Evaluation Study for the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

Readiness for Practice of Newly Qualified Social Workers

Authors
Scott Grant, Lynn Sheridan and Stephen A. Webb
Glasgow Caledonian University

August 2014

Contents

1. Executive Summary

Report Background

The first year after qualifying is widely recognised as being extremely important for social workers. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) commissioned Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), along with the Centre of Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS), to carry out an evaluation of the readiness for practice and the experiences of support and learning of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) during their first period of employment.

The social work profession in Scotland faces a challenging agenda for change with, and including: the introduction of self-directed support (Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013); the integration of health and social care (Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act); changes to the children's hearing system following (Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011); the impact of full GIRFEC roll-out following the implementation of Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014; and the anticipated changes to the provision of criminal justice social work following the Scottish Government's decision to opt for a fourth option in its recent consultation on the future of community justice in Scotland.

To support the workforce in achieving the relevant knowledge and skills required to practice effectively in the contemporary field of social work, the SSSC is developing a national learning strategy. Received as an innovative and progressive approach to professional learning, it is expected to encompass advanced learning through robust qualifying programmes and national post-qualifying pathways.

This national evaluation of NQSWs is only the second study of its kind to be carried out in Scotland. The only previous evaluative study focusing on NQSWs readiness for practice was conducted in 1996 when the social work landscape was very different (see Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996). Indeed, the pace of change from 1996 in terms of legislation, service provision and workforce development has been significant in its scope.

This study aimed to explore the experiences of new entrants into the social work profession with a focus on their first year in work. Out of a total population of 572 NQSWs (with 17 non-returns – leaving a final figure of 555) in Scotland, the study collected responses from 205, which indicates a response rate of 36.7% (In 1996, Marsh and Triseliotis achieved a total sample size of 130 in Scotland). Nevertheless, considering that the survey component of this evaluation is relatively long (61 questions, many of them requiring qualitative response), the possible study fatigue due to over-surveying in the last year of University for some of the respondents might be a significant factor in decisions made to participate or otherwise; however, a response rate of more than a third is positive when compared to average response rates for similar type surveys (Baruch & Holtom, 2008).

The study reported here is a mixed-methods investigation into 'Readiness for Practice of Newly Qualified Social Workers' in Scotland using survey and focus group techniques. The evaluation had four objectives:

- Mapping the experiences of newly-qualified social workers entering first employment from degree training programmes.
- Identifying the components that impact on their continuing professional development in the workplace.
- Examining the perspectives of recently qualified social workers related to their preparedness to enter professional social work practice.
- Investigating NQSW experiences of post-qualifying support and learning.

The survey report (Section 6) is based on findings from the project's online survey questionnaire (completed by 205 Scottish participants defined as Newly Qualified Social Workers), which included 5 themes focusing on:

- Qualifying training and background
- Choosing and entering your first employment
- Induction and support in your first employment
- Initial professional development
- Issues for continuing professional development

- Monitoring data

Open-ended questions relating to each of these five themes were also included in the survey component, generating considerable qualitative data.

1.1 Summary of Key Findings

Qualifying training and background

- The majority of NQSW respondents had some level of work experience within a care setting (86%) before starting their professional social work training. This finding is common across all studies reviewed.

Choosing and entering first employment

- There is currently no recognised scheme of probation for NQSWs in Scotland. Whilst around 54% of NQSWs report to having protection from particular areas of work e.g. child and adult protection, a proportion of the NQSW workforce reported having no caseload protection (around 37%) - with 22% unsure if their workload was actually protected or not.

- 6% of NQSW respondents perceived that knowledge about child development is 'helpful' within their first year of employment, whilst knowledge about legislation (25.6%) and procedures (20.9%) are seen as more useful.

- NQSW respondents conveyed high levels of confidence across all categories against the National Occupational Standards categories for social work. NQSWs felt most confident around areas of inter-professional working and accountability. They felt least confident in aspects of managing resources and recommending outcome-oriented action.

Induction and support in your first employment

- Almost all respondents felt they benefitted greatly from good supervision when it was provided and where it dealt with more than the day to day case management issues and felt that shadowing more senior colleagues was hugely beneficial to the development of skills needed by professional social workers.

- Inconsistencies in the frequency and quality of both supervision and induction were found across the sample for equal proportions of NQSWs. Some received very good induction arrangements, followed by consistent and good quality supervision; others received induction packs, and were required to seek their own initial learning opportunities. The majority of NQSWs did feel that supervision was generally of very good quality and adequate for their needs; however, qualitative evidence would appear to suggest that a disproportionate emphasis is placed on caseload management during typical supervision sessions.

Initial professional development

- Formal supervision is recognised by NQSWs as being a very important source of support (86.7%) in relation to professional development; however, the research findings indicate that NQSWs also value more informal sources such as colleagues (88.6%), other professionals (98%) and friends & family (85.3%).

- Indications from focus group data suggests that line managers do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) requirements.

Issues for continuing professional development

- The majority of NQSW respondents felt that university had 'adequately' prepared them for the realities of frontline practice; however only a third said it provided 'good' preparation, leaving 19.3% to say that higher education institutions (HEI's) were poor in this regard. Respondents felt that qualifying courses had only adequately prepared them for making difficult or complex judgements.

- Most respondents felt well prepared to undertake report writing but accepted that working in the statutory sector was the best way to improve their skills. 71% of NQSW respondents felt that universities prepared them for report writing skills and undertaking assessments.

- A significant proportion of respondents felt adequately prepared for delivering outcomes based services with a personalised care approach and in particular felt they had an advantage over more experienced social workers in an understanding of this approach. Around 60% feeling ‘adequately’ prepared, with 28% of NQSW respondents claiming that universities prepared them well for delivering outcome-based services

- 24% of NQSW respondents felt that universities prepared them well for understanding the integration of health and social care, with around 45% suggesting that university preparation was ‘adequate’. Almost a third (30%) reported that HEI's had not provided good preparation for this area of practice. Nevertheless, a slight contrast emerged in focus group data with a proportion of NQSW respondents suggesting that university *had* prepared them well in both integration and personalisation agendas.

- A high proportion of NQSW respondents (68%) felt they were "research-minded" when exiting the social work degree programme. Focus group data was particularly affirming of the currency of research-minded practice – with most NQSW respondents able to recognise the benefit of articulating this signature skill set.

- The majority of NQSW respondents value the process of continuing professional development to help fill knowledge and skill gaps.

- Most respondents (56%) felt the qualifying course had prepared them to resilient and confident practitioners.

Additional highlights

- The key findings suggest that to focus singularly on the curricula content of qualifying degree programmes to improve new social workers' readiness to practice is simplistic. Aspects of the working environment also need attention and readiness for practice should be considered holistically alongside several pathways of professional development.

2. Introduction

This national evaluation study focuses on newly-qualified social worker (NQSW) preparedness or readiness for professional social work practice in Scotland. The study was commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) as part of their wider review of social work education and development of national learning strategies across Scotland. These developments are in part a response to wider concerns across the UK about a perceived lack of support, professional development and guidance offered to NQSWs during the first stage of their career (Moriarty *et al.,* 2011). From the outset we would caution that research focusing on how 'prepared' or 'ready' a NQSW might be for professional practice, or research exploring the lived experience of NQSWs in their first year, is crucially lacking in Scotland (*pace* Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996). Initial sweeps of literature with strict inclusion criteria produced few results (for example: we found no studies of NQSW 'preparedness' or 'readiness' in Scotland when searching from the inception of the new degree programme in 2003). A decision was taken to expand the date parameter to include research done between 1996 to 2014 (the former being the date of the first major study of NQSW 'preparedness' in the UK, and one that incorporated the last examination of Scottish practitioners – see Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996). When reviewing the literature, a significant gap was identified in practical, theoretical and operational understandings of NQSW experiences in Scotland. The evaluation study is therefore both timely and significant in terms of its relevance for the changing climate of social work policy and practice.

3. Systematic Review of Literature

> *Not all newly-qualified social workers are emerging from degree courses with the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise'*
>
> (Munro, 2011: para. 8.18)

> *'Making the transition from student to practitioner and having to make complex and challenging decisions on your own, is never easy. Employers have a vital role in helping people to make that transition.'*
>
> ('*Changing Lives*', 2006, Part 10: para.8)

3.1 Introduction to Literature Review

This systematic review of the literature will focus on what is known about newly-qualified social worker (NQSW) preparedness or readiness for professional social work practice. It is composed to assist the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in their review of social work education and development of national learning strategies across Scotland.

