THE COLLEGE OF

SOCIALWORK

The voice of social work in England

THE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK: FUNCTIONS REVIEW

MAY 2015

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Introduction – from Chair and Chief Executive

This strategic review of The College of Social Work's (TCSW) functions and how it might best execute these is both timely and necessary. It is timely because it has been undertaken during the period leading up to the formation of a new government and because the need for social work reform has never been greater.
It is necessary because TCSW and its stakeholders (including government) must be clear about its future functions and the business model that will secure long term sustainability.

We welcome this opportunity to take honest and transparent stock of TCSW's options for future development. Government's commitment to and support for this review has been crucial and valuable.

The review has brought into sharp relief the fact that there must be radical change in how TCSW operates and in its priorities. We know that doing nothing is not an option and TCSW Board is fully committed to implementing rapidly and successfully all necessary changes.

English social work needs a credible, strong and independent professional college that will drive high standards. This review provides the potential for a reinvigorated and sustainable College that can play an instrumental role in assuring high quality social work practice across what is a changing and increasingly diverse landscape.

Jo Cleary – Chair

Annie Hudson – Chief Executive

Chapter 1 - Strategic Overview

A role for The College of Social Work

1. This report is underpinned by an assertion that The College of Social Work (TCSW) has a critical role to play in the social work landscape. In particular, it argues that *having a strong and credible professional college is a prerequisite for achieving the government's objectives of reforming social work so that everyone who needs social work can be confident of consistently high standards.*

2. TCSW's ability to undertake this pivotal role is born of the reciprocal relationship with TCSW's members, and which cannot be replicated elsewhere. This can be summarised as:

   - Through an active conversation with its members, TSCW:

     - Helps to shape social work including defining and setting standards, through a critical friend relationship to government.

     - Presents a balanced perspective of social work in the media and public debate.

   - TCSW offers members:

     - Support to achieve and maintain standards through practice guides, training sessions, conferences, and formal routes like CPD; and helping employers to enable best practice through a parallel offer[1].

     - A proactive and credible voice in public and in government.

This is explored in depth in Chapter 2 (Mission and Vision) and Chapter 4 (Possible functions of a professional college).

The College of Social Work now

Strengths

3. TCSW had a particularly challenging start in life, and this is set out at Chapter 3 (History). Since then, it has:

   - Created some well received outputs, including a range of written resources (for example, about social work and mental health, permanency for children looked after), and well-reviewed training events and conferences.

   - Brought on board nearly 17,000 members, increasing membership at a similar rate to other colleges at comparable stages in their development (as captured in Annex E– Comparative information about other professional colleges).

   - Built three credible member-led faculties covering – Adults, Children and Families and Mental Health

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[1] These would be available to members and non-members, but membership confers preferential rates.

Weaknesses

4. Despite this, TCSW is currently facing some significant issues and challenges which place its sustainability and effectiveness at grave risk, including:

  - *A significant gap between income and expenditure* in 2013/14 (£225k, which could be covered by a surplus from previous years) and a further gap projected for 2014/15 (just over £240K) which prompted this review. The analysis has shown that:
    o Some operating costs – for example, accommodation and corporate costs – are relatively high and place an undue burden on the balance sheet.

    o When these operating costs are apportioned across the two work areas – 'membership' and 'practice and policy' – each work area makes a loss. This is in part because TCSW's membership fee is less than half of its nearest competitor. Historically, increasing membership numbers has been prioritised over income generation not only by TCSW but also by TCSW stakeholders as an important means of establishing credibility.

    o The corporate membership offer is a source of serious concern for two reasons:
      o Each corporate membership results in a very significant loss; in 2014/15 this was almost equal to the gap between annual income and expenditure
      o Corporate members sometimes pay two or three years in advance; this has helped to 'cash flow' TCSW, masking the more significant issues around income flow (where income is pro-rata'd).

  - *An uneven standard of output*: the membership offer, and the practice and policy outputs vary in quality, with some not being the highest quality that they can and need to be, and the resources available to the college – members and faculties – are not leveraged as well as they should be in their creation or promotion.

  - *Online systems and a website which are not fit for purpose*: TCSW delivers most of its membership services online, yet if 50 members try to access online services at the same time, the system crashes, and the system has extremely high annual costs to maintain in its current configuration.

Looking to the future

5. Given the severity of the immediate financial situation, it is clear that doing nothing is not an option. However, there is an appetite from the Board, senior leadership and staff for radical change, building on the achievements set out above; ideally moving TCSW to a position from which it would be well placed to deliver against its mission now and into the future.

