

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Performance Reporting 2023-24

KPI Update for Sept 2023 and Quarter 2 (1 July – 30 September 2023)

From the Operational Leadership Team



Quarter 2 Update Report (1 July – 30 September 2023)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides an update on progress made towards the Business Plan objectives at the end of Quarter 2 in the 2023-24 Business Year. It includes key highlights for July to September activity, and delivery against our KPI's.

Key highlights for Quarter 2 (Month 6)

- The Social Care Council received their Health and Wellbeing IIP Gold award at the IIP ceremony – the first employer in the UK to attain this. The Social Care Council was also invited to be a key speaker at the event to share their IIP journey
- Complaints training for all staff and new governance arrangements rolled out including a revised Complaints Policy
- Risk Management Committee and ARAC met to review the organisational risks to the organisation including a revised Risk Management Strategy and Risk Management Procedures
- Annual Equality Progress Report for 2022/23 produced
- Draft Quality 2020 Report for 2022/23 produced and submitted to the DoH for approval
- Annual Property Asset Management Plan for 22/23 developed including an action plan for 2023/24
- Meetings with BSO have taken place to review the level of service and cover from the range of SLA's for back office services including Information Governance, Estates, Health and Safety and recruitment
- The Social Care Council is working closely with the DoH to secure the shortfall in funding for the dilapidation costs for Millennium House
- Annual Report and Accounts laid in the NI Assembly and published on the website
- Development of 'Raising Concerns' policy for staff
- Review of Social Work Degree underway and reapproval of Ulster University Approved Professional in Practice Programmes
- Care in Practice Framework development on the Level 2 Certificate in Safe & Effective Practice.
- Initiation of the IMPACT project to improve care worker well-being
- Social Care Collaborative Forum and Children's Strategic Reform Board meetings and workstreams meetings
- Social Care Making a Difference campaign closing activities, including BBC news story featuring a care worker in Radius Housing
- Information sessions promoting registration, regulation, standards and development with new registrants/employers/students
- Online engagement to welcome new social work students 'Class of 2023'
- Surveys and engagement for the review of Fitness to Practise referrals guidance and delivery of hearings
- Evaluation planning for the review of the Credit Accumulation Route within the Professional in Practice Framework

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Section 2 – Business Performance – September 2023

Section 3 – Quarter 2 Highlights

Section 1 – Business Plan KPIs

Summary of performance and supporting information for each of the KPIs is included in the table below:

At the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2023):

- 11 KPIs were rated **GREEN**
- 1 KPI was rated as **AMBER**. - Registration processing is marginally below the lower tolerance limit of 92% for it to be assessed as **GREEN**. Further detail on the factors affecting this KPI and assurance on the effective management of any associated risks is provided in section 2)

What we measure	KPI standards for 2023-24	KPI achievements September 2023	KPI achievements Cumulative
1. We will provide quality services that achieve a minimum of 85% stakeholder satisfaction throughout the year	85%	96% n=79 customer survey responses	86% n=399 customer survey responses
2. We will process 100% of completed applications/renewals within 20 working days of submission.	100%	91% n=1,325 applications/ renewals completed	91% n=8,244 applications/ renewals completed
3. We will update the register for all Fitness to Practise decisions within 2 working days of receipt of the information.	2 Working days	100% n=15 decisions updated	100% n=61 decisions updated
4. We will triage all referrals to the Fitness to Practise Team within 3 working days .	3 Working days	100% n=44 referrals triaged	100% n=269 referrals triaged

What we measure	KPI standards for 2023-24	KPI achievements September 2023	KPI achievements Cumulative
5. We will conclude 100% of Interim Suspension Order (ISO) hearings within 4 weeks of referral.	100%	100% n=2 ISOs concluded	100% n=10 ISOs concluded
6. We will conclude 90% of Fitness to Practise cases within 15 months of opening the case.	90%	91% n=13 Cases closed	90% n=142 Cases closed
7. We will complete 100% of Quality Assurance processes for social work education and training within timeframes agreed with providers and identify recommendations for improvement.	100%	100%	100%
8. We will ensure our staff absence levels do not exceed 4% during the year.	4%	1.7%	2.68%
9. We will ensure we achieve the minimum standard of paying 95% of undisputed invoices within 30 days	95%	97.73% n=43/44 Invoices paid	97.01% n=486/501 Invoices paid
10. We will ensure we achieve the minimum standard of paying 75% of undisputed invoices within the 10 day prompt payment target .	75%	90.91% n=40/44 Invoices paid	90.02% n=451/501 Invoices paid
11. We will manage our finances to achieve financial breakeven target of 0.25% or £20k (whichever is greater).	0.25%/ £20k	7% = £142k	-2% = -£70k
12. We will ensure the Online Registration Portal is available at least 98% of time during the year.	98%	100%	99%

Strategic Theme: Delivering Effective Regulation

Registration

At the end of September, there were 45,451 people on the Social Care Register (38,347 social care workers, 6,573 social workers and 531 students). Student transfers on and off the Degree programme will impact on the student and social worker register figures until mid-October. Automated removals were reintroduced on 11 September, having been paused during the system upgrade since May 2023. 3,407 registrants were removed on that date and 409 applied for re-registration. The size of the register at the end of Quarter 2, reflects the previously observed trend of a net monthly increase of 200-240 social care registrants between May 2022 and April 2023.

