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Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Secretary of State

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Anna Gupta, Andy Gill, Janet Melville-Wiseman
British Association of Social Workers (BASW)
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11 JUN 2019

Dear Ms Gupta, Mr Gill, Ms Melville-Wiseman,

Thank you for your letter of 9 May about appointments to the board of Social Work England (SWE). I note that you have also written about this matter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. Please consider this a joint response.

Our plans are for SWE to be a modern and dynamic regulator that takes a flexible and proportionate approach to regulation and the way it governs itself.

I am clear that social work expertise and involvement will be needed to ensure SWE is effective. That is why I am delighted that Lord Patel of Bradford, SWE's Chair, and Colum Conway, SWE's CEO, both have a social work background.

It has also been great to see the significant amount of engagement work that SWE has undertaken as it develops as an organisation. In particular, I am aware of the Professional Expert Group that your organisations attend, and the Experts by Experience Group that SWE has established to provide advice, support and challenge. Alongside this, SWE are establishing a Regional Engagement Leads team, who will all be registered social workers, to continue to work in partnership with the profession. Ensuring that social workers, those who are supported by social workers and those that train future social workers are part of the development of SWE is crucial.

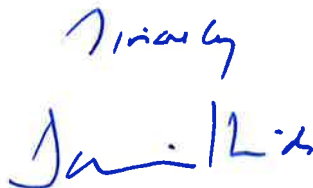
The members of SWE's board have a significant role in providing strategic direction and challenge across a wide range of issues. They also have an important role in engaging service users, educators and others, and ensuring their views are taken into account in decision making processes. Five high calibre non-executive board members have been appointed to date, each bringing a valuable and distinct set of expertise, ability and knowledge to the leadership team. Each appointment has been made on merit, and via an open

and transparent process.

I am clear that SWE's board should not be a representative body. The board should be able to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and awareness to take account of social workers' interests, but not represent them. I do not think it is helpful to have a quota of who should and should not sit on the board. What is important is to ensure that there is the right mix of skills and experience so the regulator is robustly scrutinised and held to account.

I urge you to continue to work in partnership with SWE as it continues to develop and prepares to become the regulator for social workers in England. By working together we can ensure that SWE becomes a regulatory body that will ensure public protection and supports social workers. I am delighted that Lord Patel of Bradford has invited you to attend a SWE board meeting to discuss how you can continue to work together.

Thank you for writing on this important matter. I am copying this letter to the Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP.



Damian Hinds
Secretary of State for Education