6. Consequently TCSW has undertaken a review of four of its key functions, leading to recommendations on how to improve both the *outputs* and *delivery* so that it can fulfil its mission and be financially sustainable. These should be taken as indicative of the rigorous, evidence –based and lean approach which TCSW would seek to take in the future, and are set out at Chapters -5- 8.

Recommendations to improve outputs and delivery

7. More in depth strategic and business plans will be required to take TCSW forward, and the assumptions would need to be more nuanced. However, it is clear that there are a series of changes which TCSW could make quickly and which would have a noticeable impact on its current position, including:

Membership:

Offer:	• Surveying members and non members to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the benefits package and how it could be enhanced.
	• Mapping a social worker's career journey, aligning the membership offer with key milestones.
	• Exploring the potential of a merger or partnership arrangement with a Trade Union in detail.
Pricing and delivery:	• Increasing individual membership to at least £90, and set corporate rates at a sustainable level (with no more than a 15% reduction on individual fees).

Conferences and events:

Offer:	• Increasing the number of events significantly, using members and faculties to deliver excellence.
Pricing and delivery:	• Charging ticket prices which allow for a 30% profit margin, with a discount for members and students.
	• Outsourcing conference organisation to reduce overheads, whilst ensuring excellence.

Practice and Policy:

Offer:	• Building a CPD offer that is recognised and endorsed by the sector, and signals that CPD is essential, not optional, in order to improve practice.
	• Supporting local authorities and other partners to better lead and respond to salient issues such as child sexual exploitation.
Pricing and delivery:	• Ensuring income generation from TCSW resources and products. Whilst income streams from government cannot generate surplus, they can be used to support the development of supplementary training materials and events.
	• Making a quality assurance offer to employers, which has the potential to become a significant income stream.

Accreditation:

Offer	• Introducing a strengthened and more robust endorsement framework for initial and post qualifying education (CPD) • Subject to government decisions, overseeing the accreditation system for all specialisms in social work
Pricing and delivery:	• Requires further evaluation and review, subject to government policy and discussion with employers

Finance

8. Chapter 11 covers TCSW finances, and in particular, models the impact of the recommendations of the balance sheet. This shows that over the course of the year, there is a strong possibility that both 'membership' and 'practice and policy' could generate a small surplus. However, it also shows that implementing these changes at the end of July 2015 is not enough to entirely cover the deficit.

Organisational change

9. Behind the recommendations for augmenting individual functions, lie some needs for improvements at an organisational level:

- *The TCSW online systems are not fit for purpose.* Chapter 9 recommends a rapid external review, and highlights that a new system will be needed (whether bespoke or licensed 'off the shelf' from another college).

- Chapter 10 makes recommendations to improve *capability* and sets out how changes to *governance* could support TCSW at this point in its journey:

  - Staff capability could be increased in part by making a credible learning and development offer, agreeing time bound objectives with staff, and being more precise about the skills needed for each role. In particular, it is argued that core TCSW staff should drive and enable delivery, drawing on expertise for content, whether that is organising conferences, or creating practice and policy products.

  - The governance structure is unwieldy, with roles and relationships between different elements not sufficiently clear. The Board recognises that it needs to co-opt additional expertise at this stage of its development (including finance and legal).

Options

10. The review has concluded that are three options for TCSW

Option 1	Government signals explicitly to social workers an expectation about membership.
Option 2	TCSW significantly reduces its delivery to a core membership offer, building strength and credibility over time, and leading up to a point when the government is able to send out the signal set out above.
Option 3	Shut down: the Board takes the decision that TCSW is no longer able to operate and is closed.

11. *Option 1* is centred on increasing functions, in particular those relating to accreditation and CPD, and looks to government for an unambiguous public signal of support. The Board and senior leadership are strongly in favour of this route. We believe that this will give TCSW the best chance to be the 'voice' of the profession, and to take a strong lead in improving professional standards. With an unambiguous message from government and a significantly improved membership offer, TCSW would be able to make a transformative contribution to the social work landscape within months.

12. However, the College does recognise that, given its current position, government may take a view that Option 2 is more timely. In this case, TCSW would continue with the plans for significant change whilst continuing to build a membership base and renewed credibility at a slower pace. While this is not the preferred option of the Board and senior leaders who have invested considerable time and energy in building the current college, the value of this option is recognised. Within this option TCSW would remain a resource for its most committed members – whom we know greatly value their services - and would retain critical links into government, while attracting new members with an enhanced and credible offer. While the aim of this option would be to take the strong lead around professionalism at a slower pace, we would retain a clear focus on that target. TCSW would seek government recognition and support in delivering this option.

