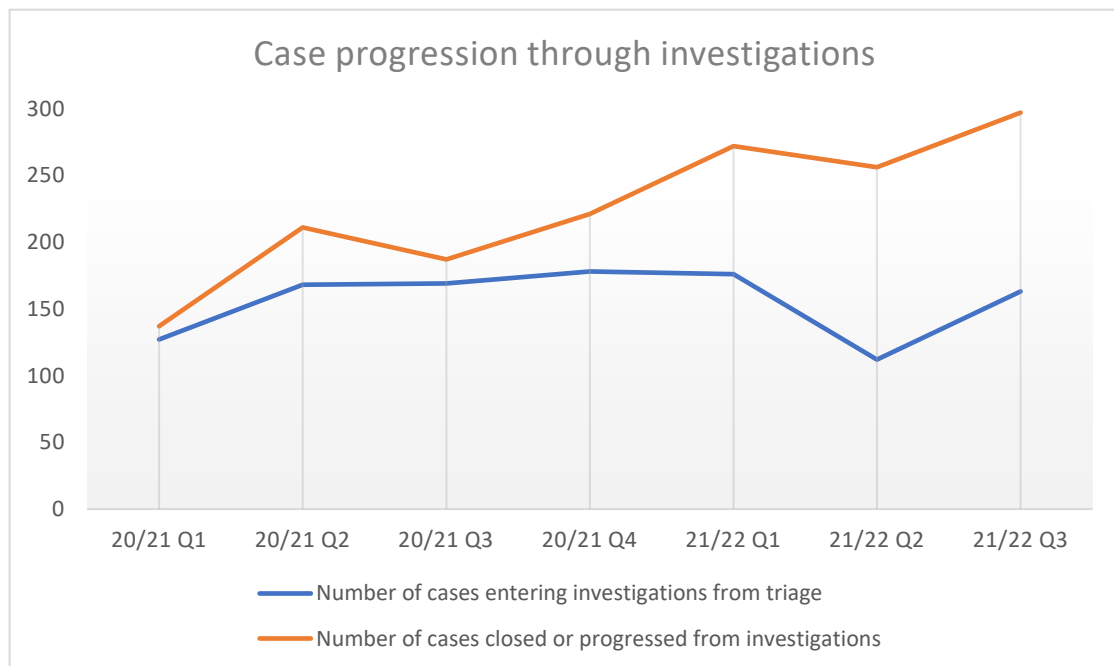
- 15.6 As noted above, Social Work England faced a situation unique among the regulators we oversee. That makes it harder to assess its performance on timeliness. Social Work England is prioritising legacy cases, as we would expect it to, but this affects its ability to progress new cases. The graph below shows the key timeliness measures for Social Work England.



- 15.7 The time taken to conclude new cases has increased, though it remains similar to other regulators. It will still take some time for this measure to

accurately reflect the full range of Social Work England’s casework, as its longest new cases will not have reached closure yet. The timeliness measures for legacy cases are affected by when they were referred to the HCPC and are not being balanced by newer cases coming in and being closed, so this measure will worsen over time.

- 15.8 We looked at other measures to understand Social Work England’s performance. The number of open cases which are over a year old has remained stable over the review period. This means that there is not an increasing backlog of new cases building up. Those new cases which are aging are being balanced in the caseload by legacy cases being closed. Similarly, the number of cases waiting to be completed at a hearing remained stable throughout the review period.
- 15.9 We also considered the number of cases entering and leaving the investigation stage. This is a measure of how the overall investigations caseload is changing over time. As can be seen from the graph below, the number of cases leaving investigations is significantly higher than those entering, and it is also higher than it was in the previous review period.



- 15.10 This is to be expected to some extent, given that since cases have been with Social Work England for longer, more are likely to progress, until there is a steady rate of progression from investigations. However, combined with the absence of an increasing backlog of cases over a year old, this indicates that Social Work England is progressing cases so that it may be likely to avoid significant problems once the legacy caseload is cleared.

Triage

- 15.11 Social Work England fell behind schedule against its internal target for its open caseload in triage during this review period, due to high referral rates, staff turnover and unplanned absences.