1,598 registration applications (1266 applications & 332 renewals) were received during September. 1325 applications were completed (984 applications and 341 renewals). KPI for registration processing in-month was 91% and cumulative performance was 91%. Although September KPI showed a 2% improvement against August, it remains below the 100% standard set out in the KPI. This KPI has been assessed as AMBER for cumulative and in-month performance. Capacity for registration processing was impacted by continued high volumes of customer requests for assistance and also by reduced staff availability due to illness/leave. In contrast to July and August, the volume of renewals requiring manual interventions returned to expected levels with 99% (310) progressing via the automated process. 2,515 applications were in the system at the end of September, of which 385 were completed and awaiting processing. 1,725 were incomplete and assigned to team members for follow up of missing ID/endorsement/payment. There were also: 90 applications awaiting assessment of declarations, 28 IQSWs and 159 student applications (students waiting to progress following completion of enrolment on the Degree in September 2023).

79 people responded to the Customer survey in September and reported 96% positive satisfaction with their experience of the support provided. References to difficulties with accessing the online system, missing portal links for fees/renewals, delays in getting responses to emails and lengthy queue times on the telephone lines were the most reported concerns from respondents. Cumulative satisfaction for 399 respondents across months 1-6 was rated as 86% positive (KPI is 85.%). This KPI has been assessed as GREEN (within tolerance) for both September and cumulative performance. Response rates remain lower than expected and this will remain under review with the team to ensure all survey invites are being issued where appropriate.

5,669 customer queries were managed by the registration team during September, these are very similar levels to August (which is approximately 10% higher than expected levels). 1,855 calls were handled, 3,801 emails coordinated and 13 in-person callers assisted at James House. Customers mostly required assistance to access their account, pay fees or to get an update on an application progress. Calls varied in length from 6-36 minutes depending on the complexity of the caller request. The availability of staff overtime in September assisted in addressing the high volume of emails. An average of 100 emails were received daily in September. There were 412 emails in the system requiring resolution at the end of September, the oldest of which was 7 days.

Fitness to Practise

44 Fitness to Practise concerns were referred to the Social Care Council in September and 100% were triaged within 3 working days.

Referrals related to 4 social workers and 40 social care workers. Although lower than the 66 received in August, September referral rate was 15% higher than expected levels. 12 referrals did not meet the Standard of Acceptance at triage (8 social care worker and 4 social worker). 8 referrals required provisional enquiries to support the assessment. 26 new cases were opened in the month (all social care workers). 2 cases were assessed as High Risk; involving offences against the person and an adult barring notification. The Quality Improvement project to assist people in making appropriate and timely referrals is progressing. The online survey was extended to mid-October to gather additional responses. One-to-one discussions were to explore processes and resources to support referrers. Feedback is being analyzed to identify key areas for development within the Standard of Acceptance guidance and preferred options to support those making a decision to refer.

2 Interim Suspension Orders were processed in September and concluded within the 4 week KPI. 7 existing Interim Orders were reviewed by Fitness to Practise Committees in the month and 36 Interim Orders were in place at end of Quarter 2.

13 Fitness to Practise cases were concluded in September - all of which involved social care workers. 91% of cases included in the KPI assessment were closed within 15 months (KPI is 90%). 12 cases were resolved through the consensual disposal processes (9 No Further Action, 3 Letter of Advice). 1 case concluded through Fitness to Practise Committee Hearing (outcome was a Removal Order against a social care worker referred for physical abuse). 1 case was outside the KPI taking 62 months to conclude (delay attributed to an employer investigation for this case). 2 cases which were delayed by external factors (criminal proceedings) were not included in the KPI assessment (cases took between 22 and 54 months to conclude). There were 365 active FtP cases at the end of Quarter 2, which is the highest level of open cases since January 2022. This is largely due to the higher number of new cases opened in May and September of this year. Also, the significantly higher number of referrals in August and September (66 and 44) impacted on team capacity to progress existing cases. 71% of existing cases are less than 12 months old. 40 cases were more than 2 years old (15 of these were 36+ months and are delayed by external investigations/proceedings).