13. The final option is not welcomed by TCSW. There is a strong belief from the Board, senior leaders and our members, that a professional college is a critical part of social work reform. Moreover, the impact of closing on the profession would be extremely negative, particularly at a time of challenge and change. However, if the government is not able to support either Option 1 or 2, then the Board are prepared to take this option very seriously. To that end, Chapter 11 also sets out closedown costs, which are in the order of £250k.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The review has demonstrated that social work needs a strong and credible college to raise standards and ensure that everyone needing social work can be confident of consistently high quality practice.

15. The review recommends that option 1 (above) is the best and most appropriate way forward for the profession and all its key stakeholders, including government. If this is not feasible, then option 2 is recommended although its full implications would need further consideration by the Board. The remainder of this report details the findings and other recommendations that have emerged from this review.

Chapter 2 - Mission and vision

TCSW's core mission is to drive and assure high professional standards and to provide an authoritative professional voice in the interest of better outcomes for people needing social work services.

16. TCSW was established with a two fold mission, namely to be the custodian of high professional standards and to be a strong voice for the social work profession. This mission reflects the need identified by the Social Work Task Force (see chapter 3, history of The College of Social Work) for a national professional body to articulate and promote the interests of excellent social work, offering credible and independent leadership of and to the profession.

17. TCSW's mission and vision is modelled on that of other professional colleges (including health professions, policing and potentially also that of the proposed College of Teaching). As such it emphasises the important principle of social workers taking individual responsibility, shared with employers, for their practice standards and continuous professional development (CPD). There can sometimes be a degree of tension between the two core elements of TCSW's mission, driving and assuring high standards and being a membership organisation which provides the 'voice' of social work.

18. Like all professional colleges, TCSW needs to have a compelling reason for social workers to join. There needs to be sharper and more explicit signalling to the profession as to why membership is expected and required. This is crucial to developing a professional culture that takes ownership of standards and which views college membership as wholly integral to professional pride and capability. Whilst this is, and will continue to be, a challenging task, there can be no doubt that having a strong and credible professional college is key to the successful achievement of government's objectives to reform social work and to embed consistently high standards.

19. As part of TCSW's mission to be the centre of excellence for social work, a range of resources are offered to members to support high practice standards and to help them lead and respond to change in a complex, multi-agency environment. Influencing national and local policymakers, employers and other stakeholders is similarly very important. Finally, TCSW seeks to provide an authoritative and credible voice for social work in the media and other public forums, improving public perceptions and building the reputation of social work.

Annexe B – provides further detail about TCSW's mission and vision.

Chapter 3 - The History of the College of Social Work

TCSW's history has at times been extremely fraught, with its role and modus operandi much contested. The need to increase membership rapidly has undermined its ability to develop a sustainable business model.

20. The recommendation for the establishment of The College was made by the Social Work Task Force in 2009. Government accepted the recommendation and commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to establish the college. A development group was appointed and government funding agreed for the first two years of £2.5m pa. SCIE was responsible for the finances until TCSW became a separate organisation in April 2012. Significant contracts for digital platform and IT services were entered into by SCIE. These subsequently proved to be expensive to maintain and unsuitable for service provision.

21. The Development Group sat for 6 months, undertaking a period of consultation and appointing the Interim Chair and Interim Board by a process of open recruitment. The Interim Board met first in October 2010 and took forward the development work, handing over to the Transition Board in October 2012. The Transition Board oversaw the establishment of the permanent Board and Professional Assembly. Board elections took place in February 2013. The first Chair of the Board took up office in March 2013 and the Board was established in April 2013. The first permanent Chief Executive took up post in August 2013.

22. The Development Group considered that business viability could only be achieved through partnership with an existing organisation. It therefore began discussions on partnerships with Unison and convergence with BASW early in 2010. After a series of protracted negotiations with BASW, merger discussions were abandoned in September 2012. The two organisations were unable to reach agreement on core functions and business modelling. A potential partnership with Unison was abandoned in December 2011, due to ministerial concerns about risk to the independence of both organisations.

23. TCSW became an independent organisation in April 2012 and began recruiting paying members. The corporate membership scheme was launched in October 2012; by October 2014 TCSW had 15,000 members. It now has nearly 17,000 members.

More detail is given in the paper in Annex C

Chapter 4 - Possible functions of a professional college

TCSW's future effectiveness and sustainability is placed at risk by an ongoing lack of coherence about core functions. This needs to be addressed so that TCSW has a strong profile and plays an effective leadership role across the social work landscape.

24. This element of the review has considered the potential functions of a professional college, taking account of evidence about functions in other professional colleges, including the proposed new College of Teaching.