- 15.12 Social Work England told us it has also had higher processing times than anticipated in triage, because of the volume of referrals from members of the public, which require further enquiries to make an informed assessment. It said it has been ensuring the correct decisions are made by conducting further enquiries or deferring the assessment, as opposed to focusing solely on timeliness. This is reasonable and we agree that it is important the correct decisions are made. We will continue to monitor Social Work England's performance to ensure cases are not getting excessively delayed at this stage.
- 15.13 Social Work England has taken various steps to increase capacity in triage during the review period, including through recruitment, training, and offering overtime. It plans to devote more resources to triage, as the caseload in investigations continues to reduce. Some of the funding received from DfE will also be used to increase capacity in triage.
- 15.14 Social Work England has been working on an 'upstreaming' project to reduce the number of unnecessary or inappropriate referrals it receives from members of the public, as well as to ensure easy access to further information from employers where necessary. We agree that people should be helped to raise their concerns in the most appropriate forum, and that regulators should only deal with matters which raise concern about a professional's fitness to practise. We will monitor this project to ensure that appropriate referrals are not discouraged.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 15.15 The impact of the legacy cases on Social Work England's ability to progress fitness to practise cases continues to be significant. Progressing these cases was a challenge that was going to take more than a year and is unique to Social Work England as a new regulator. However, it has taken two years and further delay will become increasingly unacceptable.
- 15.16 We consider Social Work England's focus on clearing the legacy cases to be appropriate and it has made good progress this year, whilst avoiding creating significant problems for future years. Therefore, we are satisfied that this Standard is met this year. However, it will be important to maintain this work. We will expect to see the resolution of the vast majority of remaining legacy cases, as well as progress in timeliness and triage, in next year's performance review.

Standard 16: The regulator ensures that all decisions are made in accordance with its processes, are proportionate, consistent and fair, take account of the statutory objectives, the regulator's standards and the relevant case law and prioritise patient and service user safety.

- 16.1 Social Work England met this Standard last year. We had looked at a sample of fitness to practise cases closed at the early stages of the process and found, overall, a good standard of decision-making. We had also looked closely at Social Work England's use of its new powers to close cases by agreeing an outcome with the registrant ('accepted outcomes'). We had seen

some benefits to this process but also had concerns; Social Work England had engaged with our feedback and demonstrated a commitment to improvement. We continued to monitor its work on accepted outcomes in this review period.

Accepted Outcomes

- 16.2 There were 71 cases concluded in the review period as accepted outcomes, a significant increase from 37 cases last year. Whilst this did not represent a concern, it increased the scale of any risk associated with the process. However, although there has been an increase in the number of these decisions, the proportion of cases where Social Work England's case examiners have agreed an accepted outcome has decreased this year. Of substantive decisions made by case examiners, accepted outcomes represented 10.3% in this review period, compared to 12.3% in the last review period.
- 16.3 Social Work England has measures in place to assure the quality of decisions. Its Decision Review Group continues to review accepted outcomes, with at least 90% of the cases reviewed this year meeting or exceeding its quality standard, with an upward trend. It plans to provide updated guidance to continue to improve the quality of decisions.
- 16.4 We reviewed a sample of ten accepted outcome decisions published on Social Work England's website. We wanted to know what progress Social Work England had made in addressing the issues we found in our report last year on accepted outcomes.¹⁴
- 16.5 Based on our review of the published determinations, we were satisfied that nine of the ten cases reviewed appeared to have reached reasonable outcomes. We shared some concerns with Social Work England about the other case. It accepted that the decision could have been clearer, and explained that there was further material not included in the determination that supported the outcome. Overall, our review did not give us significant concerns about how Social Work England is making decisions in accepted outcomes.
- 16.6 We gave Social Work England feedback about how its determinations could be clearer. It accepted our feedback and confirmed that it will share learning from our review with relevant staff through training and individual and group discussions. It is also reviewing relevant guidance, including its sanctions guidance, guidance for case examiners, and guidance for the public about how the accepted outcomes process works.
- 16.7 We had been concerned last year that unrepresented social workers might be accepting disproportionately harsh outcomes through this process. Social Work England's data for this year shows similar acceptance rates for represented and unrepresented social workers. It is appropriate for Social Work England to continue to monitor the risk of disproportionately harsh

¹⁴ Available at: <https://www.professionalstandards.org.uk/publications/performance-review-detail/review-of-social-work-england-s-process-for-accepted-outcomes-in-fitness-to-practise-cases>.

outcomes for unrepresented registrants, and we discuss under Standard 18 below the steps it is taking to continue to mitigate this risk.

