



Department  
for Education

# Non-Executive Director Social Work England

## Candidate Information pack

Closing date: 03/01/2025

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# Foreword from the Chair of Social Work England

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Social Work England, the specialist regulator for all social workers and for social work education.

As Chair and a Board member for the last six years, my vision is that Social Work England will be at the forefront of developing social work practice that puts the protection, health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our society first. To do that Social Work England must set the highest professional standards and deliver its core regulatory functions effectively and efficiently.

Our aim is for excellent social work practice and social work education to be the norm across all sectors, all ages and communities and all institutions and agencies. As someone who has worked in health and social care for 45 years, I know how important it is for those who receive services, for their families and loved ones, and for communities and wider society. Social workers can and do help to transform lives for the better, and a skilled, committed, and confident workforce requires a strong and effective regulator. Social work is important, and so the effective regulation of social work is important too.

Social Work England has a strong, cohesive Board, but as some non-executive Directors come to the end of their terms, we are seeking new, high-quality members to join us and support our strategy and further development, and to assure Government and the public that public protection and the efficient use of public resources is at the heart of our governance.

As a non-executive Board member, your abilities will be essential to our success. Strategic and constructive challenge and ideas, fiduciary oversight, and your contribution to decision making are vital in this role, alongside the ability to relate positively to Social Work England's diverse stakeholders.

These are challenging but ultimately rewarding roles. The successful candidates will make a genuine contribution to raising standards in social work, protecting vulnerable people, and supporting the implementation of key government reform in both children's and adult social care. If you believe you have the values, skills, experience, and commitment to undertake this role I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr Andrew McCulloch, Chair, Social Work England



# Social Work England

The work social workers deliver for adults, children, and families is essential and deserves to be recognised and supported. Social Work England works closely with both the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care. It is central to many of government's wider social work reform plans and its ambitions to secure a highly capable and highly skilled workforce.

Social Work England was established under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to be a new single-profession regulator for all child, family and adult social workers in England. It took over regulatory responsibilities from the Health and Care Professions Council and began regulating social workers on 2 December 2019.

Based in Sheffield, Social Work England employs around 230 staff and has an operating budget in the region of £20 million, with costs met through a combination of income from registrant fees and funding from government.

Social Work England is a separate legal entity in the form of a non-departmental public body, operating at arm's length from government. The Department for Education is its sponsor department.

It is responsible for delivering key regulatory functions in respect of social workers, including:

- setting professional standards for all social workers in England
- maintaining a register of all social workers in England
- running a fitness to practise system
- setting standards for education and training
- inspecting providers of initial social work education and training

As with other health and care regulators, Social Work England's overarching objective is to protect the public. Its values are to be fearless, independent, transparent, ambitious, collaborative, and to act with integrity.

Social Work England is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. Its [equality, diversity and inclusion action plan](#) reflects its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion as part of its core business and demonstrates principles synonymous with being a social worker.

Social Work England is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA). The PSA publishes an [annual report](#) on the performance on each of the regulators it oversees and challenges decisions about the fitness to practise of health and care professionals if they believe that they are insufficient to protect the public.

Further information on Social Work England is available at [www.socialworkengland.org.uk](http://www.socialworkengland.org.uk)

## Social Work England's Board

Dr Andrew McCulloch is the Chair of Social Work England. Andrew's vision for Social Work England places the regulator at the forefront of developing social work practice that puts the protection, health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our society first.

The Board consists of:

- the Chair, Andrew McCulloch
- Chief Executive Officer, Colum Conway
- six non-executive directors

Each member of the Board brings a distinct set of skills and expertise. Social Work England's Board is responsible for overseeing the full range of the organisation's regulatory responsibilities. The Board holds the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive Leadership Team to account and provides the overall strategic steer for the organisation. In addition, the Board oversees performance, the use of resources and ensures a sound system of internal control and risk management. Its responsibilities include:

- establishing and taking forward the organisation's strategic aims and objectives
- ensuring compliance with any statutory or administrative requirements for the use of public funds
- demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times.