25. The review has identified a range of functions and activities across three main areas which could be undertaken by a strong professional college. These three areas are:
    - Professional leadership
    - Professional standards
    - Membership benefits

26. For each of these areas, the strategic aims and principle functions are listed in Annex D, together with a chart indicating where this function currently lies for social work. This provides a menu of possible options for consideration. It should be noted that some functions and associated activities fit within two or three of the areas. Information about other professional colleges is included in Annex E.

27. The review has very purposively set out a range of possible functions and activities which could be undertaken by TCSW and not just those currently undertaken by TCSW. Some of the areas not currently covered by TCSW would require explicit government support (and potentially associated funding) whilst others would be services TCSW would sell.

28. The review has looked in depth at some of the functions identified, considering what TCSW currently does and opportunities for future development in relation to activities connected to membership, policy and practice resource developments, accreditation and conferences and events. There has been evaluation of current costs, benefits, strengths and weaknesses in TCSW's current approaches, in order to provide a basis for critical analysis of how these activities could be undertaken in future.

29. Work on the membership function has been very detailed and demonstrates unequivocally that TCSW's business model and strategy must radically change, most particularly in terms of corporate membership. More detailed work will be undertaken in terms of other activities

Chapter 5 - Membership

There is much potential to build on what TCSW already offers members but this needs to be further refined and developed in order to present an attractive and valuable proposition. The current corporate membership offer is not tenable and significantly undermines our financial sustainability. Membership fees should rise.

Overview

30. TCSW aspires to derive legitimacy and credibility from a strong membership base. It is clear that our current membership offer – whilst in need of further refining and finessing – has contributed significant value to those who have engaged with it; supporting practitioners in their careers, and contributing to professional excellence.

31. Member benefits are the basis on which we market membership to individuals and corporates. While our offer is reasonably standard in comparison to that of other professional colleges, there is variation in terms of popularity, resource implications and cost. In our view, there is real potential for this offer to be enhanced into the future, but to achieve this, the membership strategy needs to be radically redirected.

Member benefits and defining value

32. Underpinning the analysis of our member benefits – alongside their cost, and impacts on viability – is the consideration of what constitutes 'added value' for members and potential members. While we can look, to an extent, at individual components of the overall benefit package; we should also consider them in the round. For example, we may choose to run 'loss leader' type models (e.g. student membership), that are subsidised through those other areas of the business which are able to generate more income (e.g. conferences). The aim of this exercise should be to recommend a course of action which maximises member value as well as financial viability.

Recommendations:

33. The analysis set out in the membership annexe brings us to the following recommendations, which centre around three distinct areas:

    1. **To build on the potential of the existing membership offer and provide better value for money for members, TCSW should:**
       - Test and refine the membership offer by running a member survey which will further assess the value derived from our benefits package, and how it might be enhanced into the future.

       - Discontinue the Knowledge at the College service, and downsize the peer mentoring service.

- Map and analyse user journey, ensuring the membership offer is strategically aligned with the relevant career milestones.

- Stratify the membership offer by career stage, as is standard practice within other professional colleges.

2. **To ensure that the organisation's business model is sustainable and fit for the future, TCSW should:**
- Increase the individual membership fee to at least £90.

- Set corporate membership rates at a sustainable level (i.e. no more than a 15% reduction on the individual fees).

- Decouple professional indemnity insurance provision from corporate membership, and increase the fee for public liability insurance.

3. **To drive an increase in membership overall, TCSW should:**

- Commission a market research exercise to test perceptions of the college with non-members.

- Explore the potential of a merger or partnership arrangement with a union in more detail.

Annexe F provides comprehensive detail and analysis of this function.

Chapter 6 – Practice and policy resources

We must prioritise successful delivery of government contracts at the same time as developing our capacity to develop additional resources, including those which support practice improvement. These resources should meet member needs and generate additional income.

Overview

34. A core function of any professional college is the design and delivery of resources which define, articulate and uphold high standards, supporting practitioners and managers to deliver the very best services and outcomes. Social workers have lacked a consistent 'go to' place where they can have confidence that the advice, information and guidance they receive is of the highest quality and relevant to contemporary needs. Indeed it was in part precisely because of this gap that the Social Work Reform Board proposed the establishment of TCSW.

35. Social work has suffered greatly from a lack of definition and coherence, and indeed consensus, about what constitutes excellent practice. This has rendered it difficult for hard pressed practitioners to be confident about the basis for their judgements and decisions. A key function of TCSW involves defining and articulating, in partnership with key stakeholders (including members, government and employers) quality standards for social work.

