

The new degree in Social Work
An exploration of stakeholder views

by
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Executive Summary

This independent exploration of stakeholder views on how the new degree in Social Work is developing was commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in the summer of 2006 as the course reached the end of its second year in operation and the Council's quality assurance report on the first year, 2004/05, became available. Its objective is to help the Council to a more precise understanding of particular issues at this early stage, and to inform its thinking about effective means of engaging with quality assurance and enhancement against the requirements and standards set out in the Scottish Executive's Framework for Social Work Education document, published in 2003. The work was undertaken by Critical Thinking and Bellevue Consultancy in the period October to December 2006.

The starting point for the work was the Council's 2004/05 quality assurance report on the new degree. The methodology was a mix of desk research and structured interviews - individual and group - with a list of stakeholders identified by the SSSC as representative of the range of interests: education providers (universities) and their students; service providers; other interested bodies; and users and carers. Over 40 people were interviewed for the study. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, it has not been possible to speak to members of the user and carer community.

Interviews highlighted many positive features of the new degree, but, inevitably, also pointed up some challenges. Although not all without some issues, the following were cited as particularly positive aspects of the qualification:

- **Graduate status** – the new degree established Social Work as an all-graduate profession, on a par therefore with allied professions in areas such as Education and Health.
- **Diversity** – recognising that one size does not fit all, flexibility in the structure and design of course provision.
- **Curriculum** – opportunity and space to give greater emphasis to key areas such as risk, ethics, child protection, user and carer involvement, practice and the integration of theory with practice.
- **Interdisciplinarity** – emphasis on the inter-connectedness and dependence of a wide range of professions in the delivery of services.
- **Standards** – consolidation of quality and occupational standards, and also consistency with standards operating internationally, giving the qualification a wide currency.

Particular challenges were considered to be presented by:

- **Change** – the pace and weight of change on a continuous basis.
- **Roles and Relationships** – confusion about roles, relationships and lines of accountability at the high level: the Scottish Executive; the SSSC; the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE); the Learning Networks; and the Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP).
- **Council Process and Regulation** – interpretation, as process and regulation are tested in practice.

- **Infrastructure** – issues in the areas of practice learning and teaching and the operation of Learning Networks.
- **Quality** – adequacy of assurance procedures to provide guarantees in relation to delivery against the expectations of the standards; effective means of enhancing quality.
- **Articulation** – from Higher National Certificate and equivalent qualifications to provide equality of opportunity and diversity of entry to the new degree.
- **Standards and Levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)** – to demonstrate clearly the difference between previous and current qualifications and address perceived inconsistencies across current provision.
- **Funding** – or lack of, to support the involvement of users and carers in provision.

To address these particular challenges, we make the following recommendations to the Council:

- 1 **Pace of change**
The Council should seek to exert its influence to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck at all times between the need to move forward on issues and the need to ensure effective delivery.
- 2 **Roles and relationships**
To clarify counterproductive confusion about roles, relationships and lines of accountability, the Council should make a clear statement first of its own role, paying particular attention to that in quality, both assurance and enhancement; and second of its role in relation to other bodies: the Scottish Executive; the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education; the Learning Networks; and the Scottish Practice Learning Project.
- 3 **Process and regulation**
To remove areas of uncertainty in existing procedures and regulations, the Council should provide clarification on the basis of any relevant existing known or anticipated cases.
- 4 **Infrastructure**
To address key issues relating to practice learning and teaching, the Council should:
 - ensure that practice teachers are fully briefed about the Standards in Social Work Education;
 - facilitate a review of supervision arrangements for practice learning, specifically of the relationships between all parties involved – students, practice learning providers and universities - with a view to establishing common understandings of partnership in this context;
 - sustain action to support the effective management of demand for practice learning opportunities; and
 - establish a clear path for bringing practice teaching qualifications on stream at the earliest opportunity.

5 **Quality**

To address concerns in this critical area, the Council should:

- set out in detail its role in quality assurance and enhancement;
- consider, in consultation with stakeholders, arrangements for quality assurance currently in place with a view to ensuring they provide sufficient reassurance in relation to delivery against the Standards in Social Work Education;
- develop, in consultation with stakeholders, a programme for exchange of experience and approaches on topics of common interest and concern, this to cover both practice and procedure; and
- specifically, consider:
 - with universities and students, means of systematically capturing and considering students' views on their experience; and
 - with universities and user and carer groups, means of supporting the wider and deeper engagement of these groups.

6 **Articulation to the new degree**

In the interests of supporting equality of opportunity and the diversity of intake that is one of the objectives of the new degree, the Council should give urgent consideration to achieving agreement on ways of progressing the development of articulation agreements and bridging courses.

7 **Standards and levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**

To demonstrate the difference between the previous (diploma and undergraduate degree) and current corresponding Social Work qualifications, and make a clear statement of expectations within the new degree with a particular view to considering, and if necessary removing, inconsistencies in the application of standards, especially in the context of practice learning, the Council should indicate that each course should be able to show, and should also take steps to explain as appropriate, its levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

8 **Funding**

Recognising the centrality of user and carer involvement to the new degree, the Council should consider taking forward the issue of specific funding for their engagement.

Part 1: Introduction

Background

1.1 The new four year honours degree in Social Work was introduced in Scotland in September 2004 in the context of the Scottish Executive's concern to ensure the provision of education and training for social workers at a level suited to the increasingly challenging and complex demands of professional practice. It replaced the two year Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), which will be phased out by 2007. The honours degree now stands as the base level qualification for professional practice as a social worker.

1.2 The new degree was developed by universities in the light of requirements stipulated by the Scottish Executive in its Framework for Social Work Education, published in January 2003. This document included a consolidated statement of standards – Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) - designed to reinforce the link between the key academic and practice elements of education and training in Social Work which had previously been set out separately in, respectively, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Benchmark Statement and the National Occupational Standards for Social Work.

1.3 The SiSWE afforded providers of the new qualification discretion in the structure and design of their programmes, the principal concern being that courses of study should be capable of delivering the learning outcomes specified by the statement of standards.

1.4 Programmes of study leading to the new degree were approved by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) using innovative processes aligned with those of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and including testing of written submissions by panels comprising, variously, SSSC and academic staff, and service users and providers. Programmes from nine universities, two in partnership, were approved in this way. Seven programmes came on stream in September 2004 with the eighth following in February 2006.

