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06 June 2018

Rt. Hon. Robert Halfon MP
Chair, Education Select Committee
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London,
SW1A 0AA

Dr Sarah Wollaston MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Select Committee
House of Commons,
Westminster,
London,
SW1A 0AA

Dear Robert, Sarah,

Social Work England: Government response to SWE consultation on secondary legislation

We are writing to notify the Education and Health Select Committees that on Monday we published the Government's response to the consultation on the regulatory framework for the new specialist regulator for social workers in England: Social Work England.

We want all social workers to be equipped to deliver outstanding services and have therefore developed a significant reform programme, across child and family and adult social work, to improve both the quality of social work practice, and the systems which support social workers. A fundamental part of this reform programme is delivering on our commitment to establish Social Work England. Social Work England's primary objective will be protection of the public. It will do this by setting

professional and education and training standards for social workers, and providing assurance that those registered meet the standards, are qualified and remain fit to practise. By doing so, it will promote public confidence and trust in this vital profession.

The consultation sought views on the policy underpinning the proposed secondary legislative framework for Social Work England. Our aim in developing the framework is to enable Social Work England to operate in a streamlined, proportionate and efficient way, while ensuring public protection. The consultation received 198 responses, with 43 from organisations representing the social work and care sectors, local authorities, unions, charities, education providers and regulatory bodies. During the consultation period, we held 11 consultative events, including with social workers, education providers and interested parliamentarians. We also met with representatives of our Regulatory Expert Group and Advisory Group.

Overall, respondents supported the move towards a profession specific regulator and the drive towards greater flexibility and proportionality in the draft regulatory framework. Respondents supported the majority of proposals. Areas of concern focused on the provisions relating to fitness to practise processes and the role of government in overseeing the regulator. We have carefully considered the feedback and have made a number of changes to strengthen the draft regulations. These changes aim to achieve an effective balance between ensuring a fair, transparent and robust framework whilst supporting our vision to create a regulator that fosters innovation and promotes effective regulation.

Alongside the publication of the government response, the draft regulations have been laid before Parliament. This commences the Parliamentary scrutiny process. Social Work England regulations will come into force when Social Work England takes over the regulation of social workers in England from the current regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (subject to successful passage of the regulations through the Parliamentary process).

We are delighted to announce that Colum Conway has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Social Work England. Colum is currently Chief Executive of the regulatory body for the social work profession and social care workforce in Northern Ireland. Alongside his experience of running a regulator, he has a background in social work and has many years' experience working in senior leadership roles. We are confident that he will bring a wealth of relevant experience to this role and we look forward to working with him, and Social Work England's Chair Lord Patel of Bradford, to make Social Work England a success.

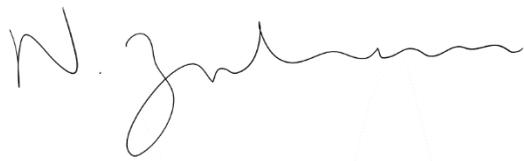
Government will also continue to work closely with other key stakeholders, including the Health and Care Professions Council, in the implementation of Social Work England and the smooth and safe transfer of regulatory functions.

We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you to develop and establish Social Work England.

Copies of the consultation response will be placed in the House Library and are available on the Government's website, at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/social-work-england-secondary-legislative-framework>

Yours sincerely,



Nadhim Zahawi MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
for Children and Families



Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister of State
for Care