Current Activity

36. TCSW currently undertakes a range of activities that have the express purpose of supporting practitioners, managers and commissioners to achieve the very best outcomes for children, adults and families. These include:

- **Designing and delivering a range of guidance and learning resources** that enable and promote continuing professional development.
- **Utilising the expertise of members**, including and particularly TCSW Faculties and Professional Assembly to articulate expectations of practice and commissioning standards.
- **Organising conferences and events** to support CPD and high quality professional debate about best practice and the conditions that support this.
- **Promoting professional leadership through:**
  i. Collaborating with other organisations to support effective inter-professional practice.
  ii. Encouraging new thinking in social work, including through the dissemination of research and other evidence.
  iii. Engaging with other stakeholders and strategic bodies.
- **Supporting members through activities** such as providing updates on practice and policy issues; publishing reports on key areas of social work; providing and leading forums for debate and common interests.

Future Activity

37. Moving forward, the strategy in relation to this function will be developed to:

- **Deliver more focused activities** on early and continuing professional development.
- **Increase inter-professional working** particularly with colleagues from health.
- **Support local authorities** and other partners to better lead and respond to salient issues such as child sexual exploitation.
- **Deliver inter-professional training** events that bring together partners from health, police, and education that produce joined-up solutions to shared concerns.
- **Build a CPD offer** that is recognised and endorsed by the sector and signals to the profession that CPD is essential, not optional, to improve practice.
- **Ensure income generation** from our resources and products.

Quality assurance

38. TCSW has good potential to provide distinctive outcomes focused quality assurance and improvement services to social work organisations. No other organisation in the sector focuses specifically on social work practice, skills and effectiveness across the whole profession, from qualifying to advanced practice and Principal Social Work level. We propose:

- Designing and developing a distinct quality assurance and improvement offer
- Using the refreshed PCF and other evidence for auditing and benchmarking quality within and across organisations.
- Access and mobilise national practice knowledge, expertise and evidence to create an outcomes-focused social work quality assurance service.
- Building opportunities to collaborate with other professional colleges to raise standards of inter professional practice and education.
- Offering independent 'health checks' for organisations.
- Providing consultancy advice services to organisations on a (growing) range of specific issues.

Recommendations

39. The outcome of our current analysis indicates that four recommendations should be taken forward:

I.   TCSW should design and develop resources with respect to three specific practice areas; these areas would be determined following consultation with members and employers.

II.   Produce a strategy and business plan for developing these resources as costed training packages to social work organisations.

III.   Develop a business case for designing and delivering a tailored menu of quality assurance and improvement resources for local authorities and other sectors.

IV.   Deliver a training package to social work organisations over the next 18 months on implementing the revised Professional Capabilities Framework.

Full details of the functions for the practice and policy resources can be found in annexe G

Chapter 7- Conferences, events, training and workshops

TCSW's small yet well received conferences and events programme could be significantly expanded to become a genuine growth area for TCSW in terms of income, credibility and profile.

40. TCSW has run several successful conferences, all of which have been well received by members, and well attended. Events represent a real area of potential for the College, for the following reasons:

   - We have a significant bank of existing organisational resource, evaluation and experience to build upon in terms of event design and delivery

   - There are very few competitors in the market for high quality events which focus specifically on social work practice, and strong attendance at our previous events appear to signal a clear demand for these kinds of programmes

   - An expanded events programme would fulfil the dual aims of generating income and driving an increase in College membership

   - There is a clear rationale and business case for this activity being self-funding and sustainable into the long-term, through the application of a 'cost plus 30%' margin on ticket pricing

   - In addition to conferences, there is scope to provide a 'mixed-menu' of events, incorporating half-day workshops and training sessions. These would also generate revenue, with lower direct costs for delivery (see cost modelling in annexe H)

   - The intellectual capital we possess within the organisation, as well as our brand value (in terms of content design, expert opinion, access to academics and practitioners etc), make us an attractive events partner for external organisations who may look to commission and undertake joint conferences with us.

   - There is significant potential to generate a stronger revenue stream in relation to our existing conferences, through increased exhibition and sponsorship opportunities.

Recommendations:

41. We would propose that:

I. Further detailed scoping is undertaken to develop a model which utilises the outsourcing elements of event management, with the aim of:
- Producing a high-quality and events programme which enhances the TCSW membership offer and drives an increase in overall membership.
- Running a cost-effective and sustainable model which makes best use of in-house resources, and can scale successfully as membership and demand grow.
- Eventually subsidising a 'no or low cost' series of member engagement events which are smaller scale and complement our core offer.