The project

1.5 The majority of the new degree programmes came to the end of their second year in the summer of 2006 at the same time as the SSSC quality assessment report on the first year, 2004/05, was published. The SSSC considered this early stage in its existence to be a suitable juncture at which to commission an independent exploration of stakeholder views on how the new qualification was developing. It invited Critical Thinking and Bellevue Consultancy to undertake this work with a particular view to helping the Council to a more precise understanding of particular issues and serving to inform its thinking about effective means of engagement with quality assurance and enhancement against the requirements and standards set out in the Framework document. The work was undertaken in the period October to December 2006.

Methodology

1.6 The study method was a mix of desk research and structured interviews, both individual and group. Those interviewed are listed at Annex A. The principal documents consulted are shown in Annex B. A glossary of terms and acronyms is at Annex C.

1.7 Interviewees representative of the range of stakeholder groups were identified by the SSSC. All eight education providers (universities) agreed to participate, and we were able to meet with student groups at five of them. Five of the seven service providers (employers and overarching bodies representing the interests of employers) identified contributed their views, together with four of the seven other interested bodies (external stakeholders) to which we were directed. At the time of writing we have been unable to speak to anyone from the user and carer constituency. In total, over 40 people were interviewed – individually or as part of a group – for this report.

1.8 Interview questions, having regard to stakeholder group – education provider; service provider; student; other interested body - focused substantially, but not exclusively, on issues suggested by the SSSC's 2004/05 quality assurance report. Interviewees were encouraged to raise any issues they considered might usefully be aired.

Context

1.9 The SSSC was established by the Scottish Executive in October 2001 under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act. It is one of six national successor bodies – one in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and three in England - to the UK Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) which was abolished in the same year.

1.10 The SSSC is a regulatory body and, as such, its primary activity is to protect the public.¹ Alongside approving, regulating and, in some cases, awarding professional social work qualifications, the Council's remit also includes registration of groups of social service workers; promoting and developing education and training for them; developing and publishing Codes of Practice; and workforce planning and development.

1.11 The Council's role in quality assurance and enhancement derives from its regulatory responsibilities and is enshrined in the 2001 Act. That role presently awaits detailed specification by the Council.

1.12 At inception, the Council's style and approach in general - and to course approval, monitoring and review, in particular - was influenced in the main by two factors. The first was perceptions of its predecessor body, which had been regarded as rather heavy handed and overly bureaucratic; and the second, the emergence of a new approach to quality assurance in higher education in Scotland. This new approach, introduced in 2003/04 as discussions about the development and implementation of the new degree were happening, aims to achieve continuous quality enhancement of learning and teaching in the Scottish HE sector through striking a balance between quality assurance and quality enhancement. Emphasising

¹ Harvey 2004

the student experience in a focus on learning as well as on teaching, and requiring cooperation and partnership, the approach comprises five main elements:

- *a comprehensive programme of subject reviews*, run by institutions themselves. The nature of internal reviews is decided by individual institutions but they share certain agreed features, including the use of trained reviewers and also externality within review teams;
- *institution-level review*, which involves the QAA and each Scottish higher education institution over a four-year cycle;
- *improved forms of public information about quality*, based on addressing the different needs of a range of stakeholders including students and employers;
- *a greater voice for student representatives* in institutional quality systems, supported by a new national development service; and
- *a national programme of enhancement themes*, in which all institutions participate, aimed at developing and sharing good practice in learning and teaching in higher education.

1.13 Against this background, the SSSC sought to align its arrangements for course approval, monitoring and review with those of universities and colleges and the QAA under the new enhancement led approach to quality assurance. Specifically, it sought to avoid duplicating process requirements, as well as those for information - effectively to operate with a 'light touch', coming from the perspective of help and support.

1.14 The new Council, then, took up its responsibilities at a time of change in the wider academic environment as well as in its own sphere of operation. These responsibilities, set out in its remit, constituted a full and highly dynamic programme of work, in relation to which there were expectations of rapid and effective delivery across the board.

Part 2: Strengths of the degree

2.1 The study was designed to elicit stakeholder views on how the new Social Work qualification is developing. Interview sessions yielded a great deal of information. They pointed to many positive features of the new degree, but also indicated that there were a number of issues. We have considered the positive features below as Strengths and the more challenging issues separately at Part 3 as Challenges.

2.2 Respondents from all the different stakeholder groups are highly positive about a number of features of the new degree, albeit there are caveats associated with some of these. In particular they mentioned:

- **Graduate Status**
- **Diversity**
- **Curriculum**
- **Academic and practice integration and focus on practice**
- **Interdisciplinarity**
- **Standards**
- **User and carer involvement**

Strengths

Graduate Status

2.3 The move to an all-graduate profession has been almost universally warmly welcomed. Service providers in particular believe that it will increase the attractiveness of Social Work as a profession and encourage more good people in, which, in turn, will be good for the profession – creating a virtuous circle. They believe it will drive up standards. From universities' point of view, they no longer have to ration degree places having regard to their Funding Council allocations of funded places and so screen out good and able candidates. Students and other stakeholders commented that graduate status puts social workers on a par professionally with those with whom they routinely work, ensuring that they no longer have need to feel the junior partner in discussions. Universities in particular believe that the new degree itself is helping to embed a sense of professional identity and, by providing space for a more comprehensive education, is providing a better foundation for the development of the 'confident' practitioner the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) require.

2.4 Some universities sounded a small note of caution on graduate status. Social Work is a stressful profession, not especially well-paid, nor especially well respected in Britain and graduates might choose to follow other occupational routes which are less stressful, more highly regarded, with better pay and conditions and corresponding levels of satisfaction. In this context, there was evidence from students that they are aware they have other options. In addition, some universities believe the more academic nature of the Social Work degree might make articulation with the Higher National Certificate (HNC) more difficult. (This is also a particular concern of employers - see Curriculum below). All in all, the pool of qualified practitioners might be smaller than expected.

Diversity

2.5 The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland intentionally acknowledges that one size does not fit all through allowing universities latitude and flexibility in the structure and design of programmes. This has been widely welcomed, although there are attendant issues. The discretion allowed by the Framework means that universities' approaches differ widely in respect of coverage, structure and pacing of course content and, not least, in relation to organisation of periods of practice learning. In some universities, for example, practice learning takes place from the very first year; in others it comes further into the student's academic career, at 18 months or even two years later, after a rigorous grounding in a range of subjects.

2.6 Often being older and with carer-type responsibilities, Social Work students may be less mobile than other students, less inclined to shop around and more likely to go for a local course. Degree providers think this is good reason for a range of degrees across a range of universities; it enables them to be responsive to local demand.