Just Disposal Policy

- 16.8 Social Work England's Just Disposal policy allows it, in line with its legal powers, to close a legacy case which the HCPC had decided to take further. This is a potentially high-risk area. We reviewed cases closed under this policy in our audit last year, and did not have any significant concerns. We continued to monitor the data this year.
- 16.9 From 18 February 2021 until the end of this review period, there were 290 recommendations to Social Work England's Decision Making Group for cases to be dealt with via the Just Disposal Policy. In 276 (95%) of these cases, the Decision Making Group accepted the recommendation. This data does not give us any cause for concern. We will continue to monitor Social Work England's use of the Just Disposal Policy as it works to clear the legacy caseload.

Section 29 appeals and learning points

- 16.10 We received 118 final decisions in the review period and appealed three of them under our section 29 powers.¹⁵ We also shared learning points with Social Work England in relation to seven cases. The most common theme was delays in legacy cases, which we have considered in relation to Standard 15 above. We identified good practice in relation to one of the cases we appealed. Social Work England provided additional support to the registrant in a difficult case, which also helped in concluding the appeal.
- 16.11 Overall, none of the cases we appealed or identified learning points for gave us any cause for concern with respect to Social Work England's performance against this Standard.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 16.12 We have not identified any significant concerns in relation to Social Work England's decision-making. Its response to the feedback from our review of accepted outcome determinations demonstrates that it remains committed to improving how it uses this process. Therefore, we are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Standard 17: The regulator identifies and prioritises all cases which suggest a serious risk to the safety of patients or service users and seeks interim orders where appropriate.

- 17.1 Last year, Social Work England did not meet this Standard, for three reasons. Its process for risk assessment at the triage stage was unsatisfactory before August 2020, our audit found numerous failures to adhere to its risk assessment policy, and we were concerned about the time to make interim order decisions for cases transferred from the HCPC.

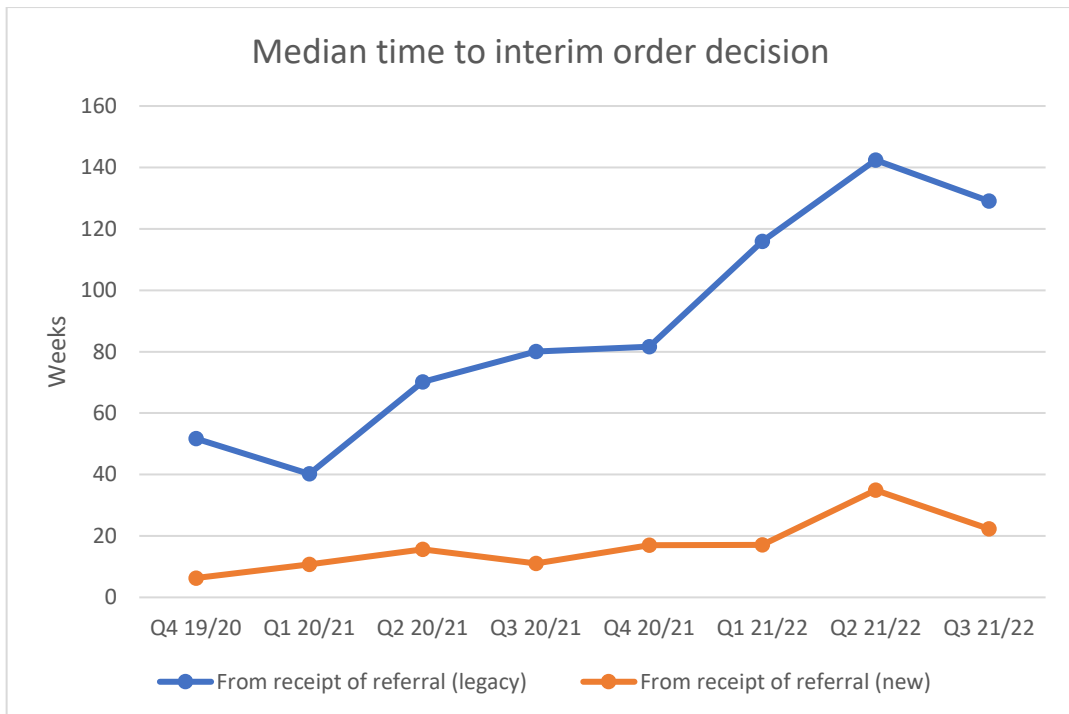
¹⁵ See footnote 1, above.