II. That further detailed scoping is undertaken to enhance exhibition and sponsorship revenue.

III. That demand for workshop events as outlined are tested, and further delivery models considered.

Chapter 8 – Accreditation

Government should give serious consideration to conferring clear status and authority to TCSW in relation to the accreditation of social workers in all specialisms, and in relation to initial and post qualifying CPD accreditation. .

Accreditation

Overview:

42. Accreditation is a key function of most professional colleges, helping to deliver high levels of membership and to exert important influence over professional practice standards. This review has concluded that there is a pressing need for social work's professional college to be explicitly mandated to accredit individual social workers, qualifying and post qualifying education and ASYE programmes.

43. There are two justifications for assigning the accreditation function to TCSW. Firstly, to do so would be entirely consistent with practice in other professions, such as medicine and allied health professions. We understand that the proposed new College of Teaching could, in the longer term, potentially have similar roles assigned to it. Professional colleges have been given such responsibilities in recognition of their dual role of guardians of professional standards and as the professional leadership body for their respective areas.

44. Secondly, there are no other national organisations that focus specifically on social work practice, skills and effectiveness across the whole profession, from qualifying to advanced practice, to principal social workers and strategic managers. As social work is delivered in more diverse and pluralist ways, there is an even more pressing need for one national body to define, monitor and assure high standards. Accreditation of individuals would offer a more compelling reason for all social workers to join their professional college

45. TCSW currently provides accreditation schemes for education and training, both qualifying and CPD. This has already made significant improvement to standards. We propose to develop this accreditation function further as a means of securing greater rigour and consistency across practice and education.

46. Annexe I gives comprehensive information and analysis about the three types of accreditation, namely:
   - Accreditation of individuals
   - Accreditation of qualifying education
   - Accreditation of CPD

Recommendations

47. The following is recommended:

I. Government should assign TCSW with appropriate responsibilities for develop and implementing a model for accreditation of individual practitioners, building on current work being undertaken

II. Government should commission TCSW to undertake the accreditation of social workers in all specialisms including advanced children and families practitioners

III. Government should mandate TCSW to develop a national register of AMHPs and BIAs

IV. Government should mandate TCSW to develop a robust accreditation scheme for initial education

V. Accreditation should be mandatory

VI. TCSW to work with sector partners to ensure employer engagement at senior levels

VII. Department of Health to extend BIA endorsement scheme at least until 2017

VIII. TCSW to promote the BIA endorsement scheme to HEIs and employers

IX. Government to make ASYE validation mandatory in both adults and children and families services

X. TCSW to review and promote, with all key stakeholders, including employers, generic CPD endorsement scheme

Chapter 9 - Systems and website

There should be an independent review of TCSW website as systems going forward are not fit for purpose.

Overview

48. All of TCSW's services are delivered online, and 90 per cent of our systems and processes are automated. Our current systems and website are not fit for purpose. Should they remain the same, the complex way in which TCSW's inherited systems have been established and maintained poses a significant risk to the organisation's ongoing stability.

49. Similarly, as a primarily online organisation, our website is both our 'shop window' and the platform through which existing members engage with the benefits we provide as part of their membership fee. At the moment, our website begins to 'fall over', when it reaches 50 visitors at any one time. This is a worryingly low number. Recently, members have reported it taking up to five minutes to log in to the membership dashboard. It is clear that if the website is not invested in during the course of the next year, we severely limit the ability to serve our current membership, and will be unable to expand altogether.

Recommendations

50. This review recommends that TCSW:

   I.   Commission an independent review of the website and systems (can be undertaken pro-bono or at low cost, that is less than £1K).
   II. Investigate 'off the shelf' products to replace inherited complex systems at a lower ongoing maintenance cost.

Annexe J sets out further details

Chapter 10 – Organisational capability, staffing and governance

Governance structures need to be cost effective and fit for the future. Particular attention is being given to the role and relationship between the Board, the Professional Assembly and the three faculties. The staff structure is being redesigned.

Organisational capability

51. TCSW organisational capability and capacity has been very stretched from the inception of the organisation. Despite this, TCSW has been able to create an increasingly strong presence and profile. It has, however, at times struggled to work across the full range of activities with which its members and other stakeholders wish it to be involved. Importantly TCSW has also not had adequate capacity or capability to develop parts of the business that generate significant new income, including being able to bid successfully for new contracts.

52. TCSW's organisational capability has been shaped by a number of factors. Firstly it has been difficult at times to secure the profession's ownership of the need for a professional college which in turn constrained TCSW's ability to develop as a sustainable and successful college. This may in part reflect the fact that, in contrast to more established professions such as law and health, social work does not yet have a coherent and confident professional identity that transcends specific agency functions and that is based on clear consensus about what constitutes good and excellent practice.