2.7 External stakeholders, however, whilst valuing some diversity, believe there is a portion of work - a core - that could be covered in common and that there should be some consistency in key processes and content. Examples given included SCQF levelling; numbering of standards; and expectations of practice teachers. Many thought that the Council was the organisation with the power to specify what this core should be. Several universities, however, feel strongly that any attempt to impose more standardisation would lead to an over-emphasis on consistency which could well stifle creativity.

Curriculum

2.8 The standards, and the expansion of the base level qualification from two to four years, have provided university staff the opportunity and the space to craft courses that provide for increased emphasis on areas where they considered this to be warranted. Specifically cited in this context were risk; ethics; child protection; involvement of users and carers; preparation for practice; and embedding practice. Preparation, fitness to practice in the new degree – the terminology used varied from university to university, as did the interpretation in practical terms – gave, for the first time, early notice of each individual's particular strengths and weaknesses, attitudes and values and hence the opportunity to address issues quickly. This was something that was particularly valued by service providers receiving students for practice learning.

2.9 Several non-university stakeholders - and some students - perceive gaps in the curriculum. They suggest that there are some important areas of practice that are not being covered routinely, child protection for example. Having said that, one group of students expressed the view that there was too much child protection content in the curriculum of a generic course. Universities are less likely than service providers to think that gaps matter – especially not at the expense of diversity – as learning can, and does, continue in practice once the student has graduated.

2.10 Where a more traditional Scottish degree structure is in place, i.e. one that provides exposure to subjects in cognate areas in the early stages, some students - those who always knew they wanted to be social workers - expressed frustration with having to take such subjects as criminology or sociology; however, others who had

come to university to study another course and had changed to Social Work, appreciated the opportunity. Most students agree that, with hindsight, there are benefits to having to study a wider range of subjects although, for some of them, at the time it felt like they were distracted from what they came to university to do.

2.11 Because of the structure of the new degree and the way it has been introduced, few students we encountered had experience of both the old and new qualification. From the point of view of students, the transition to the new qualification has been seamless, and most could not comment comparatively. One of those who could, however, said that she noticed a clear difference: the old course had felt as if it had been about producing 'clone social workers', whereas the new degree is much more about the individual and instils a sense of responsibility and independence in each student. Whilst this is hardly a representative sample, it does suggest the particular approach and ethos of the new degree is indeed apparent.

2.12 Students are generally appreciative of the curriculum content and the aims of the new degree. Some found the theory/practice relationship harder to negotiate than others. Such students, while wanting more support in the aspects they find challenging, would prefer more emphasis on the aspects in which they feel most confident. There was a sense from some students that the course is quite gruelling. Some drew a comparison with teaching where they felt 'the profession welcomes you'; in contrast, it feels that Social Work 'is all about proving you are good enough to join'. One commented that it is widely believed that 'being a Social Work student is much harder than being a social worker so, if we can hack this, we'll be fine'.

2.13 Students in several universities commented on the pacing and structure of their learning. In particular, because of the structure of the academic year, there is often a gap between the end of one stage and the start of the next. Even those students who value a break, are comfortable with self-directed study and do not have to make a conscious effort to re-motivate themselves and re-engage on return to university, said they feel the gap is too long, especially when they are under financial pressure. Students in five universities said that the course feels like three years stretched to four. Some, although not all, added that, aside from the length of the break between academic years, timetabling was quite light, certainly in the first year – around 3/3.5 days per week.

2.14 Somewhat related to pacing, we encountered students in some universities who thought they might have been given some credit for prior learning, but had not. Generally, universities tend to consider HNC as the entry qualification/standard to the degree. In practice, HNC entrants – more often than not those already in employment in Social Work Departments – say they find themselves repeating much of the curriculum covered by the HNC in the first year of the degree. This is as much an issue for employers, who will now be releasing staff for up to four years to full qualification, as it is for students who are re-treading old ground. One university noted that employers are sponsoring fewer students because of the backfill costs associated with the length of time to full qualification. Some service providers commented that capable HNC/HNC equivalent candidates could well be disinclined to proceed to full qualification because of the length of time and opportunity costs involved.

2.15 Universities, especially those with more traditional degree structures, admitted that such structures make articulation for HNC students more difficult as there is such a high academic content early on. They consider the level and content of the HNC, as well as the more supported style of learning in the feeder colleges, to be a barrier to entry with advanced standing. Without action on articulation, however,

some universities could foresee the danger of the emergence of a two-tier profession, with a number of students not continuing to full qualification.

2.16 Development of articulation agreements and bridging courses are means of addressing this situation. Such arrangements would support equality of treatment and opportunity for all students and, in the process, help secure the more diverse intake to the profession that is one of the objectives of the new degree. The need for action was acknowledged by universities, and we understand it to be under discussion.

2.17 Notwithstanding the concerns outlined here, most students reported that they feel confident they will 'know a lot', by the end of their course. They feel independent and well-prepared for practice, and appreciate that a base of theory is very useful to support practice. University staff support this view.

Academic and practice integration and focus on practice

2.18 The development space of four years, integrating theory with practice from the first year, and increasing the intensity of practice, has been widely agreed to be a good thing; and universities in particular believe that the aim of producing more reflective and analytical practitioners seems to be being borne out by experience so far.

2.19 Universities consider the cultivation of the ability to analyse, reflect, use literature, research independently and act autonomously to be the defining characteristic of the degree – 'graduateness'. They use a variety of different methods to facilitate this, from the keeping of portfolios and reflective journals to one university which has adopted Problem Based Learning (PBL) to demonstrate and emphasise the link between theory and practice. One university had increased the involvement of user practitioners in course delivery. Another holds 'integration days' where practitioners and students are brought together in groups; and practice teachers working with this university also hold special sessions with groups of students during practice learning periods. As indicated above (at Curriculum), students have mixed experiences with integrating theory and practice, but most acknowledged that it is a case of 'getting the hang of it', which some manage to do more quickly than others.

2.20 There are lingering doubts among some external stakeholders about whether universities are according sufficient weight and importance to practice in the new scheme of things and whether they are not still seeing practice as very much secondary and subordinate to theory. However, universities are confident that their programmes are delivering, while those service providers to whom we spoke were of the opinion that it is still really too early to comment.

Interdisciplinarity

2.21. Service providers expressed the view that the diversity in the degree programme should make for a more rounded worker, and one with a wider perspective. Whilst the Diploma was very much focused within Social Work and on Social Workers, the Degree emphasises the inter-connectedness and dependence of a wide range of professionals, for example, in Health, Housing and Education, and brings students into contact with them, consistent with the way services have to be provided in practice. In this respect, all stakeholder groups have welcomed the

increased requirement for interdisciplinary work which reinforces understanding of the importance of holistic approaches and professional networks. Students in one university commented that it meant they were brought into contact with Education students in the same School and carried out two interdisciplinary assignments in their first year. Similar arrangements pertain in other universities, although students reported their perception that interdisciplinary activities tailed off after the first year. Some commented that they would value the opportunity to shadow practitioners in other professions as well as in Social Work if that could be organised.

