**Commission for research into public perceptions and experiences in raising Fitness to Practise concerns - Response to Clarification Questions**

**Q) Will there be access to the types of complaints that Social Work England receive at different stages, i.e., which groups and the level and data?**

**A) Yes, Social Work England would very much invite you to review the status and trends of the case /referrals to draw insight.**

**Q) How does the analysis that potential providers are expected to undertake, differ between this piece of research and the Commission for research into themes within Fitness to Practise concerns raised by members of the public tender opportunity, that Social Work England also have live on Contracts Finder?**

**A) The reason that Social Work England feel it was better to break the pieces of research into two separate tender opportunities, is that with this piece of research we are looking outwards to the public, towards people who have had experience of engaging with services/perhaps have concerns about them. The Commission for research into themes within Fitness to Practise concerns raised by members of the public tender opportunity, is looking outwards from the organisation and is a much more introspective piece that will be looking at our own our own material or in data in cases and will perhaps help us to consider our own decision making. A rough breakdown of the two pieces is this tender opportunity is very much externally focused, and the other tender opportunity is internally focused. But if there are benefits to drawing some internal data into this piece of work, then we would be happy to consider that in in some of the evaluation, and we would encourage any potential bidders to include that in any tender documentation.**

**Q) I just wanted to check - Within the objectives for the public perceptions, it says to undertake a study into perceptions and experiences of members of the public in raising a Fitness to Practise concern, and to study any themes within the existing data. So, within this one tender document around public perceptions - Are we looking outward at interviews with members of the public? But then we are also analyzing the data within this tender?**

**A) To undertake this piece of research, potential providers will need some access to our coding data, but not to the level of the Commission for research into themes within Fitness to Practise concerns raised by members of the public tender opportunity, which is heavily centred around profiling cases, and understanding the content.  The reason we have split the two pieces of research activity is they require two different types of activities, though we are of course aware some potential providers may be able to undertake both pieces of research.**

**Q) Why have Social Work England implemented such tight timelines, with regards to this tender opportunity?**

**A. Social Work England have tried to strike a balance between the research, and the pressure we are constantly under as a regulator.  We have built in a mid-point in the ITT to relieve some of the pressure, but ideally, we would be wanting to stick to all of the stated timelines. This piece of research is being sponsored by our board/sponsorship team, and they are very keen that we drive this forward as soon as possible.**

**Q) In terms of sample - I am just thinking about how to reach out to these people to take part in an interview. Are you planning on providing this sample, or are we looking to find people who have made a complaint?**

**A) If in the tender documentation you are able to suggest an approach, then Social Work England are able to do that. We have already dipped our toe into the water with this work, in that we commissioned a provider recently to undertake a piece of persona work for us. And out of that very small sample came some interesting insights that that made us feel that there was certainly benefit in doing something on the broader scale. And to do that very discrete piece of work, we assisted in identifying appropriate contacts in case types and sort consent to share information from the project approach for this. if that is something that suits you, we would be to assist you with the necessary access If that is the way you would want to approach this. If potential providers are looking for a wider public sample or come looking for the larger numbers of respondents, then that might be something you would want to factor into your own recruitment. But Social Work England can certainly be helpful with the people who we have interacted with. Perhaps this is a regulator or a provider that has been involved in some of our research activity.**

**Q) What is the overall number of complaints that Social Work England have received.**

**A) In our first full year as a regulator, Social Work England have received approximately 2100 Fitness to Practise referrals, against a register size of approximately 97,000. We are not a complaint resolution service; we are a service that receives complaints about the fitness to practise of Social Workers and explores any evidence to the point where we are able to determine if an individual is indeed fit to practise. It is up to the individual investigator, whether they wish to seek involvement of the instigator of that complaint at any stage during the process. There can be misconception that the instigator of the complaint is the owner/driver of the complaint process, but that is not always the case.**

**Q) Should potential providers be more interested in complaints that have been triaged out of the Fitness to Practise Process, and do not have a complaint that needs to proceed?**

**A) I think that would be a sensible approach. The first stage Social Work England use is the triage – which is to make brief enquiries with the individual who has raised the concern. If the case merits a full investigation, this usually takes around 6 months - we will only investigate if we feel there is an over-arching impairment to fitness to practice. The final stage is a case examiner adjudication, who would look at all the evidence collected through Social Work England’s full investigation process. This will then determine whether the case can be resolved on the available evidence alone, or whether referral to a full public hearing is required. Less than 10% of referrals go to full public hearings.**

**Q) What is Social Work England’s case closure rate from triage?**

**A.  50% of cases are closed at the triage stage. 70% of the referrals are from members of the public. The Triage closure rate of referrals from members of the public, is much higher – circa 70% - 80%, and only around 20-30% of these cases progress through to investigation.**

**Q) Would Social Work England be able to support the chosen provider with accessing members of the public who have raised concerns relating to social workers, for example by:**

 **Providing a contact database of people who have raised concerns with Social Work England (we appreciate this may not be possible due to GDPR)?** **A) We may be able to support access to a limited number of people and would have to work through GDPR implications with successful bidder**

1. **Distributing/emailing a link to an online survey to a contact database of people who have raised concerns with Social Work England (so no contact details would need to be passed on)?** **A) We do not hold a ‘contact database’ of people who have raised concerns with us, but we may be able to send a link to those who have consented to support our research aims. This may be limited in in number, however, so a research model may need to consider how to get the most from a small sample. We have shared links to surveys through social media in the past which has proved successful at recruitment.**

**Q) approximately how many contacts do you hold and can you identify those with protected characteristics?**

**A) We have contacts with two groups of people researchers may have an interest in engaging with:**

**People with lived and learned experience of social work who have not raised a formal concern about a social worker – We have an established National Advisory Forum of people with lived and learned experience of social work and some contacts beyond this group who may be interested in participating in the research. We could make an estimate this could range from 5 to 30 people depending on the incentivisation model and the particular experiences of the people the researchers are looking for.**

**People who have raised a fitness to practise concern with Social Work England - we have a limited existing pool of people we have already worked with on research and evaluation of our fitness to practise work but could look to expand this further within our own resource limitations. Depending on interest, confidence in handling sensitivity of research questions and incentivisation, we could estimate around 20 participants.**

1. **For the quantitative survey are you expecting a robust sample of people who have raised concerns or would a sample of the general public with a sub-sample of people who have raised concerns be acceptable (in the absence of a database, finding a robust quantitative sample focused on those who have raised concerns may be difficult, particularly for protected characteristic groups)**.
2. **The research is focussed on members of the public who have raised concerns to organisations including Social Work England. The successful provider would be expected to engage a sample of people within this group. Some assistance with this may be able to be offered to the successful provider by Social Work England, but there is also a question about data collection in the tender for the providers to demonstrate their proposed approach.**