Committee

8 Committee days were held (all online). 2 online Fitness to Practise hearings were delivered (registrants did not attend or send any representation/submission). Witnesses were supported to engage in proceedings and a total of 59 telephone contacts supported participants. 15 registrations were updated on the register to reflect FtP decisions in September and 100% were completed within the required 3 days. 12 cases were prepared and listed for future Committee dates and 15 notices of proceedings were issued for upcoming Committees/Hearings.

Review of online/in person hearings and committees was progressed - Surveys have been completed with witnesses, staff, legal advisers, Committee Members, registrants, union representatives and legal representatives. Analysis from this review and final recommendations for future delivery of hearings and committees will be drafted for review by SLT and the Board in December. Proposed changes to Fitness to Practise Rules to accommodate these recommendations will be drafted.

Strategic Theme: Developing the Capability of the Workforce

Social Work Education, Training and Development

Degree in Social Work – The Review of the Degree is now underway with meetings with some focus groups (student and academic staff) having taken place and plans for further stakeholder consultations and surveys ongoing. Annual Monitoring of DPLPs is close to completion (most responses received and professional adviser analysis being undertaken). Annual monitoring of Degree Course providers is ongoing with scheduled requests for information sent to Further and Higher Education providers. Student inductions have been completed for Belfast Met, South West College, UU, QUB and OU in which the Standards of conduct for students were highlighted, copies were provided and directions to the standards and other resources on the website were provided. The Social Care Council has convened a Promotion of the Degree in Social Work group with partner stakeholders to share and develop promotion ideas - next meeting is scheduled for 6 November). The Engagement Team have presented at Social Work promotion events at both QUB and UU (Derry/Londonderry) designed to attract potential students

Approved PiP Programmes – Reapproval of Ulster University Approved Programmes was completed in September. Three additional meetings were held for those who had been required to meet further conditions. Two programmes have not satisfactorily met their Conditions for 5-Year Re-Approval. As a result, they will be appointed a 'Visitor' by the Social Care Council as provided for in the Social Care Council PiP Rules. At the end of the first academic year they will carry out full reviews of the Initial Professional Development and Practice Teaching programmes. 800 intakes and outcomes have been Quality Assured in September with numerous links back to providers. Significant work has been undertaken in September to ensure that the CRM system has the necessary functionality for the PiP Framework to deliver its statutory functions. Annual PiP Monitoring processes scheduled for September were delayed to October due to staff absence.

Awards Progress - 252 Intakes have been processed from April – September with over 50 requiring follow up information from providers. 528 Programme Assessment Outcomes were processed in September (800 Modules). 13 social workers on the PiP Framework were identified who meet the criteria for transferring requirements. Writing to these candidates has been delayed because the Transfer process is not operating within CRM since the upgrade. A plan is now in place to reinstate this in CRM and letters will be progressed once the process is functional.

PiP 2 requirements - 199 letters issued to social workers scheduled to complete their Requirements. 8 applications for PiP Requirements were considered in September and extensions granted. 80 Duplicate 2 Requirement Compliances identified and processed

Credit Accumulation Route Redevelopment - Focus Groups were completed in August and feedback collated. This material was shared with Centre for Effective Services team in September. They provided information on implementation science and helped develop thinking around a 'phased' introduction of changes to CAR that involves evaluation of outcomes at each stage.

Work Based Learning Route - The course currently running is ready to present to the November 2023 Approval Panel. Professional Advisors have supported other courses, 3 of which are also ready to submit to the November panel - FITC, QI and Leading Social Work.

Assessment Standards - New Assessor training session was held and 6 new IAR assessors completed and have joined the list of assessors. An IAR assessor standardisation session was also held. 6 additional support sessions were held for IAR candidates who don't have a PiP Rep. Joint sessions were facilitated with PiP Reps who are supporting candidates with submissions.

Approved Social Worker Conference – The Social Care Council is supporting the Department of Health in planning and delivering this virtual conference, scheduled to take place on November 8th.

Social Care Education, Training and Development

UK and Ireland Alliance meeting was hosted at the Council over 2 days in September, bringing together partners to discuss workforce recruitment, retention, skills development and training. The Social Care Collaborative Forum also met in September. Terms of Reference and workplans for all of the workstreams have been agreed. 2 new workstreams have been agreed by the Forum to include Carers and Supported Living. It has also been agreed to hold a workshop in the Autumn with the members of the Fair Work Forum to review its' terms of Reference, membership and workplan and consider its' relationship with the Social Care Collaborative Forum. Patricia Higgins and Peter Toogood are presenting a parallel session at the NICON conference on the establishment and work of the Forum.