User and carer involvement

2.22 A major plank of the Framework is the requirement for more formalised input from users and carers. Presently, users and carers are generally identified through staff relationships, although universities are making efforts to diversify routes to the constituency.

2.23 We found evidence that users and carers are involved in a wide range of activities, for example, in programme review, student assessment, and contributing to selection policies and processes; and they are also involved in teaching. All stakeholder groups consider this an encouraging and positive development, albeit one still with some way to go. Many other stakeholders (i.e. not user and carers) believe firmly that user and carer involvement is not token, and that users and carers believe their input to be valued. Several universities are considering with their user and carer group/s areas into which they might extend their involvement.

2.34 Although enthusiastic and committed, universities acknowledged operating in this area to be hard work – particularly maintaining and refreshing groups of people – and made a plea for some financial support to assist with costs (see Funding, below.)

2.35 Students in several universities feel that the pool of users and carers to which they have been exposed on course is restricted. Some of the employers were also sceptical about how meaningful the arrangements for user and carer involvement are, although, to some extent, they acknowledged that this was the nature of the constituency. Often a user is only a user for a short period then they move on. Certain groups will always be hard to reach and it is difficult to capture the differences of opinion within user groups and between user and carer groups.

Standards

2.36 The bringing together of content/quality and occupational standards in a consolidated statement, the Framework document, has been widely agreed to be a positive move. Universities consider the standards to be ambitious – six standards with 83 learning outcomes as opposed to the previous 27 practice requirements – but agree that the SiSWE are workable. Universities in particular welcomed the consistency with international standards as this gives the qualification a far wider currency. In addition, they believe the standards to be clearly expressed and superior to those in England. Service providers added that, in theory, the specification of degree course content and standards should serve to break down perceptions of a hierarchy of providers, i.e. that a qualification from university A is worth more than one from university B. All students should cover the same ground to the same standards.

2.37 Levelling years of study within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) has been challenging. In line with the SiSWE requirements, and as routinely practised in Scottish higher education, all universities have done this. They have generally put a great deal of work and thought into it, and the resultant levels should serve to indicate – in theory at least – the difference between an honours graduate and DipSW student.

2.38 The move to an all-graduate profession in Scotland confirmed in the 2003 Framework document, and the vision of learners becoming ‘critical reflective practitioners’, demands that there is a step change between previous Social Work qualifications - diploma and degree – and the new degree. External stakeholders question whether this step change will indeed take place and how it can best be measured. With hindsight, they believe that universities should have sought harder to establish common baselines at the outset; as it was, they did not take a holistic view. The upshot is that there are no clear, agreed measures that can point up the differences between the former and current qualifications. Universities could legitimately be working on the same assumptions and expectations as for the old qualifications where this is possible. For areas such as risk management and user and carer involvement, however, where emphasis has been increased, it will not necessarily be possible to do this. Prior expectations might be perfectly valid in the context of the new degree - universities had, after all, been offering Social Work-related degree provision previously - but the point is that these expectations had not been defined and commonly agreed as such. This is a particular issue for practice teachers where they have not yet been fully engaged as stakeholders and will not, in consequence, be fully aware of differences in expectation.

2.39 The group of external stakeholders with concerns in this area, suggest that the matter can be addressed retrospectively by the Council working with the universities to identify key areas, to prioritise the baselining activity to completion, and to agree the means by which it would be done. Then there would be a comprehensive set of measures by which difference, where appropriate, could be shown. One area in particular where the Council could usefully facilitate discussion is as the first cohort of degree students comes to final assessed practice, covering issues such as what is/are the graduate indicator/s at this stage? What is the difference from first assessed practice? What are the degrees of fitness to practice?

2.40 Students at one university in particular thought that standards on the Social Work degree bear no relation to those in the other non-Social Work subjects they had studied: the Social Work standards are far higher. These students had read the SCQF statements in the university’s literature but they do not think they are being consistently applied, and nor have the differences been explained.

2.41 Some service providers were concerned about a weakening of social work values – for example, confidentiality, dignity, respect, integrity, anti-discrimination, anti-racist, anti-oppression - in the SiSWE. The document seeks to integrate them in knowledge and skills but they properly need to be made explicit so that students can carry them forward consciously into their practice as professionals and as teachers of the next generation of social workers. In this regard, *Changing Lives* is considered to be a helpful document in that it restores the aspirational dimension of social work. Some thought that the SiSWE might be amplified in its light (but see Change, below).

Observations

2.42 The new degree has many strengths. We make the following observations on some of the challenges they raise:

- there are tensions between diversity and a perceived need for some common content, coverage and processes, which could usefully be aired and discussed. At the very least, sharing information on their different degree structures and coverage would expose universities to different perspectives which might be beneficial;
- in the context of demonstrating the difference between the previous and current Social Work qualifications, some useful work could be done on baselining standards;
- in the interests of equality of opportunity for students, there is a need for active consideration of bridging and articulation issues; and
- establishing, maintaining and developing networks of user and carer groups requires substantial time and effort.

Part 3: Challenges of the degree

3.1 The study indicated that there were a number of issues. In particular interviewees mentioned:

- **Change**
- **Quality**
- **SSSC process and regulation**
- **Roles, relationships and accountabilities**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Funding**
- **Profile of student intake**

3.2 We have considered these below.

Change

3.3 We have noted earlier the timeline of publication of the Framework document for Social Work education in Scotland in January 2003 and the introduction of the four year honours degree in September 2004. There have been several major and substantial publications since the Framework, notably the report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, *Changing Lives*, in February 2006, the associated implementation plan in June 2006, and the Key Competencies in Child Care and Protection in August 2006. And in September 2006, the submission for the new Practice Learning Qualification was made.

3.4 We understand that the time available for development and approval of the new degree was relatively short by any standards. Examples of the practical consequences cited by interviewees were insufficient time properly to address the known history of difficulty in relation to availability of practice learning opportunities, and more issues, particularly in the later stages of the course, to be addressed in implementation than might otherwise be the case. At the same time as these are being tackled, however, there is also a high level of output and demand from initiatives subsequent to the Framework to be considered. Several interviewees – including universities, employers and others - commented that the community is expected to absorb and respond to major developments in short order and, moreover, on a continuous basis. In the interests of effective delivery, they express a strong desire for a tempering of expectation and time to focus and consolidate. At the very least, they are looking for some coordination and prioritisation of demands from the source agencies: the Scottish Executive, the SSSC, the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education (SIESWE), and the Scottish Practice Learning Project (SPLP).