There is substantially more grey literature (e.g. Government reports; regulator reports; privately-commissioned reports) on "continuous learning" than any robust examples of published research on NQSWs in Scotland. A hiatus of some 18 years is noted from the last significant study of NQSWs in Scotland as part of a national UK project led by Peter Marsh and John Triseliotis in 1996. It follows that our review of literature has extended its reach beyond the border of Scotland to consider results from a series of relevant studies conducted within England and Wales. Throughout this review, we have been cognisant of divergence in nomenclature, legislation, policy and education between Scotland and elsewhere. We have been careful to flag explicit differences between respective systems and we have expressed caution about making any claims to representativeness or generalisability from the studies we have included. This indeed led, in part, to our decision to present this section in a systematic way – allowing the reader to digest each study without a clouded synthesis that would not, in essence, have direct application to a Scottish context. Any inference must take account of the socio-political, as well as the socio-legal

context in which NQSWs operate. The literature review sought to establish what is known about:

- The experiences of NQSWs in first year of practice
- The experiences of NQSWs in Scotland
- NQSW 'preparedness' or 'readiness' for practice
- Scottish social work graduate transitions into professional employment
- The impact and effect of social work degree programmes
- Support and CPD opportunities made available to NQSWs

3.2 Search methods and inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria

- Studies that focus on 'readiness' or 'preparedness' for social work practice.
- Studies that explore the experiences of NQSWs within the first few years of qualification.
- Studies that explore the impact of social work education on NQSWs.
- Studies composed in the English language.
- Studies conducted in the United Kingdom.

Exclusion Criteria

Given the overall lack of research on NQSWs in general, our exclusion criteria was somewhat limited; however, we excluded general non-empirical articles that reported no data, and studies that reported solely on social work students (as these tend to provide no repeat-measure comparison with NQSW cohorts). Nevertheless, for background and context, we do refer to these exclusions throughout the body of this review – including some reference to grey literature.

Search Methods

The following electronic archives were searched: Social Care Online, Web of Science, IBSS, SOSIG, SSRN and Google Scholar. Primary search terms included: 'newly qualified social worker' AND 'preparedness' OR 'readiness'. Secondary search terms included: 'new social worker' AND 'social work graduate' AND 'transitions to practice'. Using citation tracking, we conducted manual searches of the most relevant and frequently cited journals: *Social Work Education, Journal of Social Work Education, British Journal of Social Work,* and *Research on Social Work Practice*. This enabled us to search advanced online-access articles. All abstracts were screened against our inclusion criteria and full texts were obtained if eligibility was met. All papers were assessed for quality and relevance before inclusion.

3.3 Literature Search Results

Three studies were identified that focused on practitioners who qualified with a Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) or Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW): Marsh and Triseliotis (1996); Pithouse and Scourfield (2002); Lyons and Manion (2004). Five studies were identified on practitioners who qualified with the new social work degree (but also including smaller numbers of DipSW and Masters graduates): Galvani and Forrester, (2008); Bates *et al.* (2010); Jack and Donnellan (2010); Sharpe *et al*. (2011); Carpenter *et al*. (2013).

The only study that specifically explored the experiences of NQSWs in Scotland however, was Marsh and Triseliotis (1996). Despite the vintage of this study, we decided to include it for two reasons: firstly, it is the only study of NQSWs that incorporates the views of criminal justice staff – important as the other studies in this review focus exclusively on England and Wales where all equivalent criminal justice provision is covered by a separate agency (National Probation Service); secondly, this study had a national focus on social work provision across the UK where areas of convergence and divergence between Scotland and England / Wales were noted. Limitations have been acknowledged in our summary of this research.

Study 1: **Marsh and Triseliotis (1996)**

Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) conducted what was ostensibly the first major study exploring the effectiveness of social work education, and the 'readiness' or 'preparedness' of newly-qualified social workers (and probation officers) for practice in the UK. A sample of 714 DipSW and CQSW graduates (CQSW: n=329; DipSW: n=385) from Scottish, English and Welsh sites completed a mail questionnaire shortly after qualification in 1992 and 1993 (response rate: 55%). This process was repeated again with a work-based questionnaire after a year in practice (response rate: 70%). 60 semi-structured interviews were conducted with NQSWs in 1994. 80% of this sample had some experience of working in social work / social care roles before entering education. 69 social work managers completed a questionnaire (response rate: 36%) and 31 semi-structured interviews were conducted with this particular group.

The main findings of this study suggest that the majority of students (85% of n=714) felt 'quite well' or 'very well' prepared for practice. However, they found that just over half agreed that their CQSW or DipSW was a good preparation for practice. A high figure of 26% were 'unsure' about how well their course prepared them. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that NQSWs seemed to value their prior experience of social work practice *before* entering formal education, and that their past experience – coupled with subsequent applied learning – somehow made them feel more prepared for practice. In their sample, four out of five participants had worked in some aspect of social services before undertaking the CQSW or DipSW. Around 2/3rds of social work managers felt that NQSWs were 'mainly' or 'highly' prepared, with only one-fifth rating NQSWs as 'poorly' prepared.

In relation to education, 74% of NQSWs felt that lectures were 'effective' or 'very effective' – followed by 70% for workshops and 66% for role plays. Group tutorials were found to be the least effective teaching method (47%). Interestingly, 79.4% of respondents viewed peer-based learning as being an important part of social work education. After a year in employment, 80% of respondents said they 'often' or 'sometimes' applied theories taught on social work courses. Interestingly, those working in the English probation services and those who trained in Scotland

were more likely to apply theory in practice (probation: p<.05; Scotland: p<.001). In both cases, it would appear that English probation staff and Scottish criminal justice social workers were more likely to apply theory in practice – perhaps an artefact of the structured nature of work with offenders in the mid-1990s.

In terms of specific facets of instrumental and process elements in the social work role, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) isolated 36 social work tasks from an extensive literature review – informed by an earlier pilot study. Twenty-four tasks had less that 60% of NQSWs reporting to be 'well' or 'adequately prepared'; nine tasks had less than 40% of NQSWs reporting the same. NQSWs felt most prepared for: *making assessments* (76.3%), *self-evaluation* (73.8%), *writing assessments* (68.3%) and *home visits* (67.8%). NQSWs felt least prepared for: *small care budgets / finance* (8.4% felt 'prepared'), *working with the private sector* (24%), *using information technology* (28.5%) and *coping with hostile clients* (30.7%). NQSWs suggested that substantial amounts of time are spent on specific tasks such as: *keeping records* (98.7%), *making assessments* (97.4%), *decision making* (96.4%) and *filling in forms* (93.5%). Interestingly, when Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) explore these results further, they found that NQSWs in probation were much better prepared for practice tasks than NQSWs in children and families (13 of 17 tasks in probation scored as 'well prepared'; whereas 7 of 21 tasks in children and families scored as 'well prepared'). Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that: 'probation staff are significantly more likely to have supervisors who encourage them to use theory, to have weekly supervision and to have suitable in-service training... Probation staff are potentially much more 'ready to practise'' (p108-09).

In relation to responses from NQSWs and social work managers' in terms of key skills required by newly-qualified staff, some interesting convergence was noted: NQSWs and managers both ranked *report writing*, *communication* and *assessment* as being the most important skill-set required. Divergence was noted in subsequent ranking where managers favoured *administration*, *time management* and *budgeting* over the NQSWs preference for *counselling / negotiation, recognising own values / empowerment* and *decision making / court skills*. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) noted that managers broadly focussed more on *instrumental* skills, whereas NQSWs spoke more about the application of *process* skills in their routine work. In terms of judging

the extent to which NQSWs were prepared for practice, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that social work managers ranked *information gathering, assessment and planning; engaging clients and direct work with them* as being areas where NQSWs were consistently 'well prepared'. In contrast, *report writing, time management and prioritising* were thought to be areas where NQSWs were 'ill-prepared' and lacking in ability.

The research also found that almost three-quarters of NQSWs felt that their workload was manageable, with only one-in-ten reporting to be struggling. The most common complaint amongst NQSWs was the negative impact of 'bureaucracy and paperwork' on their ability to deliver frontline services. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) noted that: 'there is a strong feeling that professional practice is becoming converted into a more technical or administrative process (p136). Around half of NQSWs felt that work given to them in their first year was 'appropriate', with the other half indicating that they were allocated work that was *beyond* their ability as newly-qualified practitioners (such as child protection and complex mental health cases). Over half of NQSWs indicated that levels of stress associated with their new employment had 'spilled' into their personal lives. A third of NQSWs felt that university education had not prepared them to cope with the emotional side of their work.

In terms of formal supervision in their first year, 79% of NQSWs said they got regular supervision which was reported from weekly (16%) to monthly (20%) – with the remainder reporting fortnightly (24%) and three-weekly contact (17%). Around half of NQSWs reported general satisfaction with the quality of supervision they received. The 'satisfied' NQSWs suggested that indicators of quality supervision included: 'regularity, consistency, [and] structured sessions' (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996: 151). NQSWs in this group also viewed their manager as someone who had the following qualities:

- Supportive (listening, encouraging, praising, sometimes advising);
- Offering feedback;
- [Giving] Challenging and constructive criticism;

- Interested in the supervisee, his/her personal development and on the impact of the work on him / her;
- Available for informal consultation, if needed.
  (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996: 152)

Those NQSWs who were 'dissatisfied' with supervision (around half), referred to indicators of poor quality such as: 'no arrangements made; cancellation / disregard of arranged meetings; frequent interruptions (callers, telephone calls); [and supervision] mainly focusing on work accountability' (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996: 152). Over a fifth of NQSWs felt that arrangements for supervision in the first year of work were 'totally' or 'almost totally' unsatisfactory. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that: 'a significant number of newly qualified staff experienced their supervision as totally instrumental in nature by focusing wholly, or almost wholly, on accountability' (p154). Nevertheless, those NQSWs who valued the quality of their supervision – those who were 'satisfied' –typically had managers who inquired about their personal circumstances, giving them a space within supervision to discuss their feelings and emotions about the work they do. In relation to discussions about the application of theory to practice during supervision sessions, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that six out of ten NQSWs suggested that this occurred 'hardly ever' or 'never'. Subsequent interviews with NQSWs corroborate this view with few making reference to theory as a feature of discussion during supervision.

