**Social Work England 00338 – Response to Clarification Questions**

 **Investigations Team:**

1. **How many of them are there?** **A) 23 investigators, 5 lead investigators, 3 officers and the Investigations Manager**

**What is the organisational structure within the investigations team?** **A) These can be provided upon request by emailing commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk**

1. **How does this team fit into the rest of the SWE structure? A) The orgnisational structure charts, can be provided upon request by emailing commercial.team@socialworkengland.org.uk**

**Q) What do you mean by ‘new' members of the team and when will they be recruited?** **A) We have recruited new staff at all levels. They are a combination of staff who are new to the organisation and existing staff members. They have taken up their new roles between September and November.**

1. **What is their typical background: do they generally have legal training and/or a social work background?** **A) Staff generally have a background in investigation or social care/social work**
2. **How long are their contracts: are they full time or part time?** **New staff have been recruited on full time, 12-month fixed term contracts**
3. **Can we have sight of their job description documentation (or even part of it)?** **A) Please see attached job descriptions for the investigation manager, lead investigator and investigator roles**

 **Location and working circumstances:**

**Q) Are they currently working from home?** **A) Yes**

**Q)** **Are they based locally to Sheffield?** **A) Yes**

**Q) How has the team been managed during COVID-19?** **A) All staff have been managed remotely through existing management structures, with enhanced support in place**

**Q) Have they all met face to face in the past or are there any of them who have only met virtually?** **A) The majority of the team have worked together in our offices in Sheffield. However, new staff have joined since March and they have had an online induction to the team.**

 **Typical cases and statistics:**

1. **How long does it take for an average case to pass through the system of Social Work England from beginning to end? A) Our target timeline is 12 months. However, performance against this timeframe has been impacted by the size and age of the caseload that was transferred from the HCPC and the impact of Covid-19**
2. **How much time does each case spend with the Investigations Team?** **A) Our target timeframe is 6 months, but see above regarding performance**
3. **How many cases is an Investigations Team member working on at any given moment?** **A) Approximately 1,300 cases**

**Q How many of them are assigned to each case - one person or more?** **A) Our Fitness to Practise Rules require two investigators to be assigned to each case. Each case is assigned to an investigator, and a lead investigator who supervises the investigation**

1. **Who decides who does what?** **A) See above, ownership of the case is with the investigator. Supervision is provided by the lead investigator**
2. **What is the guidance that helps each of them to know when they have done enough investigating?** **A) We have a range of internal guidance documents in place and cases are reviewed regularly by lead investigators. Lead investigators also quality assure the case at key points in the investigation.**

**Q) 3.1 – please can you provide more detail about the ‘3 days per week’ mentioned here?** **A) We are looking for someone to work with the team for three days a week. We are flexible about how this time is distributed across the week.**

**Q) 3.2.4. –'provide additional capacity’: can you please provide more detail on what is meant by this? (I believe that the aim is to increase capacity by accelerating the speed and efficiency with which investigations are processed: how is it envisaged that we assist with this? A) By providing additional capacity at the lead investigator level. This may be, for example, by providing case supervision to the investigators, reviewing and quality assuring documents such as risk assessments, investigation plans and case investigation reports**

**Q) 3.3 - Can we see any available guidance documents for:**

\* Planning and risk assessment?

\* Disclosure and redaction policy?

\* Templates/guidance for taking statements from witnesses?

**A) We are unable to disclose these documents at this stage**

**Q) 3.4.1 - 'Supporting lead investigators… etc'. We would appreciate more clarity on this point.**

1. **The lead investigators generally have backgrounds in criminal investigations. They are developing their knowledge and skills in regulation and fitness to practise. We are looking forward someone with significant experience of fitness to practise and investigations to support the lead investigators in their development through training and coaching**

**Q) 4.1 - What are the priorities for the training, in terms of the order in which the plan is rolled out?
What do you expect to have achieved by the end of the first month, i.e. within December 2020?**

**A) The first priority is to equip new investigators with the knowledge they will need to progress fitness to practise investigations effectively. Our aim is for a package of basic training to be delivered by end January. The learning objectives for December are for the new investigators to have an understanding of fitness to practise, Social Work England’s fitness to practise process and the relevant case law as well as an introduction to investigation planning.**

**Q) 5.2 - Our recommendation will be that in the first 6 months, the training is held online only and that we commit to this in the plan. Based on recent experience and feedback, we are confident that this will be highly impactful. In light if that:**

**can you please clarify whether or not we need to submit two options for every part of the training – an online option and a face to face? This will create two plans instead of one. A) We are content to receive one plan for online delivery of training.**