Observations

3.5 We make the following observations:

- the pace and weight of change in the last four years has been considerable;
- education and service providers alike, while feeling the pressures, have risen to the challenge to date; and

- recognising the need for momentum in any change process, forward movement needs to be balanced by considerations of effective delivery. The Council might usefully seek to exert its influence to ensure an appropriate balance is struck at all times.

Quality

3.6 The SSSC was responsible for approving each of the new Social Work degrees and continues to be responsible for assuring their quality. As outlined earlier, the new degree was established at a time of major change in the general approach to quality assurance in higher education to an enhancement-led model. This has been reflected in the arrangements for assuring the quality of the new Social Work degree, which aim to promote continuous improvement and very deliberately envisage a 'light touch' by the Council. The Council receives reports from universities annually – the annual monitoring return (AMR). These include data on student entry, progression and completion; internal quality assurance reports; copies of External Examiners' reports; information on any complaints or appeals, if appropriate; information on stakeholder involvement in the course; and information on the quality of practice learning opportunities. In the spirit of quality enhancement, the AMR also invites universities to report on a series of themes, currently: access and diversity; teaching and learning in relation to the analysis and management of risk; and academic leadership (meaning innovation and leadership in the design and delivery of programmes). The Council provides written feedback to each university on the content of its report.

3.7 In addition, a series of workshops and seminars on the theme of quality enhancement in Social Work has been held under the Council's auspices, some in conjunction with SIESWE. The Council intends to develop this aspect of its activities.

Effectiveness

3.8 The Council's own Quality Assurance Annual Report concludes that, at the end of the first year of the degree, the AMRs have been 'completed fully and thoughtfully'. However, several interviewees, from different stakeholder groupings, are concerned with the adequacy of these arrangements for purposes of quality assurance, considering that they tend to be about inputs and outputs and do not provide a complete picture of quality. Two universities used the expression 'tick box' to describe the current processes, although one was referring to the Council's requirements of universities (in that it does not, for example, require or involve reflection on the student or user experience), whilst the other was referring to the Council's response to institutional reports (whereby Learning and Development Advisers simply repeat back in a letter what was said to them, giving the appearance of a back-covering exercise).

3.9 Whilst acknowledging the need to avoid duplication of process, or of imposing unnecessary burdens on universities, some stakeholders (outwith universities) have also questioned whether, given the weight and sensitivity of the areas for which the Council is responsible, the fact that the process is predicated on self-assessment achieves an appropriate balance between self-regulation and externality. Although universities are confident that the external examiner system delivers, other stakeholders consider this to be a small, closed world, especially now that universities are wholly responsible for the appointment of external examiners. One

service provider suggested that, in the interests of promoting confidence, it might be worthwhile considering involving the Learning Networks in external appointments.

3.10 All of the universities involved are confident that they are delivering a high quality degree and on the outcomes agreed. They are happy to prove this, although they would prefer the least onerous mechanisms by which to do so. Several stakeholders questioned the ability, and even the legitimacy, of the Council to intervene if necessary to resolve any issues.

3.11 Several universities acknowledge tensions in the Council's role: part inspector/regulator and part facilitator of development. This hybrid role raises the classic question of how open those being inspected are likely to be prepared to be with their inspector about problem areas and matters with which they are having difficulty. This in turn influences how universities respond to Council-led initiatives, and potentially works against the enhancement-led approach which higher education in Scotland is taking to quality assurance matters.

3.12 One service provider commented that universities' disposition to competitiveness does not augur well for sharing good practice, and that they might well want to keep successful/productive approaches to themselves. Universities are particularly sensitive about how good practice is identified and promulgated. Interviewees commented that, although well-intentioned, even citing good practice in the SSSC Newsletter could carry the implication that practice elsewhere was not so good; they added that there had been workshops run by 'experts' which smacked of teaching grandma to suck eggs.

3.13 The Council's Annual Quality Assurance Report indicates that workshop attendance is voluntary and that events are not always fully subscribed. Nonetheless, both universities and other stakeholder groups agreed that the most positive approach to quality issues would probably be structured engagements for staff to exchange views and experience. Such engagements could also be used to explain processes. Without a clearly understood and incontrovertible role in quality, however service providers in particular considered that the SSSC could well have difficulty making inroads in the area of quality.

3.14 Several universities commented favourably on the link between Council Learning Adviser and university the Council had operated in the past. The Learning Adviser with a link to a specific university had been a helpful resource, a contact on an ongoing basis who acted as a monitor and a guide. Universities consider it helpful to have a contact in the Council who is familiar with the particularities of a university and its course provision and can provide information and advice in both directions.

3.15 As the key stakeholders in the process, students themselves are clearly a major resource in terms of ascertaining whether or not the new degree is delivering. Indeed, the degree programme is designed to facilitate their transformation into self-critical and reflective practitioners. University staff reported a variety of mechanisms designed to obtain student views and involve them in the process, including regular open meetings and surveys. These appear largely to be standard feedback mechanisms which apply to all students on all courses, however. Student groups reported a less rosy picture. There is low or vague awareness of formal arrangements, and a view that students have been repeating the same issues for some years without any change resulting. Student groups had a lot to say about the degree and this might be captured to good effect.

3.16 At its inception, the SIESWE was intended as a mechanism through which providers shared issues and practice in matters relating to the delivery of Social Work education and, in particular, on the development of the new degree, supporting projects in areas that could be worked on by universities in collaboration. The Institute initially focused on three projects which aimed to support the development of the new degree. In the event, however, the degree had to be developed very rapidly, in advance of any outputs from the projects. With the degree now underway, the Institute has moved beyond this phase. It sees its current role as to work with, and on behalf of, universities to influence Social Work education in its broadest sense and to set up initiatives with agencies and the Scottish Executive. The Institute will be reconstituted in December 2006 to reflect a new role in serving a wider range of stakeholder groups and as a research and development agency. A key part of its remit will be to assist universities with implementing the recommendations contained within *Changing Lives*.

Efficiency

3.17 Like all professional programmes, the Social Work degree has to meet academic requirements and those of the professional and regulatory bodies. There are mixed messages from universities about how efficiently this works. Three reported finding this demanding, saying that, as the processes are not dovetailed, a lot of effort and resources go into meeting the different quality assurance requirements of the bodies concerned. There were strong pleas for a single reporting system. Others reported that they experience few problems with dovetailing processes. We surmise that they might have something to learn from each other in this regard.