Non-executive directors provide an input to a range of organisational and operational issues and oversee the delivery of Social Work England's functions and objectives as a specialist regulator. Equally important to contributing to Board meetings, they provide input to a variety of different Social Work England groups, meetings, and stakeholder events.

## About the role

We are looking to appoint **three** non-executive directors across a range of skills, including finance and commercial; data management and analytics and digital strategy; professional education experience (including continuing education) as well as those with national and non-executive director experience.

Among these three, we are looking to appoint a non-executive director with specific responsibility as Chair of the Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC).

There is a degree of flexibility around start dates, but we expect successful candidates to take up their positions in either April or May 2025.

## Responsibilities

Non-executive directors support Social Work England to be an effective regulator. This includes providing input to organisational and operational issues of Social Work England including processes, strategies, and policies. Non-executive directors are also expected to contribute across a range of specific areas, including:

- ensuring the board engages and listens to the voice of service users and ensures this is considered within decision making processes
- strategic guidance, offering independent judgement on Social Work England's Strategy to ensure it aligns with the long term goals
- performance monitoring, evaluating the performance of Social Work England as a whole including the executive team
- identifying and managing potential risks to the organisation
- ensuring the organisation adheres to legal and regulatory requirements and upholds high standards of corporate governance
- providing a critical perspective on board decisions and challenges the status quo when necessary
- offering advice and support to the executive directors and senior management
- supporting committees to provide specialised oversight

The specific responsibility as Chair of the Board's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), is demanding and requires strong independence, and an appropriate range of skills and experience. The ARAC provides insight and constructive challenge where required, such as on risks arising from fiscal and resource constraints, new service delivery models, information flows on risk and control, and the agility of the organisation to respond to emerging risks. More detail on this role can be found online, within the [Audit and Risk Assurance Committee \(ARAC\) Handbook](#).

## Person Specification

This may be your first non-executive role, or you may be an experienced non-executive with the background we are looking for.

We welcome applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and educational routes, particularly women, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, people with disabilities, and those with lived experience of social work.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria. In your application you should demonstrate clearly how you meet each of the following requirements.

### Essential criteria

Successful candidates are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- the role of a non-executive director, together with an ability to set direction and engage in constructive debate and challenge at all levels
- analysis of complex issues including the ability to identify and understand risks and develop mitigations

Successful candidates are required to demonstrate their commitment toward:

- fiduciary responsibility, acting in the best interests of the profession and of people with lived experience
- engaging and working collaboratively with people with lived experience of social work and the most marginalised in our society

### Desirable criteria

It is desirable that successful candidates demonstrate expertise and ability in **either**:

- digital strategy, including data management and data analytics to derive insights and trends, **or**
- commercial experience, **or**
- education experience - specifically strategic experience of developing professional educational models (including professions other than in health and social care)

**or** expertise and ability in:

- senior financial management and accounting, including audit and procurement expertise
- chairing an Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- the development and review of internal controls and risk management systems including governance at a senior level
- an accountancy, internal or external auditing and/or legal qualification and associated professional membership e.g. CIPFA, ACCA, CIMA.

## Board Diversity

The Department for Education is focused on equality of opportunity and is committed to ensuring that public appointments better represent the views of the communities which they serve. We particularly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, those based outside London and the South-East and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

The Department for Education has a strong culture of inclusion and diversity, and we want to encourage applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds and educational routes. In 2018 we launched a five year strategy to create a department where everyone is able to bring their whole self to work and where honesty, challenge and innovation are encouraged and valued. We are recognised by leading diversity organisations for promoting diversity in the workplace.

We want to ensure any appointee to the Department's arm's length bodies is committed to promoting diversity, in its broadest possible sense. This will include embedding a commitment to championing opportunity for all, helping to ensure that the organisation is one which a genuinely diverse range of views can be expressed, without fear or favour.