Risk assessments

- 17.2 Social Work England introduced a new process for risk assessments at triage in August 2020, following an internal review. We saw cases in our audit last year which had been through the new process and did not have any significant concerns about the risk assessments in these cases. In this review period, we have not seen any evidence which would suggest there are any new problems with the current risk assessment process at triage. We no longer have concerns about this area.
- 17.3 In response to our audit findings, Social Work England explained that it had provided further training to investigators and amended its supervision framework to ensure that risk assessments were documented on receipt of new information.
- 17.4 It has taken other actions throughout this review period to improve its approach to risk assessments. Social Work England's senior fitness to practise lawyer reviewed the case reception process, which led to managers reviewing all referrals within 48 hours of receipt and adds an extra layer of assurance. Its Investigations Review Group reviewed interim order referrals initiated by case examiners and identified training opportunities for the investigations team on some specific cases. It has also provided refresher training for other teams, ensured new investigators undergo specific training on risk assessments, and uses the length of time that has passed since the last risk assessment to inform case supervision.
- 17.5 We welcome these steps that Social Work England has taken and there is some evidence to demonstrate the positive effect it has had. It has completed two audits of its risk management and interim order considerations in this review period, one in December 2020 and one in November 2021. The December 2020 audit found numerous failures to follow relevant guidance and made recommendations for improvements. The audit conducted in November 2021 provided 'adequate' assurance and noted improvements compared to the previous audit. These included significant improvements in the timeliness of risk assessments and in documenting consideration of new information received. The November 2021 audit also found areas for improvement, including in how lead investigators document their reviews of risk assessments. We note that the guidance for this is being updated.
- 17.6 Overall, Social Work England's performance in assessing risk appears to have improved over the course of the year. We have noted the improvements and the areas for development identified by Social Work England's internal audit team. This is an area we will continue to monitor over the course of our next performance review.