Observations

3.18 We make the following observations:

- There are concerns among all stakeholder groups about whether existing quality assurance processes are adequate to provide reassurance that the new degree is delivering against the SiSWE;
- students appear currently to be somewhat marginalised in discussions about the new degree. They are an important stakeholder group and also a key resource with valuable observations to input to the process, if effective ways can be found to capture these. Universities seem to be applying standard feedback arrangements and processes. It may be that they could consider ways of allying the development of skills in critical and reflective practice to eliciting student views;
- universities consider the link between the Council Learning Adviser and university to have been a helpful resource and there is support for its reinstatement;
- Council-promoted workshops and seminars have been generally welcomed and there is an appetite for more to share practice and ideas. However, there is a need to make clearer what is voluntary and what is mandatory. In particular, the Council may need to make clearer that the enhancement-led approach to quality assurance is a package of measures and activities and

does not stop with the AMR. A commitment to participation in at least a core number of the workshops and seminars it organises, sponsors or endorses might be expected of universities;

- there is some debate about whether the Institute or the Council should be the focus for encouraging developmental activities; and
- to make real progress on quality issues, the Council will need to specify in detail the responsibilities in the area of quality accorded to it by the 2001 Act. (See Context above)

SSSC process and regulation

3.19 The SSSC has produced a suite of procedures and regulations to support and control the new degree from its perspective. This work had, perforce, to be completed in advance of the introduction of the new degree, and also in a correspondingly short timescale.

3.20 A number of universities commented that, as they encounter situations and cases in practice, they need elaboration towards greater clarity in a number of aspects of process and regulation. Chief amongst the immediate concerns are:

- course approvals – a definition of ‘material change’ for purposes of report - what does and does not constitute a ‘material change’, a major as opposed to a minor modification, in course provision;
- registration – definitions to guide decisions on reporting of misconduct - what might reasonably be handled through institutional procedures as opposed to formal report; and
- diversity – guidance on the extent to which the special requirements of students with disabilities could be accommodated without calling qualification to practice into question.

Observations

3.21 We make the following observations:

- operating experience will inevitably test the adequacy of existing procedural and regulatory requirements; and
- clarification on the basis of any relevant existing known or anticipated cases is required.

Roles, relationships and accountabilities

High level

3.22 A number of bodies are involved in directing, steering and otherwise contributing to or influencing developments in Social Work education and training in Scotland. The principals are the Scottish Executive, the SSSC, the SIESWE, the Learning Networks, and the SPLP. Each has its own view of its particular role and function and can point to a published statement of purpose. Within the community at

large, however, among education and service providers alike, there was admission to a degree of confusion about the relationship between these bodies and the nature and scope of their respective responsibilities and accountabilities.

3.23 A number of universities indicated that, on the information and data front, they are routinely approached for material variously by the SSSC, SIESWE and SPLP. In some cases, they have already provided the same or similar information to another body. Seldom was there any feedback after information or data had been provided. Perhaps more worryingly, there is apparent confusion on the policy/regulatory front. One university cited correspondence from SIESWE that seemed to suggest approved course provision needed to be modified to take account of the then recently published Key Competencies in Child Care and Protection. This led to the speculation that there might be 'soft' regulation by the Institute alongside 'hard' regulation by the SSSC.

3.24 As outlined above (at Quality), several universities recognised a tension within SSSC's role: part inspector/regulator and part facilitator of development. This duality, they felt, could influence their response to Council led initiatives: they would be more guarded about particular issues or problems if there were any possibility that their competence might be called into question.

Delivery level

3.25 We explored perceptions of relationships at the level of delivery, i.e. between service providers and education providers and between education providers.

3.26 Education providers are broadly content with their relationships with each other. They work together on specific projects, those run by SIESWE for example, and whereas the structural change represented by the new degree is thought to have lessened collaboration in the west of Scotland - the DipSW had been common to all four providers there, with modules written and delivered in partnership - elements of the pre-existing networks remain, with Heads of Schools meeting regularly and similar meetings between Course Leaders.

3.27 Notwithstanding broad satisfaction with current relationships, however, universities did indicate that they would welcome structured opportunities to exchange views and experience (see Quality, above).

3.28 Experience of relationships between education providers from the perspective of service providers who deal across a range is that there is scope for improvement in communication between them, particularly in relation to coordination of arrangements for practice learning. In this context, interviewees think that the Learning Networks will be particularly helpful forums.

3.29 As far as education/service provider relationships are concerned, there appears to be general satisfaction on both sides. Significantly, from the point of view of two service providers, academics are more inclined to come out of their universities for meetings. Service providers are being effectively involved in selection and reporting on students, and also in assessment and curriculum development. The appointment of practice learning managers or coordinators is considered to be a positive and constructive development in facilitating relationships.

Observations

3.30 We make the following observations:

- lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities at the high level is both time-wasting and counter-productive;
- the Council might usefully make a clear statement first, of its own role, paying particular attention to that in quality – assurance and enhancement; and second, of its role in relation to that of other bodies: the Scottish Executive, SIESWE, Learning Networks and SPLP;
- while generally content with their current level of, and opportunities for, interaction, universities would still value forums to share experience and approaches;
- from the service providers' perspective, there is scope for education providers to communicate with each other more effectively on practical issues concerning practice learning; and
- there seems to be evidence of a developing and strengthening relationship between service and education providers in the context of degree level provision.

Infrastructure

3.31 We are interpreting infrastructure in this context as resources/provisions that provide underpinning for the delivery of the professional practice elements of the degree, specifically, the Learning Networks, practice learning and practice teaching.

Learning Networks

3.32 The Learning Networks are area-based partnership bodies with membership drawn from the range of stakeholder constituencies - social services employers in the public, voluntary and private sectors and education providers. Their remit is wide, encompassing support for: practice learning; workforce planning and development; social services employee development; and registration of staff.

3.33 Agreement to proceed with the establishment of the Learning Networks was reached at the start of 2006. From our discussions, however, our understanding is that they are not all constituted or operational to the same degree at this juncture. One external stakeholder commented in particular on the adverse impact of the stasis that had ensued in the transition from the previous arrangements to the Learning Networks. The absence of forums with clear structures facilitating relationships between education and service providers has not served to promote general understanding of the new degree – its purpose, objectives or characteristics. Critically, practice teachers in particular are not as well informed about the new qualification as they might otherwise have been.