In relation to how supervision could be improved for NQSWs, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that one in five newly-qualified staff did not think their supervision could be 'bettered'. The remainder of participants on the other hand (the majority), suggested that supervision could be improved by providing 'better training [for] and less pressure [on] supervisors' (1996: 164). Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that: 'there was a widespread view that managers were totally unsuited for the role of supervisor, because of the differing demands of the two roles' (p164).

In terms of more informal modes of supervision, 85% of NQSWs felt they received good levels of support from colleagues and peers. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that NQSWs acquired benefit from advice (particularly on legal matters)

and guidance on procedures from non-managerial personnel. Through more informal exchanges, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that NQSWs gained significant degrees of learning by discussing cases with more experienced colleagues. However, for those who received less support from colleagues (15%), it was found that these NQSWs occupied teams where workloads were generally higher, where teams were short-staffed due to high sickness levels, and where re-organisation had affected the balance (and morale) of existing staff groups.

With regard to initial introduction to employment, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that 37% of NQSWs received no formal induction in their first year of practice, with other accounts suggesting *ad hoc* and improvised initiations to social work practice. Interestingly, 95% of social work managers stated that their agency had a programme of induction for newly-qualified staff. The actual amount of days allocated to induction varied from *none* (19%), *up to five days* (20%), *from 6-10 days* (36%) and *11 days plus* (25%). The content of induction varied widely from simply receiving an information pack to being asked to arrange a series of visits to local resources. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that: 'whilst a minority of social (work) services departments offered an explicit programme of induction... the majority appeared to have no policy on the matter and no thought-out packages' (p172). Some 84% of NQSWs said they had received some degree of in-house training provided by their agency. Around half of those who attended training stated that these courses were usually provided for *all* staff, and not specifically tailored for NQSWs. Nine out of ten respondents said that in-house training was appropriate to their learning needs at the time. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that on average, NQSWs attended 3.4 courses in their first year of practice. In rank order from the most popular, NQSWs attended courses including: *child care and child protection* (34%), *court work / Criminal Justice Act* (11%) and *community care related* (8%). Around 85% of NQSWs were satisfied with the quality of in-house training. Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) suggest that: 'the great majority of those commenting saw that the in-service training provided input to fill gaps or strengthen their initial training' (p180). Indeed, of the 15% of NQSWs who were not satisfied with the quality of in-house training, many said that courses generally lacked depth, had poor quality teaching or involved a duplication of material from their university education.

In concluding remarks, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) suggest that: 'this study has shown the many evident strengths of social work education. It is clear that students are generally ready to practise, but not at the level that they or their seniors would like to see' (p203). They continue their observations by proposing that: 'our study supports strongly the need for foundation material at a broadly generic level, with specialism becoming increasingly acknowledged as training proceeds' (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996: 205). They conclude by suggesting that NQSWs might be: 'ready to practise when they arrive in their new jobs, but they are not fully competent to practise' (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996: 207).

- **Strengths** of this study include: large sample size; mixed methods; repeated-measure design; longitudinal; good response rates for NQSW sample; inclusion of criminal justice workers [absent from subsequent studies in this review due to arrangements for the probation service in England i.e. practitioners no longer required to be social work trained].

- **Limitations** of this study include: time of data collection between 1992-94 (different social policy and organisational context); prime focus on CQSW training and post-graduate DipSW; self-selected sample for semi-structured interviews.

- **Main** points of this study indicate: that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for practice; that the majority of NQSWs were satisfied with social work education; that perceived learning deficits between NQSWs and managers showed some degree of divergence; that a significant proportion of NQSWs received no formal induction; that approximately half of NQSWs felt satisfied with formal supervision, with the remainder suggesting that formal supervision was more concerned with instrumental issues of accountability (caseload management); that around 85% of NQSWs received very good support and guidance from more informal sources (colleagues, peers, etc…); that in-house training was seen by the majority of NQSWs as being satisfactory and appropriate for their needs; that a more incremental and specialised route for

post-qualifying development would be appropriate to help increase levels of competence after the completion of generic social work education.

Study 2: **Pithouse and Scourfield (2002)**

Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) conducted a postal survey of all NQSWs (from DipSW programmes) in Wales between 1998 and 1999 (n=451, but return of 115 – response rate of approximately 25%) – followed by telephone interviews with 50 respondents; 25 interviews with supervisors and 25 interviews with senior managers (NB: there is no indication in this study of time elapsed from the point of qualification; although some reference is made to participants reflecting on the first 'months of practice' (2002:13). Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) designed 25 mainly closed questions for their postal survey.

The purpose of their study was to explore how well the DipSW prepared graduates for practice and how 'prepared' graduates felt after a period in post. The main findings suggest that nearly 90% of respondents (n=115) generally considered their training to be 'adequate' (48%) or 'more than adequate' (41%). However, when broken down into core competences and values (as defined by CCETSW rules and requirements at the time) where students felt 'less than adequately prepared' or 'poorly prepared', the results are more revealing. In terms of core competencies, 32% (36 of n=115) felt unprepared to *intervene and provide*; 27% (30 of n=115) felt unprepared to *work in organisations*; 23% (26 of n=115) felt unprepared to *assess and plan*; 16% (18 of n=115) felt unprepared to *develop professional competence*; and 11% (12 of n=115) felt unprepared to *promote and enable*. In relation to core values, 23% (25 of n=115) felt unprepared to *assist and improve*; 18% (20 of n=115) felt unprepared to *counter discrimination*; and 14% (16 of n=115) felt unprepared to *respect uniqueness*. Indeed, whilst there is a perceived degree of adequacy and feelings of general 'preparedness' across all core competences and values explored in this study of newly-qualified social workers, Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) acknowledge concern that approximately one-third of all respondents felt unprepared for core competences such as *intervene and provide* and *working in organisations*.

In follow-up telephone interviews with NQSWs, supervisors and senior managers, Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) employed a schedule of open and closed questions (given the limitations to this method) that explored not only 'preparedness' for practice, but attempted to examine the more discrete everyday skills required by NQSWs such as written skills, time management, team working and risk management (they identify 15 skills in total). The main findings of this exercise were that the majority of respondents (85% of n=50) across all three groups responded in positive terms to questions about preparedness for practice in these areas. *Social work values* received the most positive answers in terms of practice 'readiness', with the most negative attributed to *risk management* where NQSWs were perceived by managers to be least adequately prepared. Indeed, in contrast to Marsh and Triseliotis (1996), this study found that the majority of NQSWs, managers and supervisors perceived social work training as having a more positive impact on preparedness for more instrumental skills such as report writing and time management.

- **Strengths** of this study include: reasonable sample size (n=115); qualitative component (telephone interviews); triangulation of data from other sources (managers and supervisors).

- **Limitations** of this study include: sample was not random – thus indicating that respondents might otherwise be more motivated or self-determined than other graduates. Answers from self-selected respondents are recognised as being more positive than random samples; therefore decreasing overall representativeness of a population (Jones, 1996); low response rate of 25% - possibly due to combination of address error and time required to complete questionnaire.

- **Main points** of this study indicate: that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for practice; that NQSWs felt less prepared in areas such as risk management and intervention; that further investigation is needed in terms of exploring definitions of what 'preparedness' might mean.

Study 3: **Lyons and Manion (2004)**

Lyons and Manion (2004) provide a comprehensive review of a series of social work employment surveys carried out by the University of East London in England from 1993-2003 (La Valle and Lyons, 1993; 1994; Wallis Jones and Lyons, 1995; 1996; 1997; 1998; 2001; 2003). Surveys from 1993 to 1998 involved annual six-month follow-up questionnaires (postal surveys) issued to NQSWs to explore their experiences within employment. A five-year follow-up study was conducted from 1998 to 2003. Lyons and Manion (2004) explain that initial surveys from 1993 to 1997 focused on newly-qualified social workers' perceptions of their experience of professional employment; however, Lyons and Manion (2004) contend that these initial enquiries simply provided 'snap shots' (2004: 134). Indeed, only from 1998 (and following the Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) study) did the approach of subsequent enquiry change to include questions about the 'fit' between social work education and practice, and the opportunities provided for professional development after qualification.