Care in Practice Framework for Social Care – The working group has completed development of the specification for the Level 2 Certificate in Safe & Effective Practice. Planning is underway to establish four pilot sites for the new qualification, with a view to testing the delivery and assessment of the certificate in a range of care settings from October 2023 – March 2024. The pilot will be delivered through People First and evaluated by the Social Care Council team. The certificate is scheduled to be ready for submission to CCEA Approval Team in Spring/Summer 2024, with proposed start date for candidates in Autumn 2024.

IMPACT (Improving Adult Care Together) – The Social Care Council has been chosen to lead one of six IMPACT projects. The NI project focuses on improving care worker well-being. A presentation is scheduled to discuss the project to Participation Partnership members and raise awareness amongst their networks/associates. The first network meeting has been scheduled for 11 October in Belfast.

Registration, Regulation, Standards and Development – Information sessions for social care workers and social workers were held in NHSCT, Derry (APEX Housing) and with Rutledge to support induction of new social care workers and application of the standards in daily practice.

Learning Zone - Review of Child Development resources is progressing well and content review stage for 3 of the resources is close to completion. Human Rights for Social Work build is progressing well and work ongoing for scenario filming. Final content changes being made to the resource for Values Based Retention. Content for 23 Things Digital for Social Work were approved for editing and uploading content to the digital resource in Quarter 3.

Communication and Engagement

In Quarter 2, our campaign focus moved towards social work, as planning began for the 2023 Degree in Social Work promotion. Messaging has been developed and a campaign outline is currently out for feedback. Campaign will kick off during October and some messaging is already being shared in our social posts and channels. Promotional activity included reviewing content and/or sharing the Big Motive social care workforce reform session recruitment, industrial action messaging, portal downtime, sharing the Strategic Plan and Business Plan, Lunchtime Seminars, ECHO, providing graphics and advice to Workforce Development for a Book Chapter we have been asked to contribute to and submitting content for the ARC NI newsletter. Work commenced during September to review the DfE's Careers Service, Health and Social Care Careers bulletin. The Council is preparing content for a two page spread, which will be completed for the end of October. Social media promotion also included a number of recruitment opportunities across the organisation and ensuring we shared our presence at various careers related events during the month as led by our Workforce Development Team.