53. The specific benefits of professional college membership as distinct to those of trade union membership are also not yet fully grasped. Although an increasing number of social workers do 'get it', too many remain unclear about why a strong professional college is needed, what it offers and generally why membership is intrinsic to being a 'good' professional. There is therefore a pressing need to articulate better the rationale for joining a professional college of social work.

54. Building this rationale must include the notion of individuals having responsibility (albeit shared with employers) for standards and professional development. Arguably this involves changing some aspects of the profession's 'psyche'; this may be a challenge but it is one that TCSW, the profession, HEIs, employers and government must address successfully.

55. It has been necessary for TCSW to demonstrate a credible profile and 'brand' within a fairly short space of time, particularly in the context of widely varying expectations of its purpose and the sometimes fraught relationship with BASW. Nevertheless despite these undoubted constraints on organisational capability,

in some key areas TCSW has punched above its weight; this is evidenced, for example, by the positive reception to many published resources, events, summits, conferences as well as by our media profile and contribution to a range of national developments.

Staffing

56. The staff team remains relatively small. It contains some, but by no means all of the capabilities that we need going forward. Following a staff restructuring in mid 2013 the number of posts was reduced and we recruited to the new senior roles of Head of Professional Practice and Head of Membership and External Affairs.

57. Staff commitment to, and understanding of the purpose of TCSW across the staff team has been crucial in building the organisation's profile. However, TCSW does not yet have the required 'fleet of foot' flexibility to enable proactive response to new initiatives and practice needs. Specific capability gaps include:
- Business development and financial management capability,
- Contract management capability
- Recent practice knowledge of adult social work (a post has been deleted due to current financial pressures).

58. As part of this review a new and leaner staff structure is being drawn up for swift implementation. This will result in a significantly reduced staff resource to help maximise income and minimise costs.

Governance

59. Governance arrangements have generally evolved well with most positions on the Board, the Professional Assembly (PA) and the three Faculties (Mental Health, Adults and Children and Families) now subject to member election. Most recent elections have been contested, for example four people stood for the recent Board vacancy. The Board had a second externally facilitated discussion on governance earlier this year. This was facilitated by Hilary De Lyon, (ex Chief Executive of RCGP) who reflected on how well the Board functions and the constructive working relationship between the Chair and Chief Executive. A small task and finish group is currently reviewing governance further.

60. TCSW has a Board of 12 members (including the Chair and two co-options for people who have experienced social work support; TCSW is the only professional College to have this stipulated in its constitution). There is an elected Professional Assembly with 26 members, including the Chair, and three directly elected Faculties (Adults, Mental Health and Children and Families). Each Faculty has 14 including an elected chair. Additionally there is an

Endorsement Board (dealing with endorsement of initial and post qualifying training), a Research and Knowledge Exchange Group (RAKE) and a PCF Review and Quality Assurance group (though this is currently 'on ice' pending the outcome of the current PCF review. There will be further elections in November 2015, including for up to 3 places on the Board.

61. Work is progressing further currently in terms of:
   - Clarifying further the role and relationship between the Board, Professional Assembly and Faculties,
   - Ensuring that practitioners have a visible place across TCSW structures
   - Strengthening the Board's oversight functions of budgetary issues; a new Finance Sub Committee has been established.

62. TCSW has been fortunate in being able to secure a good mix of practitioners, managers, researchers and educators as members of its committees. However, it is recognised that there are some skills which are not yet fully represented on the Board yet which are critical given our current stage of development. These include:
   - Business development and entrepreneurial expertise
   - Finance
   - Knowledge of small charities
   - Legal expertise

The Board is actively considering ways of securing some of these skills through co-options.

63. Additionally, TCSW generally and the Board specifically will need, subject to the outcome of this strategic review to:

   - Revisit current terms of reference for different elements of the governance arrangements so that there is clear and coherent mapping across to TCSW functions
   - Consider how to resource different elements of governance structures as current arrangements are economically unsustainable.
   - Review the role and relationship of the Chief Executive and the staff team to governance arrangements, taking account of this review.
   - Utilise better member expertise, reflecting the fact that governance structures are not the only means of creating a member led organisation (much useful learning can be derived from the experience of other professional colleges).

Chapter 11 - Finance

64. This review was initiated, in part, by a significant gap projected between TCSW income and expenditure in 2015. This chapter sets out:

- **Short term review**
  Efforts to significantly reduce this gap that have begun, and are an ongoing process.

- **Medium term proposals**
  While there is not time within the report deadlines to develop and test a five year plan, work has begun to interrogate TCSW corporate costs, and evaluate radical options to reduce them.