The main findings from the first wave of surveys (1993 to 1997) revealed unsurprising results including evidence of high levels of stress and dissatisfaction within employment after a six-month post-qualification period. The 2003 survey extended the parameter of post-qualification to twelve-months. Researchers used a *stratified cluster* approach to data provided by CCETSW which enabled them to contact all NQSWs (approximately 1000 each year). As indicated, later surveys asked about further training, quality of supervision and attitudes towards their education. Response rates varied from 81% in 1995 to 56% in 2002. Because of the size of each yearly sample, fixed questionnaire designs were used – thus enabling researchers to analyse data using quantitative software (SPSS).

Findings from the 2001 study indicated that in relation to training, 73% of respondents described themselves as being able to follow a particular career pathway with support for their employer. A pattern in the data from 1993 to 2001 was noted by Lyons and Manion (2004) who identified a growing trend and preference for specialisation in social work. In relation to supervision, only 14% of NQSWs in 2001 claimed to be getting no or poor quality supervision (an improvement from one-third

in 1997). In relation to education, Lyons and Manion caution that data on this theme was only captured in later studies; therefore little is provided by-way of comparison. Notwithstanding, 2003 data indicates that approximately two-thirds of graduates were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their education. In a ranking exercise, participants were asked to rank their training in core competences from 'excellent' to 'poor': over three-quarters of NQSWs found their training in each competency to be 'quite' and 'very satisfying'. Interestingly, the least satisfying core competency (although scoring 68%) was *intervene and provide* – which concurs with the findings from Pithouse and Scourfield (2002).

Although providing a careful review of studies from 1993 to 2003, Lyons and Manion (2004) provide a more comprehensive account that we felt was crucial to include in this selection of research.

- **Strengths** of the studies identified by Lyons and Manion (2004) include: longitudinal data gathering (5 years from 1998 to 2003) using a fixed questionnaire design; good response rates; repeat-measure design; data analysed by the use of quantitative software (SPSS).

- **Limitations** of the studies identified include: no qualitative elements; primary focus on English NQSWs; reliance on self-selection (and therefore bias from respondents who might be more motivated than other NQSWs with a different view); fixed questionnaires – danger of prompting and limiting responses; no follow-up interviews to explore main themes.

- **Main points** to emerge include: evidence of widespread satisfaction with social work education; evidence of majority of NQSWs feeling *prepared* for practice; concurrence with Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) in relation to finding that NQSWs feel least prepared in relation to interventions.

Study 4: **Galvani and Forrester (2008)**

Galvani and Forrester (2008) conducted an email survey of 248 NQSWs in England who graduated between 2006 and 2007. Although their primary interest was to explore the extent to which NQSWs felt prepared to work with clients with substance misuse problems, their survey included more relevant themes for our purposes: perceived preparation for social work practice; perceptions of the importance of different elements of their training; and post-qualifying training needs. They received a return of 248 questionnaires (2914 NQSWs were initially contacted – so a *low* response rate of 8.5% is noted). Participants included 68% BA graduates, 26% Masters, and 5% Diploma. Unfortunately, Galvani and Forrester (2008) do not indicate the dates of each email shot, so we are unable to determine how long each NQSW would be in practice before participating. Questionnaires included a combination of open and closed questions, with five-point Likert scales to measure responses. Data were analysed by quantitative software (SPSS); thematic coding was applied to qualitative elements.

Unsurprisingly, given the primary focus of this study, the main findings suggest that NQSWs felt less prepared for work with service users involved in substance misuse (54% in relation to drugs; 53% in relation to alcohol) compared to around 83% feeling 'adequately prepared' for work with children and families; 77% with older people; 76% with young people; 72% with mental health issues. Just under 50% felt unprepared to work with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and domestic abuse. Galvani and Forrester (2008) found a strong correlation between those who felt unprepared to work with substance misuse issues and the lack of significant and meaningful input on this subject area within social work curricula. Galvani and Forrester (2008) suggest that within education, NQSWs experience of practice learning, reading, specialist modules and assignments were more important to their preparation for practice than general teaching (lectures), group activities within class and self-directed learning. In relation to substance misuse training for NQSWs whilst in employment, Galvani and Forrester (2008) found that 10% received a half-day, 34% had a day, and 26% had two days. Linked to this, Galvani and Forrester (2008) suggest that the training needs of NQSWs appear to differ

within each area category of social work practice e.g. older adults - where a smaller proportion of service users will present with substance misuse problems.

Qualitative data from Galvani and Forrester's (2008) study indicated significant and serious deficits in social work education in relation to the provision of substance misuse inputs with most NQSWs highlighting the poor quality of the majority of teaching received on this particular area. In relation to 'preparedness', Galvani and Forrester (2008) found two emerging camps in their qualitative data: firstly those who received no substance misuse input, and secondly those who received *some* input, but stated that it did not prepare them for the challenges of frontline practice. In terms of post-qualifying training, qualitative data showed that NQSWs actively sought further instruction in areas where they perceived their education to have been neglected (particularly around substance misuse).

In noting the limitations to their study, Galvani and Forrester (2008) highlight a crucial point that ***self-rated preparedness is not actual preparedness***. They highlight that their study attempted to measure confidence as opposed to ability. They caution that having greater knowledge in a particular area might actually serve to highlight greater limitations; therefore revealing perceived deficits in self-rated preparedness overall. This point is echoed by Moriarty *et al.* (2011) who note that the majority of studies on preparedness or readiness for practice tend to focus on self-reported accounts, drawing little evidence from observable practice. Galvani and Forrester (2008) suggest their findings show that some participants appear to know their limitations and wish to know more (conscious incompetence), whilst others perceived themselves to know enough when their responses would suggest otherwise (unconscious incompetence). Crucially, Galvani and Forrester (2008) conclude that: 'there is no objective standard for which "preparedness" can be measured' (p27).

- **Strengths** of this study include: questionnaire with open and closed questions (therefore capturing qualitative data); reasonable sample size of 248; use of SPSS to explore relationships in data (correlation between having no education input and feeling *less* prepared).

- **Limitations** of this study include: primary focus on substance misuse; study focussed on England only; very low response rate of 8.5% so increased probability of being unrepresentative of the NQSW population; reliance on self-selection (we have noted problems with this in earlier examples); no indication of time elapsed since qualification; no follow-up interviews to address main themes.

- **Main points** of this study include: evidence of majority of NQSWs feeling prepared for most aspects of practice except substance misuse; evidence of a relationship between a lack of educational input on substance misuse and feeling unprepared (in this particular area of practice); evidence of NQSWs preferring specialist modules on substance misuse over more generic subject areas taught using traditional pedagogy with limited substance misuse input (lectures, groups activities, self-directed learning); mixed picture of post-qualification training in relation to substance misuse.

Study 5: **Bates, N., Immins, T., Parker, J., Keen, S., Rutter, L., Brown, K. and Zsigo, S. (2010)**

Bates *et al*. (2010) conducted a longitudinal repeat-measure study of 22 NQSWs (35 were contacted) in their first year of practice across seven local authorities in the South West of England. The purpose of the study was to explore the perceived effectiveness of the social work degree whilst investigating the induction and probationary periods for all participants. The study also tracked NQSWs progress in relation to post-qualifying education. The views of line managers (n=15), service users and carers (n=4) were also captured. NQSWs were asked to complete three questionnaires issued with equidistance (data collected over nine-month period) using a repeat-measure design within the first year of practice. Follow-up semi-structured interviews were completed with all participants.

The first questionnaire issued by Bates *et al.* (2010) focussed on three areas: how social work education prepared NQSWs for practice; the effectiveness of induction and probationary periods; and the general learning needs of NQSWs

shortly after qualification. Participants were also asked about their involvement with, or nomination for, any post-qualifying education at this early stage. The second and third questionnaire repeated elements of the first for comparability, but placed greater emphasis on the learning needs of NQSWs within their current position. The final questionnaire included items on the general learning culture with the organisations in which each NQSW was employed. All questionnaires used a mix of Likert scale questions and reflective open questions with sections provided for qualitative data capture. Researchers also supplemented questionnaires with individual semi-structured telephone interviews after data was analysed from stages one and two. These interviews allowed researchers to follow-up questionnaire answers as each participant was tracked. Line managers were also issued with questionnaires designed to explore their understanding of the learning and development requirements of NQSWs, their views on induction and probation, and their perceptions social work education. These questionnaires also sought to explore views about the learning culture to which the NQSW (and line mangers) are exposed. Researchers also captured the views of service users and carers by conducting a focus group interview where participants were provided with the results and analysis of two survey sections at least ten-days prior. This particular group was asked about their perceptions of the learning needs of NQSWs, and what might make a NQSW *prepared* for practice.