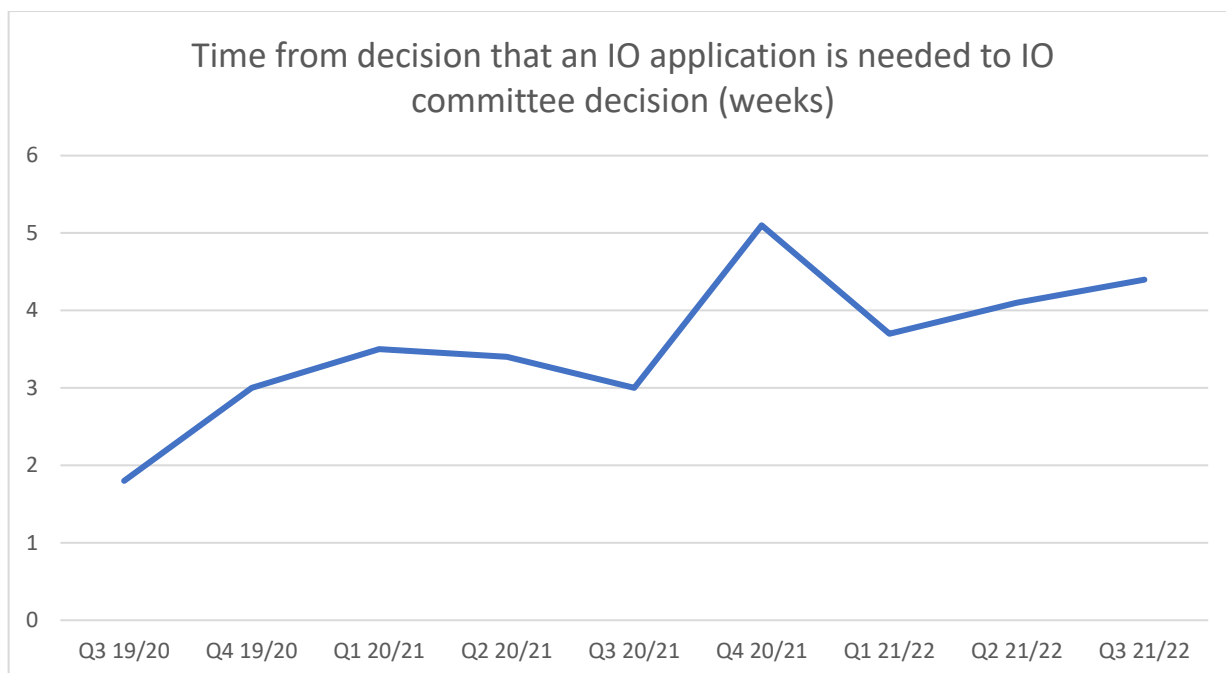
Interim orders

- 17.7 The below graph shows how long Social Work England has taken to make interim order (IO) decisions over the past two years, from the receipt of referrals.



- 17.8 We expected that the timeliness for legacy cases would worsen, as Social Work England is not receiving any new legacy cases. However, we are concerned to see that the timeliness for new cases has been worsening as well. For every quarter of this review period, the median time to reach IO decisions on new cases was longer than every quarter of last year.
- 17.9 We are cautious about making comparisons with other regulators, as there are differences between their processes. However, we noted that Social Work England was taking significantly longer than most other regulators to make IO decisions on new cases.¹⁶
- 17.10 The below graph shows the time from a decision being made that an IO application should be made, to the IO committee decision, for all cases. Social Work England's performance appears to be worsening compared to the last review period. Again, Social Work England took longer than most other regulators against this measure.

¹⁶ There were two regulators, the GCC and the GOC, whose IO timeliness was comparable to Social Work England's but for whom the number of cases involved was much smaller. This meant that for those regulators, case-specific issues in one or two cases had a significant impact on the overall figures, which was not the same for Social Work England.



- 17.11 Social Work England has experienced pressures on its hearing schedule, caused by a doubling of interim order referrals in September and November 2021, limited resilience in the schedule and sickness absence. It also must review all active interim orders in legacy cases every three months. Finally, Social Work England's legislation gives it a more complicated IO process, compared to the other regulators we oversee.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the worsening performance in relation to the timeliness of IOs, given the inherently high-risk nature of this area is very concerning.
- 17.12 Social Work England applied for IOs in 25 legacy cases, amounting to 20% of its IO applications, and it was successful in 19 of these cases. We were concerned to see what appeared to be a high number of IOs for legacy cases in this review period, over a year after they were transferred to Social Work England in December 2019. There will always be some cases where the need for an IO arises later in the process, as new or increased risks are identified. However, it is also essential that IOs are applied for and granted (where appropriate) as quickly as possible, to ensure that the public is protected.
- 17.13 There were clear challenges posed by the legacy caseload and it is notable that the number of IOs applied for in legacy cases appears to have decreased over the course of the review period, with only seven of the 25 applications made in the last five months of the year. We anticipate this decrease continuing as more legacy cases progress through the system.
- 17.14 Finally, last year we noted what appeared to be a relatively high number of cases where case examiners were initiating referrals for IOs, including five cases where the IO was granted based on information received earlier in the investigation. This year, 12 IOs were granted where the case examiners had initiated the referral. Social Work England reviewed these cases:

¹⁷ Social Work England is seeking changes to its Rules and Regulations to remove additional steps required by its current legislation.

- in two of these cases it identified concerns about the risk assessment during the investigation;
- in five cases it considered the decision not to refer earlier for an IO was reasonable but found areas for improvement in the quality of the risk assessments;
- in the other five, it had no concerns about the risk assessments.

17.15 It is appropriate for Social Work England to review these cases and to learn from them. We will continue to monitor its performance in this area.