3.34 Our discussions revealed enthusiasm for the principle of the Learning Networks but concerns on a number of operational matters. Positively, Learning Networks are seen as valuable forums for facilitating constructive dialogue and action

on practical matters such as, for example, those connected with practice learning, and as potentially powerful agents for helping to forge new partnerships in a range of areas. Adequately resourced, one service provider commented, they could be active to good effect in matters such as facilitating articulation between levels of qualification and supporting practice teaching.

3.35 Concerns focused on the governance and accountability of Networks, and on the extent of their engagement with their remit. A number of service providers said they would welcome clarification in particular in respect of material matters of constitution, accountability and conduct – the balance between categories of membership; lines of report (to whom were Learning Networks responsible and/or accountable and for what); and how they should address conflicts of interest. Accepting that Learning Networks were still at an early stage of evolution, one service provider also expressed some concern that not all aspects of the remit were being addressed. The current focus on the new degree and associated issues was distracting attention from other equally, if not more, pressing issues relating to workforce development and registration.

Practice learning

3.36 We identified issues relating to two aspects of practice learning: supply of practice learning opportunities and supervision.

Supply

3.37 The number of practice learning days in the new degree is 200, an increase of 40 on the DipSW. We have already noted the view that the timescale for the introduction of the new degree was not such as to allow for address of known difficulties in the supply of practice learning opportunities, even according to the previous requirements.

3.38 We found a mixed picture of experience to date. One university in particular considered itself to be on top of the situation, having successfully placed over 400 students last year. It had a service level agreement (SLA) with each provider and had used the new funding arrangements for practice learning to advantage, making greater use of the full-time practice teacher and linked supervisor approach to supervision. Others saw themselves facing severe problems. They had rescheduled periods of practice learning as far as possible last year to ease problems but were aware that, in doing so, they were effectively creating a bow wave of demand for this year.

3.39 The issue appears to be partly one of demand generated by clusters of universities in a particular region coupled with the increased requirements for practice learning, and, in so far as placements in the statutory sector are concerned, partly one of the policy position taken by Local Authorities (LAs). Some will offer opportunities only where direct supervision by a qualified practice teacher is available. Asked to commit to numbers of placements through an SLA, LAs will inevitably be prepared formally to sign up only to minimum numbers for fear of over-committing. In practice, they might well be able to go further, but the upshot is a shortfall on paper.

3.40 As far as the voluntary sector is concerned, agencies value students – social workers are seen as an essential part of the skill mix in teams - and are generally keen to accept them. As bodies facilitating practice learning opportunities, however, Practice Teaching Units feel themselves to be under pressure because of proposed

changes in their funding. This could have long term implications for practice teaching in the voluntary sector.

Supervision

3.41 We understand that practice learning is envisaged as a partnership between education and service providers. Partnership has many expressions, however, and is being interpreted in a number of ways. In some instances, it appears to take the form of drawing sharp boundaries and establishing clear domains. Some universities have taken a conscious decision to step back from practice learning. The degree of disengagement varies but, at the extreme, some students report that they feel entirely on their own in periods of practice learning, their ultimate progress effectively dependent upon the unmoderated view of one person - the practice teacher.

3.42 For their part, practice teachers/supervisors are not universally clear on the requirements of the new degree in general, or of those of particular courses, which vary widely from university to university. Practice teachers generally bemoan the lack of consistency, which is hard to manage. Some students perceived that practice teachers lack central guidance from the university which has a knock-on effect for students in that they are treated differently and inconsistently according to the preferences of the individual practice teacher. At least one university is investing time to brief the practice teachers working with its students, but there are indications that this may not be universal. This university was not alone in suggesting that the Council might usefully engage with practice teachers as much as with universities and employers in relation to SiSWE.

Practice teaching

3.43 There was consensus amongst stakeholders that the ability to meet the increased practice learning requirement of the new degree is critically dependent upon sufficient numbers of staff qualified to undertake assessment. As matters stand at present, we understand there will be a hiatus in provision for practice teaching qualifications until at least the spring of 2007. In consequence, the existing pool of teachers is all that there is.

3.44 Some service providers voiced concern that lack of an initial qualification is likely to mean loss of potential teachers as staff choose to embark on other types of professional development in the meantime. (Some universities suggested that the new qualification might not in any event be attractive as professional development). A number of service providers also voiced concern that the absence of refresher/updating provision for existing qualified non-practising teachers let slip an opportunity for achieving a rapid increase in the practice teacher workforce and hence in the number of placement opportunities. An additional concern about the lack of investment in briefing existing teachers on the SiSWE and the new degree is set out above, under Supervision above.

3.45 Several universities also expressed their apprehension at the agreement concluded by the West of Scotland Learning Network with the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) to develop and accredit the new Practice Teacher Qualification (PTQ) to level 3. Their concern focused on the likely resultant disjuncture between teacher and student perspectives since the philosophy and approach of the SQA was so different from that of universities. Another interviewee pointed up the opportunity presented to universities to fuse Social Work theory and practice by taking on the PTQ at levels 3 and 4. If they were to do this, they would also be helpfully reinforcing

in their own universities the direct link between numbers of teachers and numbers of practice learning opportunities.

Observations

3.46 We make the following observations:

- there are issues in all aspects of critical infrastructure. Intervention by the Council would seem to be warranted; and
- target areas should include:
 - direction and guidance to Learning Networks on matters of governance and accountability. (see also Roles and Responsibilities above);
 - briefing of practice teachers on the SiSWE, and review of arrangements for supervision of practice learning with a view to establishing common understandings of partnership in this context;
 - managing the demand for practice learning opportunities; and
 - establishing a clear path to making routes to practice teaching qualification available at the earliest opportunity.

Funding

3.47 The issue of funding arose predominantly in the context of user and carer involvement, a key feature of the new degree. Numerous interviewees pointed to the ongoing costs of engaging with users and carers and to the fact that in Scotland, unlike in England and Wales, funding had not been made available specifically to support these costs. In consequence, current arrangements in Scotland look to be unsustainable.

3.48 For completeness, we note that the voluntary sector has a number of concerns about funding in its area. They include proposed changes to funding arrangements for the Practice Teaching Units and loss of funding that had previously been available through the SSSC to support sector employees to qualification to practice. These and other concerns will, however, have been voiced in other arenas.

Observations

3.49 We make the following observation:

- user and carer involvement is a major plank of the new qualification. It seems anomalous that funding to support it should be available in England and Wales but not in Scotland.