Consistent with the studies covered thus far in this review, Bates *et al.* (2010) found that approximately three-quarters of their sample of NQSWs 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that their social work education provided them with adequate knowledge, skills and understanding to help prepare them for their current role. In contrast to Galvani and Forrester (2008), Bates *et al.* (2010) found that methods such as lectures, self-directed study and informal peer discussion *were* favoured above other pedagogical modes of learning such as specific specialist workshops or seminars. Across all three questionnaires, researchers found that over three-quarters (19) of NQSWs felt that social work education had prepared them in skills and processes including: communication, social work methods, anti-discriminatory practice, law, research-based practice, critical perspectives, values, working in organisations, inter-professional working, and role clarity. A quarter of participants felt that social work education had not prepared them for instrumental tasks such as:

report writing, assessments, record keeping, time management, case and care management, dealing with conflict, contracting; with over 50% feeling unprepared in the area of court skills (a finding consistent with a third of line managers who recognised specific deficits in this aspect of practice). These findings concur with Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) in relation to some NQSWs feeling unprepared for aspects of practice such as court work, care management of budgets and time management. Pithouse and Scourfield (2002) also found that a minority of NQSWs in their study felt unprepared for tasks such as report writing.

Bates *et al*. (2010) found that managers were very positive about the content of social work degree programmes, and interestingly *more* positive in their questionnaire responses than NQSWs (again, consistent with evidence produced by Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) where managers tended to provide a more positive picture of practice environments). Managers were seen to be more optimistic about the perception of their organisation as having a learning culture; whereas NQSWs gave a less optimistic view. Both managers and NQSWs felt that student placements were crucial to the preparation for practice. Bates *et al*. (2010) discovered that managers, NQSWs and service users agreed that at least one practice placement should be situated in a statutory setting – as all three groups perceived a significant difference between local authority and third-sector agencies in terms of learning opportunities available (particularly opportunities to gain experience of observing and conducting legal interventions).

This research study also found that approximately three-quarters of NQSWs had received a formal induction into their organisation – one that generally helped to introduce them to agency structure, values, plans and objectives; however, the study found that few had actually received a *social-work-specific* induction into the role of practitioner. Explanation here is weak; although some participants suggested their agency was not prepared for them in terms of any prescribed or structured (staggered) introduction. This perhaps suggests that local authorities and other agencies might presume the expected ability of NQSWs to be *ready to practice* after qualification. Nevertheless, Bates *et al*. (2010) did find that over half of the managers included in this survey were not trained or supported to administer a period of structured induction for NQSWs. Other managers in their cohort commented on a

lack of resources being at the root of agency pressure to get NQSWs operating at an 'experienced' level with more haste. These findings are consistent with Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) who, in a study conducted over 24 years prior, also found that NQSWs received little by-way of structured induction into social work.

Interestingly, in the first questionnaire Bates *et al*. (2010) found that over half of the NQSW cohort (12 of n=22) perceived a probationary period to be of some use; however, by the third questionnaire (after a year), this total dropped to only 5 participants. From their qualitative data, Bates *et al*. (2010) suggest that NQSWs were confused about the purpose and length of probationary periods. Half of managers felt that periods of probation would be improved if agencies allowed more time for this. Further confusion was noted in relation to arrangements for post-qualifying education with the majority of NQSWs seemingly keen to begin this process, but yet many were unable to locate accurate information on how to initiate this route (Bates *et al*. (2010) note that by September 2007, only three participants in their sample had been registered for the English revised PQ framework). In terms of training days offered, nearly two-thirds of NQSWs found these to be useful. By the third questionnaire, the average amount of training days for the first year was around twelve (an increase from the 3.4 average found by Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996). Bates *et al*. (2010) also found that service users and carers were surprised at reports from NQSWs about the stated deficits in structured induction and probationary periods.

- Strengths of the study include: mixed methods longitudinal repeat-measure design; use of qualitative data capture by follow-up semi-structured interviews informed by questionnaire responses; inclusion of managers and service users (+carers).

- Limitations of this study include: very small sample size of 22 participants (although Bates *et al*. (2010) do acknowledge problems with generalisability); self-selecting sample; questions from first wave survey possibly priming responses to second and third wave questionnaires; study focused solely on one area in England; study only gave a brief mention to importance of

supervision (as highlighted by service users and carers), but did not expand on content, frequency or general experiences within the first year of practice.

- Main points of this study indicate: that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for practice in most aspects; that around half of NQSWs felt unprepared in relation to court skills; that whilst the majority of NQSWs had received an agency induction, very few had experienced a social-work specific one; that the majority of managers felt unsupported to deliver a dedicated period of social work induction; that after a year in practice, only a quarter of NQSWs felt that a probationary period was useful; that the majority of NQSWs were confused about the purpose and length of probationary periods; that further confusion on arrangements for post-qualifying education and development were evident.

Study 6: **Jack and Donnellan (2010)**

Jack and Donnellan (2010) conducted a study of 13 NQSWs and 10 social work managers across three local authorities in the South West of England (22 NQSWs were initially identified). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and progress of NQSWs in children and families teams within the first year of qualification. Participants were invited to complete a postal questionnaire (approximately six-months post-qualified at this point), which was then followed-up by semi-structured interviews. Researchers used confidence Likert scales in their questionnaires to help measure NQSWs perceptions about their role and experience based on English national occupational standards with emerging themes explored in greater depth during semi-structured interviews.

Jack and Donnellan (2010) found that nearly all NQSWs felt they had grown in confidence in the first year of practice; however, they contend that the majority of their cohort did not foresee a long-term career in local authority social work. Data appears to indicate a trend towards gaining initial experience with a view to exploring other options such as the voluntary sector. Areas where NQSWs felt most confident and prepared for include: communication, working with individuals and relationship

building. Experiences of induction were mixed – with some confusion over what constitutes induction and who should be responsible for delivering it.

This research discovered that nearly all NQSWs felt overburdened by large workloads that they perceived as being a barrier to meaningful reflection and professional development. Some NQSWs felt unprepared for what Jack and Donnellan (2010) themed 'The Reality Shock' (p309) where tensions between social work ideals at the start of employment soon became subsumed in the actuality of care management and accountability. Many NQSWs referred to feeling 'powerless'. Jack and Donnellan (2010) found that a significant proportion of NQSWs referred to not having their emotional needs addressed by social work employers, and that work-based issues were now affecting the personal lives of NQSWs. (Jack and Donnellan (2010) report that one local authority did establish a support group for NQSWs)

Informal supervision ('open door' policies by social work managers) arrangements were welcomed by the majority of NQSWs; however, arrangements for formal supervision were seen in less positive terms – with supervision being used by the majority of social work managers simply to review caseloads and deal with practical issues. Jack and Donnellan (2010) suggest that the majority of NQSWs in their study felt 'dissatisfied and unsupported' (p.315) with social work managers. Formal supervision lacked space for critical reflection and discussion of theory in most cases. The majority of NQSWs cited colleagues in their team as giving the most support to them in their first year by offering the kind of guidance, advice and direction that they were not getting from social work managers. Another interesting observation was a sense from NQSWs that they did not feel trusted. These anxieties emerged from discussions about the proliferation of systems designed to measure and monitor their work – with little space for creative thinking or creative practice.
Interestingly, the research highlighted that social work managers perceived themselves as feeling: 'in the middle of a sandwich' (p.310) with pressure from above to *perform* and pressure from below to *support*. Managers themselves felt that their own needs were not being recognised (with the implication that NQSWs were therefore losing-out as a result). This finding is consistent with similar evidence

produced by Bates *et al*. (2010) where managers felt untrained and unsupported to provide meaningful and specific social work induction to NQSWs.

In relation to training and professional development for NQSWs, the research demonstrated that whilst in-house provision was generally seen as helpful and relevant, some NQSWs found the time commitment to be a burden on existing workloads. Some NQSWs commented that training days were useful as short periods of 'respite' (2010: 311) away from frontline work. And consistent with Bates *et al*. (2010), Jack and Donnellan (2010) found that the majority of NQSWs were confused about the arrangements for post-qualifying education and training. A similar finding emerged during interviews with managers where uncertainty about procedures and requirements was apparent in this area. Indeed, whilst it is a requirement of all NQSWs to leave education with a Personal Development Plan (PDP) (according to the English post-qualifying framework) which they *should* share with prospective employers, it emerged that none of the seven local authorities involved in Jack and Donnellan's (2010) study had discussed PDP's with any of the NQSWs involved in this research.

- **Strengths** of this study include: use of semi-structured interviews to follow-up on themes emerging from questionnaire; inclusion of social work managers; spread of seven settings used.

- **Limitations** of this study include: very small sample size (not strongly representative); study restricted to one type of setting (children and families); self-selecting sample; solely focused on England.

- **Main points** of this study indicate: that the majority of NQSWs grew in confidence within the first year of qualification; that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for communicating and relationship-building; that the majority of NQSWs feel overburdened by workload; that the experiences of induction and training were mixed with both NQSWs and managers confused about responsibility and procedure; that the majority of NQSWs were confused about arrangements for post-qualifying education; that the majority of NQSWs

experienced a ‘reality shock’ when faced with real professional accountability; that the provision of supervision was not satisfactory for the majority of NQSWs.