65. This chapter report addresses the four functions considered earlier in this report and sets out some income and expenditure projections based on the recommendations.

Short term review

66. We have undertaken a process of closely interrogating current TCSW expenditure to address the projected deficit for 2015/16, during which costs which had not been accounted for were discovered. The costs and savings identified in this exercise are set out at Table A. (All tables cited in this chapter can be found in annexe K). They indicate a nett saving of £128,488.00. Therefore, as of 6th May 2015, the projected gap between income and expenditure for 2015-16 (which was sent to the Board) was £143,247.

67. However, the balance sheet at that time included assumptions about:
    - income which were not based upon a sound business plan; and
    - income from membership subscriptions based upon a fee increase

68. Therefore, we also removed these from the balance sheet, so that is showed the most accurate possible position. As a result, **the projected gap between income and expenditure for 2015/16 is £243,003**. This position is set out in Table B.

69. As an outcome of this process, a re-ordering of the accounts has begun, in which corporate costs are allocated to TCSW functions. This has:
    - Highlighted that some TCSW functions are loss making.
    - Highlighted the importance of reducing these costs.
    - Led to a revision of accounting processes, including allocating codes to processes. This will allow far greater accuracy in the future.

Medium term proposals

Membership Fees:

70. The chapter on membership shows that corporate membership is making a significant loss. It also set out a set of proposals to address this, and we have modelled the impact on income and expenditure, based on a set of assumptions, which are set out at Table C. We have included a hypothesis about reduced costs for the Membership Team. The resultant financial position is set out at Table D. It shows that the membership offer could generate a surplus.

71. It is important to note that the modelling - with the assumptions about membership attrition, which accompany a fee rise – show that a lower fee of £90.00pa achieves a higher income than a higher fee of £128. This is therefore recommended as an interim fee position with immediate effect and this proposal was agreed by the Board at its meeting on 15th May 2015. Additional proposals which have been agreed include:
   - Mothballing Knowledge @ The College for the foreseeable future (entirely cutting this expenditure).
   - Increasing the Social Work Matter magazine to 6 issues, with limited interactive elements, to make further savings of £6,800.
   - Downsizing volunteering and mentoring services for the foreseeable future (entirely cutting this expenditure)
   - Reducing IT Contingency costs to £15,000.00.

Practice and Policy Products Proposal

72. While the income set out here is unchanged, it is clear that further income streams are possible, based on leveraging products created for government, members and faculty, to develop and sell practice products. However, there are no figures to project this and it has not been possible to capture this in the model.

73. We have only been able to capture changes in rent and hypothesise a reduction in staffing costs. Even on that basis alone, Table E shows that this team could now generate a surplus.

Accommodation and corporate costs

74. Underpinning this modelling are projections about accommodation: several alternatives have been investigated and an average has been taken. This is set out at Table F and woven into Tables D and E.

75. Beyond the work to reduce expenditure in the short term, set out above, future ways in which to reduce corporate costs could be considered:
   - Organisational merger
   - Shared corporate services

   (To note: we approached the College of OT to test this option, but they declined due to current re-organisational changes)

Shutdown Costs

76. Should TCSW find itself in a position to implement a shut down, indicative initial costs have been calculated and are correct until 31st May 2015. This is set out in Table G.

Cash Flow Forecast

77. Based on TCSW current position and the assumption that modelling of new income and expenditure will not be implemented until 1st August 2015, an estimated Cash Flow Forecast has been compiled with the removal of any new or renewed Corporate Memberships between 15th May and 31st July 2015. This is shown in Table H.

Conclusion

78. Work on the 2015/16 budget is ongoing and will require effective financial discipline and oversight. It will also require TCSW to make some difficult changes to what it does, how it undertakes its work and to its staffing and governance structures. The risks and challenges of this cannot be underestimated, however, it is very clear that, as indicated earlier in this report, significant change is required to deliver a balanced budget this financial year and a sustainable business model in the longer term

Chapter 12 - Conclusion

This review has been very wide ranging and has benefitted from the close partnership working with government. It has demonstrated very clearly that doing nothing is not an option. It has also underlined the importance of supporting the development of a credible and independent professional college to help drive up standards and embed necessary reforms to social work.

This report shows how a reinvigorated and sustainable College might and should play a prominent and authoritative role in delivering high quality social work practice. TCSW is a crucial element in the architecture for the reform of social work. Working with the two Chief Social Workers and local authority Principal Social Workers, TCSW should have the authority and functions for defining, assuring and supporting the delivery of the very highest practice standards.