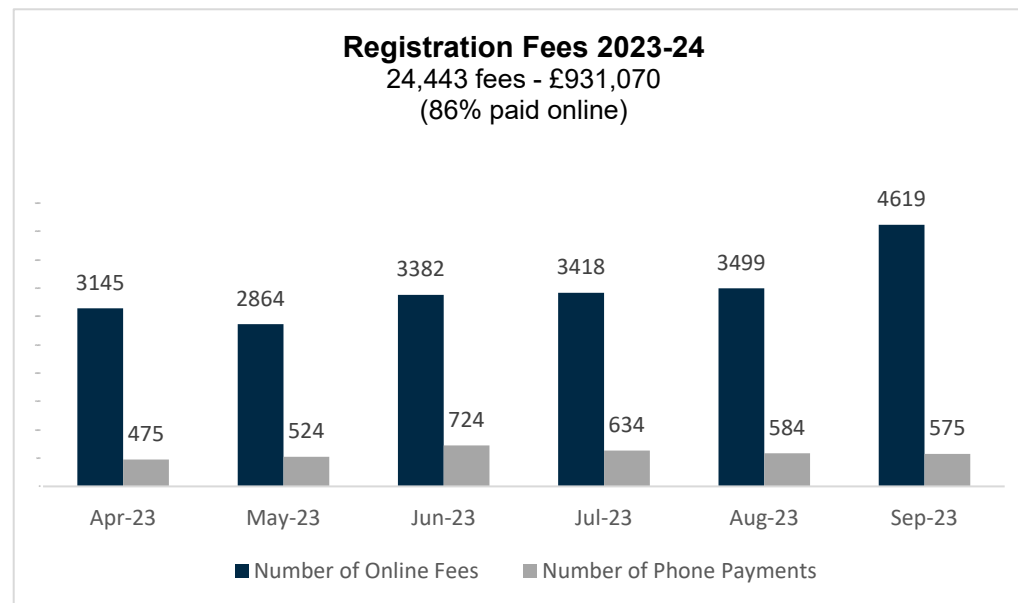
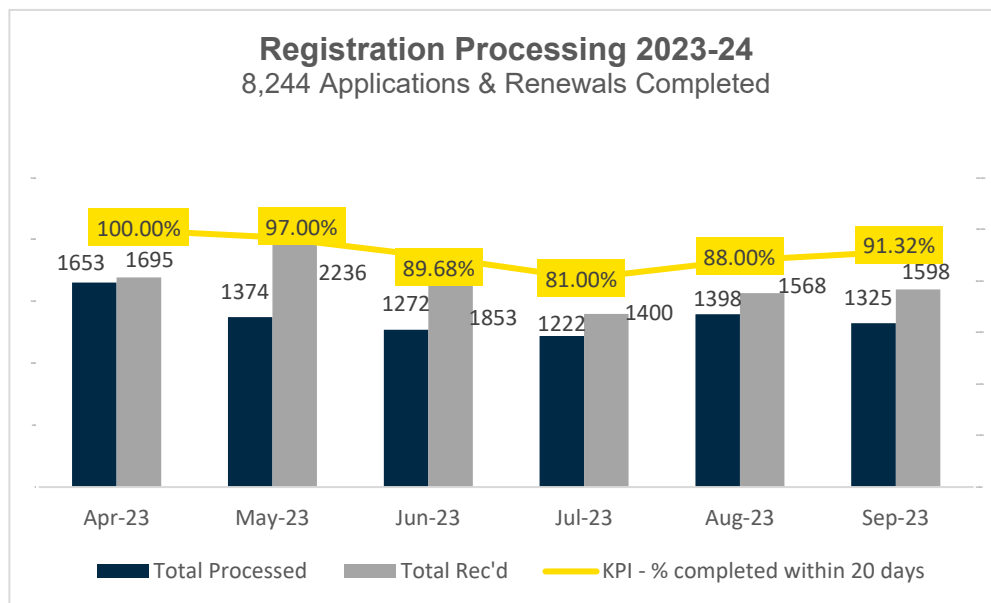
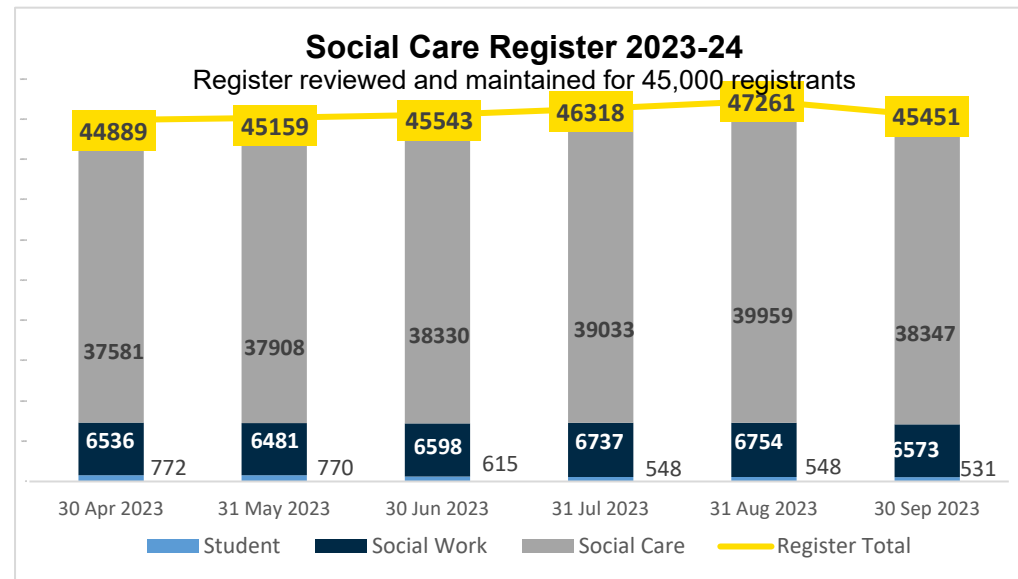
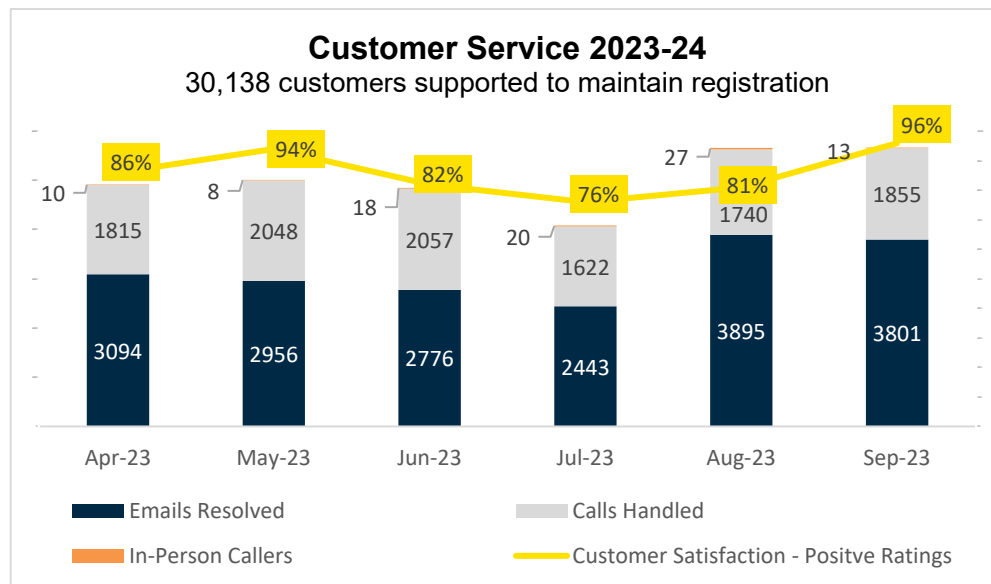
Social Care Making a Difference – the photo project was completed in September. This collaboration between the Council, Positive Futures and the five HSC Trusts created a bank of over 100 photographs of current social care in NI we can use in future social care workforce promotion, but with the benefit of our partners who facilitated this work also getting use out of these images too. A great example of cascading value from the social care workforce reform and social care campaign funding.