Study 7: **Sharpe, E., Moriarty, J., Stevens, M., Manthorpe, J. and Hussein, S. (2011)**

Between 2008 and 2010, Sharpe *et al*. (2011) conducted a longitudinal study (final report***:*** *Into the Workforce****,*** September *2011*) of 280 social work graduates exploring their transition into social work employment as NQSWs. The purpose of this study was to explore the extent to which NQSWs felt prepared for practice and explore what support NQSWs received in relation to supervision, induction and continuous professional development. This two year research study was commissioned by the *Department of Health* in 2007 under the Social Care Workforce Research Initiative. Baseline data was captured from participants as students (2006-07) – before conducting follow-up surveys with the same group (now NQSWs) in two waves: 2008 and 2009 (response rates of 29 – 44% respectively). The research team used online surveys in a repeat-measure design. Questionnaires used a four-point Likert scale to measure responses in relation to job satisfaction from ‘not enjoying it’ to ‘enjoying it very much’, as well as other job related factors such as workload, support from managers, supervision and opportunities for professional development. This study also incorporated 17 semi-structured interviews with social work managers (conducted in 2009); 2 group discussions with 14 service users and carers (conducted in 2007); 5 group discussions with senior educational staff from 31 English universities (conducted in 2010); and survey data gathered from 56 online surveys with directors of social work in England (conducted in 2009).

Sharpe *et al*. (2011) found that the majority of NQSWs were either ‘quite enjoying the job’ or ‘enjoying the job very much’ – noting a rise in the same cohort from 71% (2008) to 89% (2009). However, a third of NQSWs reported having no formal induction (again, consistent with the majority of studies thus far). The majority of NQSWs in this sample were working in some form of child protection environment (when compared to the spread of other social work roles such as older people,

physical disabilities, etc...) – in this case: 41% in 2008, increasing to 58% in 2009. In relation to workload, approximately 44% of respondents felt that they were 'coping' (consistent with Jack and Donnellan (2010) who found that the majority of NQSWs tended to feel overburdened). 64% felt 'satisfied' the accessibility of their line manager and 55% were 'satisfied' with supervision (again, consistent with Jack and Donnellan (2010) who found that whilst availability of managers was perceived as good, the quality of supervision was seen less favourably). Sharpe *et al.* (2011) report that 22% of NQSWs were having supervision less than once a month. The content of supervision was found to be dominated by caseload management and issues around agency accountability; indeed, personal development, critical reflection and discussion on theory featured less, and emotional wellbeing was rarely addressed. 59% of NQSWs felt they got better professional support from colleagues and peers (this is again consistent with findings from nearly all studies included in this review).

The research demonstrated that 60% of NQSWs felt that staff were encouraged to engage in learning activities; however, only half believed that they were given enough time to fulfil post-qualifying commitments for the now defunct General Social Care Council (consistent with Bates *et al*. (2010) and Jack and Donnellan (2010) where both studies found that NQSWs felt they had little time to commit to further learning and development due to workloads). The most frequently reported examples of development activities given by NQSWs were 'shadowing' and 'co-working' cases. In terms of probationary periods, the majority of NQSWs reported a period of approximately six-months, with a third reporting they had no formal induction period – with some confusion over what actually constitutes formal induction (consistent with the majority of studies thus far).

In relation to 'readiness to practice', three-quarters of NQSWs felt they had been 'very' or 'fairly' well-prepared by their social work degree. Sharpe *et al*. (2011) report that levels of satisfaction with the quality of the new social work degree (from 2003) had increased amongst directors of social work to around 50% in children's services and two-thirds in adult services. However, Sharpe *et al*. (2011) found that social work employers seemed to be looking for 'functionally ready workers' (p12), whereas social work educators reported to be producing students with a broad

foundation of knowledge and skills to be enhanced by further development and training whilst in formal employment. Areas where NQSWs felt least prepared for practice include: knowledge of mental health conditions, knowledge of child protection, dealing with hostility from service users, assessing risk and preparing reports for legal proceedings. These findings are consistent with Bates *et al.* (2010) in terms of NQSWs feeling less prepared for more instrumental aspects of social work roles and tasks.

This research found that those graduates who felt more 'ready' at the start of their career, subsequently scored items higher after the eighteen-month stage. Indeed, perhaps if a measure had been included around the nine-month stage, this evidence would support an assertion (as we will see in the next study) by Carpenter *et al*. (2013) that overly confident NQSWs tend to conflate their perception of 'readiness' at the start – only for it to drop at the midpoint (when caseloads start to pick-up), and then for it to increase after the NQSW begins to accumulate 'expertise'. Nevertheless, the perceived increase in 'preparedness' might support the argument by Carpenter *et al*. (2013) that an evolutionary model of professional development appears to exist – without being formally articulated and structured. In essence, Sharpe *et al*. (2011) conclude that NQSWs require better opportunities to develop and apply their learning in practice within a more supportive environment than is currently offered by social work employers.

- **Strengths** of this study include: longitudinal repeat-measure design; good sample size; use of logistic regression models to explore relationships; inclusion of semi-structured interviews with senior social work directors; focus group discussion with service users and carers; focus group discussions with HEI representatives.

- **Limitations** of this study include: lack of qualitative methods used with NQSWs to explore survey themes in more depth; self-selecting sample; study focussed on England

- **Main points** of this study include: evidence that the majority of NQSWs feel prepared for practice; that job satisfaction rates are high; that experiences of induction and training were mixed – with half of NQSWs suggesting they have little time to commit to further learning; that levels of 'readiness' and job satisfaction increased in subsequent waves of survey; further evidence of dominance of caseload management forming core content of supervision sessions; around a third of NQSWs had received no formal induction; confusing arrangements for post-qualifying training and development.

Study 8: **Carpenter, J., Shardlow, S. M., Patsios, D. and Wood, M. (2013)**

Carpenter *et al.* (2013) conducted a longitudinal repeat-measured study of three cohorts of NQSWs within children and families teams in England from 2008-12. The combined cohorts (n=2019) were participating in a pilot scheme *Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme* (NQSWP) developed by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) who made it a formal requirement for every NQSW to participate in this survey (although no sanctions were imposed for non-participation). NB: The NQSWP was the precursor to the current Assessed and Supported Year in Practice (ASYE) for English practitioners.

The purpose of this research was to assess the progress of competence and confidence – using a measure of 'self-efficacy', as well as the professional development of NQSWs who participated in this initiative over the period of a year. In their 2008-09 cohort, and for comparison, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) used a contrast group of 47 NQSWs who did not participate in the CWDC programme. Whilst Carpenter *et al*. (2013) used 'self-efficacy' as a core measure of competence in the first year of practice for each NQSW, we thought it useful to note here that the researchers' operational understanding of this term was drawn largely from literature on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997). In establishing their position, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) cite Holden *et al*. (2002: 116) who maintain that, 'Self-efficacy is more than a self-perception of competency. It is an individual's assessment of his or her confidence in their ability to execute specific skills in a particular set of circumstances'.

In cohort 1 (2008-09) all participants were emailed at three separate stages by the CWDC with a link to a confidential online questionnaire. The questionnaire examined developments in self-efficacy at three points: shortly after registering on the NQSW programme (stage 1); at the three-month review point with their supervisor (stage 2); and finally at the end of the NQSW programme (stage 3: nine-month point). Cohorts 2 (2009-10) and 3 (2010-11) were emailed through online survey software, but followed the structure of the repeated-measure design of cohort 1. Questionnaires used ten-point Likert scales to rate responses. We note that no qualitative elements were incorporated into this study.

Carpenter *et al*. (2013) found that in each cohort, statistically significant increases in mean total scores were evident in each cohort from the first point of data capture (stage 1) to the last (stage 3). In other words, NQSWs *self-efficacy* appeared to increase throughout their first year of practice (perhaps consistent with Sharpe *et al*. (2011) who found that levels of readiness and job satisfaction increased with time). Interestingly, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) note that scores for self-efficacy dropped at the second stage (questionnaire 2) – perhaps, as they note, due to an overestimation of abilities immediately after the point of qualification. By stage 3 (nine-month point), Carpenter *et al*. (2013) found that over half of all NQSWs rated themselves as 'highly confident' in using supervision, development activities and self-reflection to help advance their skills and knowledge. In terms of managing professional accountability, at least two-thirds indicated they were 'highly confident' by stage 3. Increases in confidence were noted across all items examined (some of which included: assessment, planning, formal meetings, multi-agency working, recording and communication). Overall job satisfaction across all cohorts was scored by the majority as 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' (80% of n=2019). However, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) found that levels of stress had increased from measurements in stage 1 to stage 3 (from approximately 32% at the beginning of all cohorts to 40% in 2008-09; 36% in 2009-10; and 33% in 2010-11).

Interestingly, after running multivariate analysis on the data, Carpenter *et al.* (2013) found no significant relationship between demographic variables (such as age, gender, ethnicity) and self-efficacy; however, they suggest that some evidence emerged of a relationship between those with a higher degree of social work

experience pre-qualification and higher levels of self-efficacy at the start of their professional career (consistent with similar findings on the currency of previous social work experience – see Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996). Although by stage 3, self-efficacy had levelled-out across all cohorts – with very little difference detected between those with previous experience and those without.