## Championing Social Mobility

The Department champions social mobility in all its policies and is committed to opening up opportunities for people from all backgrounds, all socio-economic classes and all regions of the UK. We are committed to embedding this principle into our recruitment and public appointments and expect all our leaders, including in arm's length bodies, to take action to attract and retain staff from all backgrounds, while also supporting them to progress within their careers.

## Disability Confident

We are a member of the Government's Disability Confident scheme and have achieved Disability Confident Leader status, signifying our role as champions of the scheme. We use the Disability Confident symbol, along with other like-minded employers, to show our commitment to good practice in employing people with a disability.

We ask that all applicants complete an anonymised Diversity Monitoring Form used for gathering data only in order to ensure departments are recruiting from the widest possible pool. The information you provide is held by the Public Appointments team and not shared with the selection panel.



## How to apply

**The closing date for applications is 03 January 2025 at 13:00.**

Information on the timetable for this campaign, selection process and the Advisory Assessment Panel can be found on the Centre for Public Appointments website: [Search and apply – Apply for a public appointment – GOV.UK](#).

In order to apply you will need to [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) or create an account on the ‘Apply for a public appointment’ website.

Once you are logged into your account click on ‘apply for this role’ and follow the on screen instructions. To apply, all candidates are required to provide:

1. A covering letter not exceeding two sides of A4. (Arial size 12).
2. A CV.
3. Diversity data.
4. Information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues.

Guidance on what to include in your CV/application and tips for applying can be found in the corresponding sections in the candidate information pack and on the public appointments website: [Public appointments – Gov.UK](#)

You will also be required to make a declaration related to standards in public life and ensuring public confidence in your application.

The Department will undertake due diligence checks on all applicants. Due diligence checks will include social media and internet searches. Information obtained through these checks will be considered as part of the selection process.

If you are unable to create an account and apply online, please contact: [SWE.SPONSORTEAM@EDUCATION.GOV.UK](mailto:SWE.SPONSORTEAM@EDUCATION.GOV.UK)

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet representatives of Social Work England’s National Advisory Forum for an “engagement event” prior to interview. The Forum’s role is to act as a critical friend to Social Work England and it is responsible for providing advice, support and challenge to its work. The membership comprises social workers; people with lived experience of social work; and education and training providers. The engagement event will be facilitated online.

The Advisory Assessment Panel reserves the right to only consider applications that contain all of the elements listed above and that arrive before the published deadline for applications.

Interviews for shortlisted candidates are expected to be held in London, week commencing **10 March 2025**.

**Please note the following:**

- **we cannot accept applications submitted after the closing date**
- **applications will be assessed solely on the documentation provided; please refer to the advert and checklist above to ensure you have provided everything requested**
- **feedback cannot be given at application stage; it will only be given to candidates unsuccessful following interview**

## Terms of appointment

Non-Executive Directors are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. The terms and conditions of the post are determined by the Secretary of State for Education.

### Location

**Sheffield.** Attendance of Board meetings is expected to be in person (Sheffield) with the possibility of hybrid attendance for other meetings.

### Time requirement

Up to 25 days per year (+5 additional days for ARAC Chair)

### Term

An initial term of 4 years.

### Remuneration

A daily fee of £350 a day. Remuneration is taxable and subject to Class 1 National Insurance contributions.

### Expenses

Reasonable expenses necessarily incurred will be reimbursed in line with Social Work England's expenses policy.

### Pension

The post is not pensionable.

### Conduct and standards in public life

Members are expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and are required to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#) (GOV.UK) and demonstrate a sound understanding of and commitment to the [principles of public life](#) (GOV.UK).

## Complaints

Please contact the Department for Education's Public Appointments team if you would like to make a complaint regarding your application at:

[PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk](mailto:PublicAppointments.DFE@education.gov.uk)

We will acknowledge your complaint upon receive and respond within 15 working days.

If you are not content with our response, please contact the Commissioner for Public Appointments at: [publicappointments@csc.gov.uk](mailto:publicappointments@csc.gov.uk)

Further information on complaints can be found on the Commissioner for Public Appointment's website:

<https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>



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