



Review of Registrants' Forum Project

Progress Report to Social Care Council Board

26th April 2023

Background and Purpose of Report

The Registrants' Forum was stood down in June 2022 to enable a review and development of proposals for effective engagement with social work and social care registrants. The Steering Group, comprising members of the Registrant's Forum, Board member and executive staff, have agreed a four phase Design Thinking approach of Discover, Define, Develop and Deliver. The initial phase of work, reported to the Board in December 2022, recognised the need to understand our relationship with registrants in a wider context and build towards an overarching strategy for communications and engagement. The purpose of this report is to update Board members on the programme of work to date and future plans.

Engagement Map

The Steering Group has worked to map out the full range of stakeholder engagement (see Miro walkthrough). The map seeks to visually demonstrate the range and nature of engagement that is in place to support and deliver the Council's core business. It identifies the policy and infra structure that currently exists to drive forward our engagement, what is in development and where potential gaps exist. The map identifies who we engage with and how, indicating a range of methods and approaches. It further demonstrates the why, the purpose and outcomes that we are attempting to achieve in strengthening professional identity and improving connections for social workers, social care workers and social work students.

Learning

This map clearly shows that the absence of a Registrants Forum, as it was constituted, has not impacted on the range or nature of engagement. The Forum's influence on and connection with engagement activity has been limited, particularly in more recent years, as the Council's communications, support and development provision has evolved. The role of any Forum therefore in moving forward needs to have clarity of purpose, value and connection to the wider strategic direction for the Council's plan for communication and engagement. The Steering Group emphasised the importance of putting registrants at the centre of everything we do, thus refocusing the engagement lens to strengthening and supporting identity and purpose.

Through recent engagement with the Social Care Managers Forum and consultation on the draft Strategic Plan we have listened and heard key messages emerge including:

- Need or wish for localised connection – as an engagement opportunity
- Gap for an opportunity to send out regularised engagement e.g. a newsletter, as a regular engagement tool

Where to Next

In moving through the stages of Discover and Define and using the Engagement Map as a baseline the Steering Group plan to move from reflection on engagement to the Develop and Deliver stages for a Social Care Council engagement strategy. To further define what the strategy needs to include from a registrant perspective in its delivery we need to undertake a range of listening exercises:

- ✓ Understanding what registrants think about the Social Care Council gives us an important insight into what we may need to do to strengthen and improve confidence, trust and pride in being a regulated profession/workforce
- ✓ This also helps us to understand whether or not our identity supports our goals and what we may need to do to ensure that perceptions of Council reflect our strategic ambitions

We plan to take a two-stage approach that combines both qualitative and quantitative informal research. Next steps include:

- Prepare informal social research to ask registrants about our engagement via a survey and focus group – ‘Ensuring our engagement, is your engagement’
- Three focus groups, one with social care workers, one with social workers and one with social work students, to be delivered virtually
- Topics will include:
 - Registrant profile and demographics e.g. gender, location, age, profession, length of service, have they been audited/subject to FtP, etc
 - Awareness and knowledge of the Social Care Council
 - Understanding of and level of interest in the role and functions of the Council
 - Perceptions of the Council – what makes or helps build trustworthiness
 - Views on communications and engagement by the Council
 - Barriers preventing positive engagement with, and confidence in, the Council
 - What could help facilitate more positive engagement with, and confidence

Risk impact - There is some risk if registrants are not available to participate during the timeframe for the project. Full participation by all approached will ensure a more revealing project outcome. There is some resource pressure on the Communications and Engagement and Workforce Development functions internally to support.

Benefits of an engagement strategy

There is significant benefit to be had from have a strategic, coordinated approach to engagement across the Council both in terms of growing and investing in relationships, improving understanding by registrants and of registrants. A strategy will also support metrics and data collection to ensure our approaches are working and are informed by evidence.

Indicative timing

Social research will take place May/June with drafting of strategy in summer months and draft strategy to September Board meeting.