As indicated, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) also used a comparison group of 47 NQSWs who did not participate in the CWDC programme. This group were invited to participate at stage 3 of cohort 1 (2008-09). Results indicate that NQSWs who *did* participate in the CWDC programme gave much higher scores (three-quarters as 'very confident') for self-efficacy at stage 3 than those NQSWs who did not participate (just over a half scored themselves as 'very confident'). Carpenter *et al.* (2013) found no statistically-significant differences in data for both groups in relation to role clarity, role conflict, job satisfaction and stress. It should be highlighted that the sample size of the contrast group (47) is particularly small in comparison to the number of primary participants involved at stage 3 of cohort 1 (n=241). Carpenter *et al*. (2013: 1) claim that their findings support the argument for a 'developmental process model for the accumulation of professional expertise'; in other words, they clearly subscribe to the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) model of 'novice to expert'; however, we would caution such an arbitrary application without first exploring the data in more depth by further qualitative investigation. Moreover, Effken (2001) makes it clear that the notion of the 'expert' in developmental process models is a professional who tends to rely on *intuition* – rather than informed judgement and reflection (which presumably we might expect from more competent social work practitioners).

Whilst the results of this study appear particularly positive in terms of general experiences and levels of confidence amongst NQSWs to carry-out tasks and key functions, Carpenter *et al*. (2013) do acknowledge that without a significant comparison group (as the sample size of the contrast group used in this study was too low), then any causal link between a NQSW programme and better evidence of development is somewhat limited. Again, this weakness might be due to the crucial absence of qualitative methods used in this study. Carpenter *et al*. (2013: 22) also acknowledge that a measure of 'self-efficacy' should not be seen as a measure of

'actual performance, but rather a belief about what a person can do in specific circumstances'.

- **Strengths** of this study include: large sample size; longitudinal repeated-measure design; use of a contrast group; adequate numbers to do multivariate analysis with confidence; country-wide spread of respondents; sophisticated data analysis using quantitative software.

- **Limitations** of this study include: no use of qualitative methods to capture nuances or follow-up on emerging themes; concepts of self-efficacy and competence both difficult to anchor; small size of contrast group; response rates varied across each wave of data collection – highest being 50.5% (2008 – Stage 1) and lowest being 24.1% (2010 – Stage 2); study focussed solely on England; no specific focus on the quality and experience of items such as supervision, induction or post-qualifying training.

- **Main points** of this study include: evidence of progression in confidence and competence within the first year of qualification (supporting an evolutionary model of professional development); evidence of increasing confidence amongst NQSWs in relation to most areas of social work practice; limited evidence of impact from the NQSWP pilot scheme; evidence of high levels of job satisfaction overall; conclusion that measuring 'self-efficacy' could be used as one method of tracing professional development.

Summary of Literature Review Findings

1. Perhaps the most significant finding in this review is that ALL studies provided evidence to suggest that the majority of NQSWs felt prepared for practice in *most* areas of social work practice after qualification. The majority of studies suggest however, that NQSWs tended to be better prepared for more process-oriented aspects of practice including assessments, building relationships, communication. Some studies suggest that NQSWs were less prepared for more instrumental facets

of practice including care/case management, budget / commissioning issues, local authority IT systems, accountability mechanisms.

2. The majority of studies suggest that social work education is, on the whole, producing NQSWs who are ready to practise. There was no significant criticism of curricula content (except from Galvani and Forrester (2008) who focussed specifically on deficits in knowledge relating to substance misuse). NQSWs and social work managers appeared satisfied with the ability of HEI's to provide an adequate foundation for newly-qualified practitioners to build on (after qualification).

3. The arrangements for post-qualifying training and development are inconsistent and vary considerably across the UK. The majority of studies provided evidence of a mixed economy of in-house training, informal forms of shadowing and co-working, short specialist inputs designed for general social work staff (and not targeted specifically at NQSWs). There was no evidence of a robust and structured approach to post-qualifying development – despite the existence of post-qualifying frameworks. There was some confusion amongst NQSWs on what was expected of them, with many suggesting that they are not afforded adequate time to properly assess and address their own post-qualifying learning needs.

4. The majority of studies indicate that significant numbers of NQSWs are not receiving any type of formal induction into social work practice. There is some confusion as to what 'induction' actually is. Some NQSWs identified induction as a simple process of agency orientation and introduction to policies and procedures. Other NQSWs understood induction to mean a period of transition to the realities of social work practice. Some NQSWs confused induction with probation (and vice versa). There was no consistency between studies that would help to operationalise a practical understanding of the concept of induction, let alone measure it. It would appear however, that most NQSWs received some form of introduction to their agency with a general orientation period (with wide variation on the nature of this for different NQSWs). There is no evidence of a robust or structured application of a specified period of induction for NQSWs in the UK (with no specified instruction on what should be included in this period, and with no indication of who should take responsibility).

5. The majority of studies provided strong evidence that a significant proportion of NQSWs are not receiving adequate levels and adequate quality of formal supervision. Most studies suggest that just over half of NQSWs appear to be receiving regular supervision with a social work manager; however, this should not be taken as an indicator of quality. The majority of studies report that the content of supervision in most cases will consist of significant weight given to accountability, monitoring and case management – with minimal time given to critical reflection, personal development, application of theory to practice and emotional wellbeing. Strikingly, a significant proportion of NQSWs report to receiving better support and guidance from colleagues and peers. There is some evidence to suggest that social work managers are themselves 'sandwiched' between pressure from senior management to meet performance targets whilst trying to provide adequate support to NQSWs at the same time. Studies would suggest the balance tips in favour of performance targets and accountability in most cases. Nevertheless, the majority of studies indicate that employers somewhat over-estimate the abilities of NQSWs – perhaps relying too much on university education to prepare practitioners for the more instrumental aspects of practice.

6. As indicated in the introduction to this review, there are clear limitations and caveats to be considered when drawing conclusions from the studies that we have included. Firstly, the majority of studies presented here are based on English NQSWs who qualified from English institutions, and who mainly practice in areas such as children and families social work. Only one study (Marsh and Triseliotis, 1996) includes criminal justice practitioners (important to highlight within a Scottish context); however, we must bear in mind that this study was conducted over *eighteen* years ago. Nevertheless, it is the only study included here with a focus on Scottish practitioners (as no other data exists). Secondly, the first three studies included participants trained before the introduction of a new social work degree in 2003. A caveat here would be that Scottish practitioners enjoy four years of higher education – compared with three in England and Wales. Scotland has a different legal framework and different governance frameworks for the provision of social work education and the organisation of local authority social work departments (e.g Scotland retains criminal justice services within local government control). Thirdly, England has witnessed significant and substantial reviews of social work education

in recent years (and even more recently with contributions by Narey (2014) and Croisdale-Appleby (2014)). These reviews have prompted a body of exploratory research in England where NQSWs have been the focus of enquiry in the majority of studies included in this review. No such body of work exists in Scotland. Fourthly, the majority of studies included in this review are based on self-selected samples. Indeed, this self-selection bias might account for more positive accounts of being 'prepared' for practice (possibly explaining the persistence of positive results in the studies included in this review). It could be inferred that the participants who agreed to take-part in these studies have, by very dint of their consent, demonstrated an enthusiasm to participate whilst significant numbers of NQSWs chose *not* to be involved. There are no ethnographic studies that observe what happens to NQSWs during their first year of practice.

7. What emerges convincingly from this systematic review of the literature conducted on NQSWs – predominantly in England – is that the quality of current social work education is, and would appear, appropriate and fit for purpose as qualifying training in preparing readiness for practice. There is clearly room for improvement in terms of content and pedagogy – and thus improving the consistency of quality across all social work courses (e.g. more input on substance misuse *as per* Galvani and Forrester (2008) findings). However, the next stage in the development transition of NQSWs would appear less clear. It is evident that there is a cluttered landscape of inconsistent and unstructured trajectories of career progression and institutional support after the point of qualification for most NQSWs. There is a clear and urgent need to address this in future policy requirements.

4. Research Methodology

This section of the report now turns to the empirical work undertaken as part of the commissioned study and focuses on quantitative and qualitative data in developing findings from the online survey and focus groups components of the study.

The online survey has now become a widely accepted and utilised method in social and behavioural research, its proliferation aided by the recent emergence of reliable, cost-effective software solutions to assist in implementation (for discussions of the approach see Couper, 2008; Dillman *et al.,* 2014). Web-based surveys have proven particularly popular over the last ten years or so, quickly moving from 'novel idea to routine use' (Dillman *et al.,* 2014). Good practice guidelines for internet-mediated research (IMR) - including online surveys - have emerged (for example Hewson, 2003; Hewson & Laurent, 2012). Web-based survey methods have demonstrated the capacity to obtain very large sample sizes which generate high quality data (for example Chang & Krosnick, 2009; Gosling *et al.,* 2004). Particular advantages of IMR methods include cost and time efficiency, the capacity to recruit participants irrespective of where they live, the ability to target specialist and/or 'hard-to-reach' populations or to recruit a large and diverse convenience sample.