Work on a number of film projects underway continued. The Council is playing a key partner role to help launch a Trust-led 'Changing Lives' video which focuses on a day in the life of social workers who work in children's services. Launch is scheduled for 27 October at South West College. The Council is supporting the launch by funding filming on the day to capture why people choose social work and why social workers are so special to their communities, and helping organise a panel discussion with those social workers involved in the film. Follow up promotion and how we use this film is also being scoped out once it is launched. Learning Zone promotion continued with a mini campaign (mailer, news item and social media) during September to promote our careers resources. This also fitted in with our efforts to promote these careers as students returned to school and start to consider subjects or schools via the C2K noticeboard. A second Council-led film which features the story of our Participation Partnership member Joanne Sansome is now at an advanced editing stage, with a launch event planned for 1 December – World Disability Day.

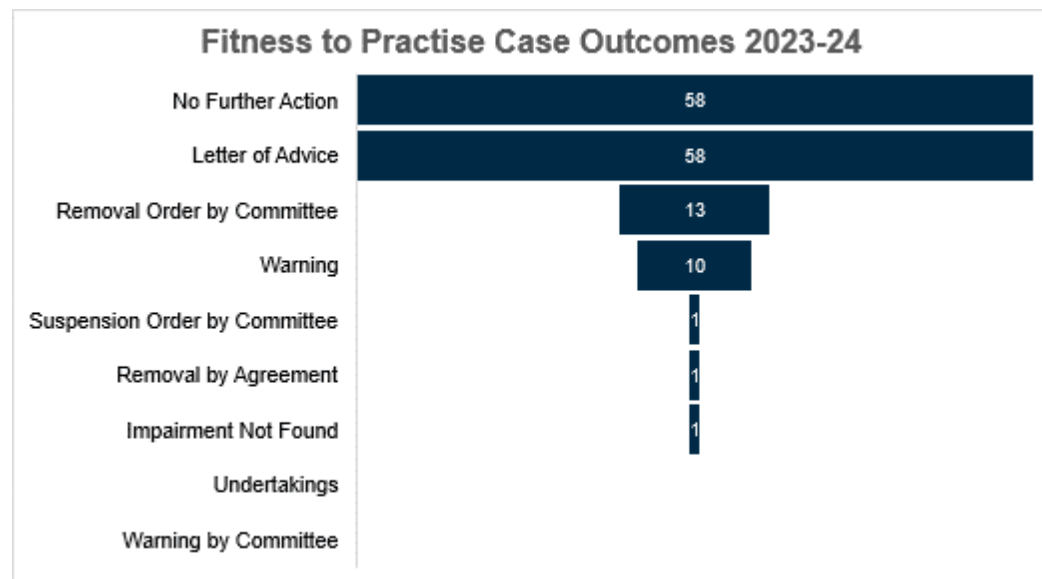
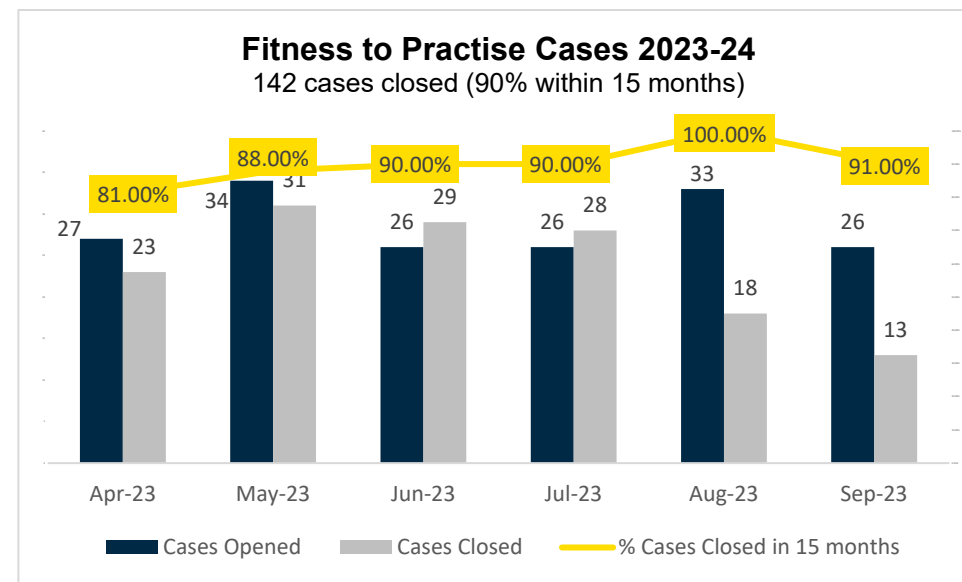
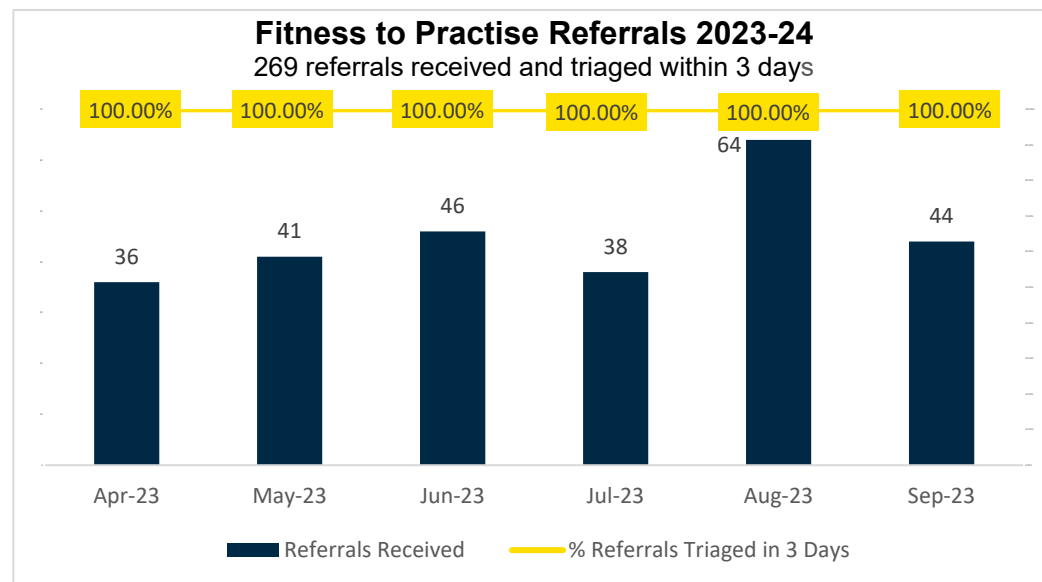
Stakeholder engagement remains a focus for the latter half of 2023, with sessions underway with the Participation Partnership about service user, family and carer engagement, and substantial work with the Registrant Forum Review Project Steering Group to analysis the findings from summer social research with registrants. This was translated into an options paper for the Board to consider at their October meeting. As a result of registrant feedback a review was carried out of the current phone recording and script. An updated phone script was developed and is now with BSO ITS for fine tuning to ensure it is pragmatic and deliverable. It is hoped this will be re-recorded and will go-live in the Autumn. Preparations have been underway to prepare for stakeholder briefings in the Autumn continued with the CEO and Chair including finalising the meeting list and development a stakeholder brief.

Section 3 – Overview of Progress at End of Quarter 2 (1 April – 30 September 2023)

Registration Dashboard up to End of Quarter 2 (1 April - 30 September 2023)