Conclusion against this Standard

17.16 We are pleased to see the progress that Social Work England has made in relation to risk assessments at the triage stage. We are also encouraged by the progress that Social Work England has reported in relation to the application of its risk assessment policy, while noting that there is still more work to be done. We will continue to monitor its performance and consider how we can be assured that it has resolved the issues we identified in our audit last year.

17.17 However, we are concerned to see that Social Work England has been taking longer to make IO decisions, particularly on new cases. We acknowledge the specific challenges faced by Social Work England but note that it took longer than most other regulators to make IO decisions. We will continue to closely monitor its work in relation to IOs for legacy cases, as we consider this a particularly high-risk area.

17.18 Overall, we acknowledge that Social Work England has made some progress, and that it faces some specific challenges. However, taking action promptly to assess risk and decide on an IO is important to protect the public from risk of harm, and we are concerned about how long Social Work England has taken to do so this year. Therefore, we have determined that the Standard is not met.

Standard 18: All parties to a complaint are supported to participate effectively in the process.

18.1 Last year, we conducted an audit of Social Work England which found a reasonable standard of customer service overall, and the Standard was met. We did, however, make recommendations about three discrete areas where we considered Social Work England could improve. We provided these recommendations to Social Work England towards the end of this review period, so we accepted they could not have been completely addressed by the end of the review period. Social Work England has prepared various actions to address the recommendations, to be completed by April 2022.

18.2 We recommended that Social Work England consider how it could mitigate the risk of unrepresented registrants accepting disproportionately harsh outcomes through the accepted outcomes process. To mitigate this risk, Social Work England is producing plain English guidance for registrants which will be provided at the time of the accepted outcome being proposed. It will also be producing explanatory videos to ensure registrants are fully informed.

- 18.3 Alongside this, Social Work England is developing and reviewing guidance for decision makers. Accepted outcomes are reviewed by its Decision Review Group, and the quality score consistently meets or exceeds its target. Finally, as mentioned above (in relation to Standard 16), we have not seen a significant disparity in acceptance of accepted outcome proposals between represented and unrepresented registrants.
- 18.4 We also recommended that Social Work England should consider how it could ensure its approach to explaining triage decisions considered people's individual needs, particularly those who are vulnerable. Social Work England has updated its templates and plans further work to improve how triage decisions are communicated. Its internal quality and improvement team audited this aspect of its process in January – March 2022 and will audit it again after all the improvement activity is complete.
- 18.5 Finally, we recommended that Social Work England should consider how to effectively keep people updated on fitness to practise cases. It informed us that its case management system now had a specific task for updates to be provided to the complainant and social worker in all its fitness to practise cases. This has been communicated to the team and will also be audited internally during this review period.
- 18.6 We received a small number of concerns about Social Work England not keeping people up to date about fitness to practise cases. This reflected last year's audit findings, particularly in relation to legacy cases. At least some of these concerns were received before we made our recommendations to Social Work England. Therefore, this does not give us a major cause for concern.

Conclusion against this Standard

- 18.7 Social Work England met this Standard last year and has begun work to address the recommendations we made for improvement. We will monitor the actions it is taking, which appear reasonable and are likely to drive further improvement in this area. We did receive some concerns, but these are consistent with the issues we are aware of from our audit last year and do not change our view on the scale of the issues. Therefore, we are satisfied that this Standard is met.

Useful information

The nature of our work means that we often use acronyms and abbreviations. We also use technical language and terminology related to legislation or regulatory processes. We have compiled a glossary, spelling out abbreviations, but also adding some explanations. You can find it on our website [here](#).

You will also find some helpful links below where you can find out more about our work with the 10 health and care regulators.

Useful links

Find out more about:

- [the 10 regulators we oversee](#)
- [the evidence framework we use as part of our performance review process](#)
- [the most recent performance review reports published](#)
- [our scrutiny of the regulators' fitness to practise processes, including latest appeals](#)

**Professional Standards Authority for Health
and Social Care**

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
London SW1W 9SP

Telephone: **020 7389 8030**

Email: **info@professionalstandards.org.uk**

Web: **www.professionalstandards.org.uk**