Profile of student intake

3.50 Diversity of intake is one of the objectives of the new degree. Interviewees' perceptions of the student profile were generally consistent with the picture that emerged from the Council's 2004/05 quality assurance report: students are

predominantly white, British and female. Some universities are conscious of an increase in the numbers of younger entrants - one university has observed a drop in the average age of its intake from 33 to 27 – and attributed this variously to the possibility now of entry direct from school; their own efforts where they were targeting younger applicants; successful national advertising campaigns for social work as a profession; and the fact that the degree course now appears in the prospectus alongside those in other subjects.

3.51 There was general consensus that the majority of students are from middle class backgrounds, although recruitment mainly in areas of social disadvantage has given individual universities a higher component of working class students. One service provider perceived fewer working class entrants and speculated that this might be due as much to poverty of aspiration as to concerns about the costs of study. The same interviewee commented that the situation was entirely different in the Fast Track route to qualification where there was greater diversity in all respects – gender, ethnicity, class, age. This view was echoed by an education provider. Fast Track entrants had gained confidence in their abilities through prior study; moreover, they were persuaded of the value of investing in their education and development, both on a personal level and on that of financial reward.

3.52 There was consensus again that attracting men and people from ethnic minorities to Social Work was problematic. One service provider commented that positive action would be needed to achieve change in these areas; one university added that, even then, change in the short term would be unlikely.

Observations

3.53 We make the following observations:

- it is early days to point to significant shifts in the profile of entrants to the degree, although there is evidence of a drop in the average age of entry;
- positive action may be necessary longer term in respect of attracting men and ethnic minority candidates; and
- the Fast Track route does appear to be attracting a more diverse group of entrants.

Part 4: Recommendations

4.1 On the basis of the observations made throughout the report, we offer the following recommendations to the Council:

1 **Pace of change**

The Council seeks to exert its influence to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck at all times between the need to move forward on issues and the need to ensure effective delivery.

2 **Roles and relationships**

To clarify counterproductive confusion about roles, relationships and lines of accountability, the Council makes a clear statement first of its own role, paying particular attention to that in quality, both assurance and enhancement; and second of its role in relation to other bodies: the Scottish Executive, Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work, Learning Networks; and the Scottish Practice Learning Project.

3 **Process and regulation**

To remove areas of uncertainty in existing procedures and regulations, the Council provides clarification on the basis of any relevant existing known or anticipated cases.

4 **Infrastructure**

To address key issues relating to practice learning and teaching, the Council:

- ensures that practice teachers are fully briefed about the Standards in Social Work Education;
- facilitates a review of supervision arrangements for practice learning, specifically of the relationships between all parties involved – students, practice learning providers and universities, with a view to ensuring common understandings of partnership in this context;
- sustains action to support the effective management of demand for practice learning opportunities; and
- establishes a clear path for bringing practice teaching qualifications on stream at the earliest opportunity.

5 **Quality**

To address concerns in this critical area, the Council:

- sets out in detail its role in quality assurance and enhancement;
- considers, in consultation with stakeholders, arrangements for quality assurance currently in place with a view to ensuring they provide sufficient reassurance in relation to delivery against the Standards in Social Work Education;
- develops, in consultation with stakeholders, a programme for exchange of experience and approaches on topics of common interest and concern, this to cover both practice and procedure; and
- specifically, considers
 - with universities and students, means of systematically capturing and considering students' views on their experience; and

- with universities and user and carer groups, means of supporting the wider and deeper engagement of these groups.

6 **Articulation to the new degree**

In the interests of supporting equality of opportunity and the diversity of intake that is one of the objectives of the new degree, the Council gives urgent consideration to achieving agreement of ways of progressing the development of articulation agreements and bridging courses.

7 **Standards and levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework**

To demonstrate the difference between the previous (diploma and undergraduate degree) and current corresponding Social Work qualifications, and make a clear statement of expectations within the new degree with a particular view to considering, and if necessary removing, inconsistencies in the application of standards, especially in the context of practice learning, the Council should indicate that each course should be able to show, and should also take steps to explain as appropriate, its levelling within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.

8 **Funding**

Recognising the centrality of user and carer involvement to the new degree, the Council considers taking forward the issue of specific funding for their engagement.

ANNEX A: INTERVIEWEES

Education Providers

University of Dundee: Dr Brenda Gillies, Head of School of Social Work; Brian Leslie, Course Director

University of Edinburgh: Professor Vivienne Cree, Head of Social Work; Richard Perry, former Head of Social Work; Dr Joe Francis, Programme Director for Final Year BSc; Ruth Forbes, Programme Director Learning for Practice

Glasgow Caledonian University: Dr Tim Kelly, Head of School of Social Work

Glasgow School of Social Work: Professor Andrew Kendrick, Head of School; Dr Roisin McGoldrick, MA Course Director; Dr John Campbell, Depute Head of Learning and Teaching

OU in Scotland: Tina Miller, Head of Faculty of Health and Social Care

University of Paisley: Janet Fabb, Social Work Course Leader

Robert Gordon University: Professor Joyce Lishman, Head of School of Applied Social Work; Terry McLean, Course Leader, FT Degree in Social Work; Neil Munro, Course Leader, DL Degree in Social Work (Residential Child Care)

University of Stirling: Professor Cherry Rowlings, Head of School of Social Work

Student Groups

University of Dundee

University of Edinburgh

Glasgow Caledonian University

Glasgow School of Social Work

University of Stirling

Service Providers

Anna Fowlie, Policy Officer, Children and Young People, Council of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

Marianne Hughes, Practice Learning Resource Manager, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOG) Practice Teaching Unit

John Kerr, Training Manager, Edinburgh Council Social Services

Tony Mackie, Training Manager, Glasgow City Council

Janet Miller, Director, Scottish Social Service Voluntary Sector Workforce Unit

External stakeholders

Mike Kirby, Chair, SSSC Learning & Development Committee

Karen Lax, Team Leader, Education Training and Workforce Team, Social Work Services Policy Division, Scottish Executive

Pam Linton, Chair, Tayforth Learning Network

Linda Walker, Institute Lead (Student and Practitioner Development), Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work (SIESWE)

ANNEX B: REFERENCES

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ANNEX C: GLOSSARY

AMR	Annual Monitoring Return
CCETSW	Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
DipSW	Diploma in Social Work
HNC	Higher National Certificate
LA	Local Authority
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PTQ	Practice Teacher Qualification
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework
Service providers	Employers, e.g. Local Authorities; Voluntary Sector Agencies; Practice Learning Agencies for the Voluntary Sector
SIESWE	Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education
SiSWE	Standards in Social Work Education
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPLP	Scottish Practice Learning Project
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council