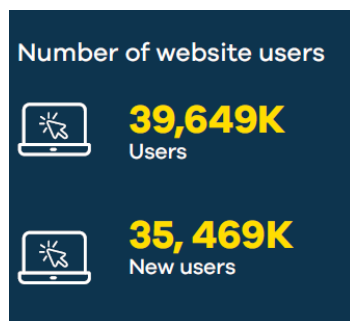
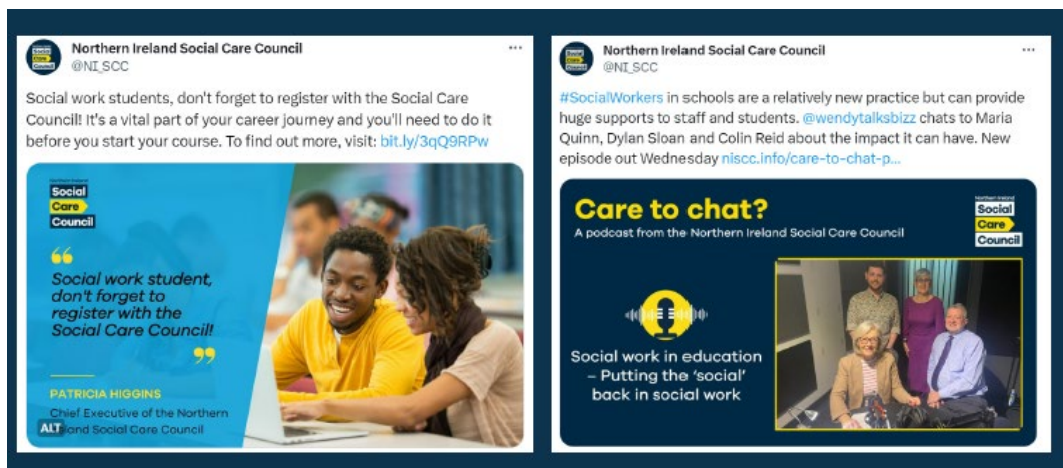
Fitness to Practise and Committee Dashboard up to End of Quarter 2 (1 April - 30 September 2023)



Fitness to Practise Committees 2023-24

37 Committee Days held to review 67 considerations
 16 Fitness to Practise Hearings held
 60 Decisions issued
 61 new cases prepared & listed - 59 proceedings served
 17 registrants and 7 witnesses supported to attend proceedings
 274 telephone contacts and 7 written submissions managed
 21 Interim Orders reviewed and 14 new Orders considered
 Training and reviews completed for Committee Members and Chairs
 Legal Adviser recruitment exercise completed
 Surveys & engagement completed for future delivery of proceedings post-COVID

Communications and Engagement Dashboard up to End of Quarter 2 (1 April - 30 September 2023)



Every month, we make over 10,000 connections through our social media and digital campaigns

Our website engages almost 40,000 people, searching for advice on registration, standards learning and development for social work and and social care



Last chance to register - The Voice of Social Care Managers Workshops

28 September 2023

The Voice of Social Care Managers Workshops

Tell us your views, needs, and expectations regarding workforce learning and development within social care, and provide feedback on the proposed Care in Practice Framework.

Workshops are taking place from Monday 9 October to Thursday 12 October 2023 from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

REGISTER NOW

Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Business Support, Database Development and Information Analysis up to end of Quarter 2 (1 April - 30 September 2023)

<p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our commitment to staff and organisational development was recognised by Investors in People • Our managers are engaged in a group-led programme to develop our leadership skills • Staff Townhalls have been an opportunity to connect everyone in James House and share what our teams do • Our partnerships and committees were supported online and in person to connect and deliver on their functions • Recruitment was undertaken for posts in registration, business support, fitness to practise and workforce development 	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our invoices were paid promptly and with 90% of invoices paid within 10 days • We managed our finances to ensure we can meet budget commitments and efficiencies in line with DoH requirements • The James House project team continues to meet to review resource and support needs for all residents • We have reviewed our data and produced reports analysing the Register/Fitness to Practise Referrals/Use of Technology for Learning and Development
<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Data Quality Group is bringing together staff from across all teams to identify how to review and manage our data effectively • Board Business and Strategic meetings hosted • Audit and Risk Committees have been hosted and papers prepared to provide assurance on our progress/standards • Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23 was laid in the Assembly and published online • A Business Highlights booklet was published to provide a more accessible review of our performance for 2022-23 <p>Quality Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects have been implemented to review the guidance we provide for those who may need to refer Fitness to Practise concerns • Online surveys and literature reviews are being undertaken to inform the future delivery of our Fitness to Practise proceedings • Surveys have been developed to find out what motivates registrants to Join/Leave the social care workforce 	<p>Technology/ Database Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCRATES database was upgraded to provide a more user-friendly interface for our staff and external users. • CRM 365upgrade – Storage reduced by approx. 20% / saving in expenditure (awaiting exact figures) • PC Refresh – laptops set up and deployed • Power BI Dashboard switched over to new Summary Tables • End to End Testing of the IAR system development prior to October assessment point • 9 PiP reports and Power Bi for PiP, AYE and PRTL. • Update to automatic emails/texts messages for restoration, removal and reminders • Automated removals reinstated in September • Portal PRTL Section Developed • Internal Support Ticket System Live for Council staff • Automated Feedback Form for customer survey • Duplicate App Form Disabled • 32 Reports Developed / Created • Support for Student to NQSW • Annual / Renewal reminder notifications amended