Subsequent to the online survey, we conducted focus groups to gain more elaborate data on themes emerging from our quantitative results. Focus groups are often used for their economy and ultimately for their capacity to reveal common understandings and shared experiences of phenomena (Kitzinger, 1995). Indeed, whilst Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) were able to conduct 22 individual interviews with Scottish NQSWs (subsequent to their written questionnaire), this current project was delivered in a short time frame therefore focus groups became the most appropriate option to extrapolate further qualitative data from the sample.

5. Sample Information (Scotland)

The online survey was implemented using *Survey Monkey* and located on the project website. It opened on 16 January 2014 and closed on 14 March 2014. It was successful in generating over two-hundred completed responses (n=205) from a sample size of 572 newly qualified social workers (with 17 non-returns – leaving a final figure of 555) in Scotland.

5.1 Survey design and measures

The questionnaire used in this survey was derived from a series of detailed analyses of similar tools used to generate equivalent data in comparable studies. We are indebted to Jonathan Parker and his team at Bournemouth University for providing examples and materials used in a major study on NQSWs in England (see Bates *et al.,* 2010). We adapted and developed a rigorous questionnaire, both calibrated for the Scottish context and designed to measure a pre-determined and replicated set of variables addressing key themes in the literature.

As indicated earlier, the questionnaire design was composed of six sections:

Qualifying training and background
Choosing and entering your first employment
Induction and support in your first employment
Initial professional development
Issues for continuing professional development
Monitoring data

Selected questions afforded space for more in-depth qualitative responses, whilst others required participants to rate a specific item by using Likert scale measures. Initial sifting of results from the questionnaire phase helped with the production of an interview schedule for subsequent focus groups.

6. Research Findings of Survey and Focus Groups

This section reports on the data generated from the online survey and the two focus groups conducted several weeks after the results of the survey were collated.

6.1 Qualifying training and background

For Question 2 (Table 1) respondents were asked "In the two years prior to starting your qualifying training, did you have any experience of working in a social work/social care setting?"

Table 1

Yes	86.07%
No	13.93%

The majority of participants in the sample had previous work experience within a social work/care setting in Scotland (86%) within the last two-years prior to commencing professional education. Within this group over 86.3% gained experience through paid employment whilst around 13.6% acquired experience through voluntary work. This would suggest that the majority of participants would have at least *some* working knowledge of processes and cultures within different social care fields before undertaking formal social work education. Only 13.93% had no previous experience working in a social work setting before commencing professional social work education. These results roughly correspond to findings by Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) where three-quarters of their sample had some social work experience before undertaking either CQSW or DipSW training.

Survey respondents were asked to provide details of the level at which they undertook their professional qualifying training (see Table 2).

Table 2

Undergraduate (First degree - BA/BSc)	48.7%
Postgraduate (Master's degree - MA/MSc)	32.6%
Employment based route (e.g. Open University Undergraduate)	18.5%

The majority of participants in the sample embarked upon social work training at undergraduate-level (18.5% of which from employer-sponsored courses such as the Open University); 32.6% commenced social work education at postgraduate level. These results reflect the current landscape of social work education where undergraduate programmes across Scotland tend to admit more students than typical postgraduate routes. Whilst we did not cover the educational backgrounds of the cohort, it is interesting to note that Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that a quarter of entrants on to social work courses between 1992 and 1993 had no formal qualifications of any kind; one quarter had an undergraduate degree; the remainder had a mix of various HND/OND and 'other' qualifications. The introduction of the Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland (2003) clearly marked a turning point in driving up standards of entry both in terms of new undergraduate and postgraduate routes. Indeed, it could be inferred that the majority of undergraduate students post-2003 would now possess either Scottish Highers or a HND/HNC in social care – or a combination of both in some cases. Those undertaking social work at postgraduate level would now be *expected* to possess an honours degree.

In generating further data about the background of the newly qualified social workers, an opened-ended question required respondents to describe each of the practice learning opportunities/placements they undertook in their qualifying training (see Table 3).

Table 3

Children & Families	23.4%
Mental Health	13.7%
Criminal Justice	13.2%
Learning Disabilities	11.6%
Young People	10.1%
Community Care	9.6%

6.2 Choosing and entering the first of employment

In choosing and entering their first employment, newly qualified social workers were asked about factors that influenced their decision (see Table 4).

Table 4

Pre-qualifying interests and experience	49.4%
Experiences from learning opportunities during qualification	48.4%
Existing commitment through secondment arrangements	10.4%
Reflection on experiences after qualification	18.2%
Local job opportunities, vacancies and advertisements	54.1%

Job availability was the most significant factor that appeared to determine choice of employment. Participants appeared to be influenced more by the availability of employment opportunities after qualification (54.1%) as opposed to locating their influence for job choice in previous experience or gaining a sense of preference from exposure to other care settings during periods of assessed practice placements. However, 49.5% said they were influenced by pre-qualifying interests and experience while 48.4% were influenced by experiences from learning opportunities during qualification.

For Question 7 respondents were asked to provide information about the sector they were currently working in (see Table 5).

Table 5

Local authority social services	91.4%
Health	0.5%
Voluntary organisation/third sector	6.5%
Independent/private business	1.5%

Thus the majority of participants in the sample are presently employed by local authority social work departments (91.4%). A small minority of participants work either independently or within a private agency (1.5%). Around 6.5% of participants

are employed by a voluntary agency or third sector employer. These results reflect the current landscape of social services where the majority of qualified staff occupy posts within statutory settings. Findings further revealed that around 76.2% of newly qualified social workers are on permanent contracts, with approximately 16.2% on temporary contracts and around 8.1% on fixed-term arrangements.

In terms of working with particular service user groups, the majority of newly qualified social worker participants are based within children and family teams / services (65.4%). The remainder occupy statutory posts within adult (23%), learning disability (20%), mental health (19%), criminal justice (16) and older adult (14%) teams. The majority of NQSWs are placed within statutory fieldwork teams (82.6%). Again, this appears to reflect current workforce trends where existing vacancies emerging in children and families settings tend to dominate the social services job market. This picture is somewhat comparable with results from Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) who found that over half of their sample were situated in children and families posts, with a quarter in community care and around one in 10 (of N=130) in criminal justice. A remaining 11% were reported as occupying 'generic' posts (at that time).

For Question 14 respondents were asked: "Are you working within a Probationary Period? If so what is the period of probation?" An overwhelming majority of newly qualified social worker participants (93%) stated they were *not* on a recognised period of probation with their current employer. The remainder reported to be on periods of probation from three to twelve months. These findings suggest that employers (mostly local authority social work departments in this case) do not have a formally articulated probation scheme in-place for NQSWs in Scotland.

The survey aimed to discover about whether the workload of newly-qualified social workers was protected in some way. For Question 15 a significant proportion of NQSWs state that their workload is *not* protected (around 37%) – with 22% stating that they *'don't know'*. 40.6% informed that their workload *was* protected. A respondent in FG2 reported "It is quite a stressful job from the minute you walk in the door – there is no such thing as a protected case load that is an absolute myth." Another respondent reported that "agile" or flexible working arrangements tended to militate against supported workloads: "I should not have been started in criminal

justice then moved to children and families because it suited the needs of the larger organisation. It ruined my confidence. No agile working for three years. We learn from and rely on colleagues to support us in the first few years. Agile working makes no allowance for that" (FG2). However, the majority of respondents (54.1%) received some form of protection from particular *areas* of social work practice such as child protection, sex offenders and adult protection. Only 55.4% of participants report that they are not expected to embark on particular tasks on their own – including child and adult protection. These findings however, do suggest that a significant and concerning proportion of NQSWs are engaging in statutory social work tasks that require more complex and comprehensive levels of knowledge, skills and practice experience. Interestingly, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) also found that NQSWs in their study were likely to be carrying complex cases – including child protection – that 'they were not supposed to have at this stage' (p.5).

A range of questions (Question 20-22) addressed the nature of which knowledge, skills, values and experiences were considered by newly qualified social workers to be most important during their first year of employment. When grouped thematically the open-ended qualitative data revealed the following findings for three questions:

"Which experiences do you think are most helpful during the first year in post?"

Table 6

Other Workers	23.0%
Supervision	21.7%
CPD Training	21.0%
Experience on Job	15.7%
Shadowing Colleagues	7.2%
Case Load Protection	6.5%

"What knowledge do you think is most helpful during the first year in post?"

Table 7

Legislation	25.6%
Procedures	20.9%
Theory Building	18.2%
Practice Experience	12.1%
Experience	7.4%
Training	6.7%
Child Development	6.0%

"What skills and values do you think are most helpful during the first year in post?"

Table 8

Communication Skills	28.57%
Professional Values	21.09%
Management Skills	17.69%
Assessment Skills	12.24%
Relationship Building	9.52%

Newly qualified social worker respondents were asked about their levels of confidence across the key roles identified by the National Occupational Standards for social work. For Question 23 we asked NQSWs to rate their level of confidence on a scale matched against each unit identified by the NOS (see Appendix 1).

The results indicate that the majority of newly qualified social workers felt *very confident* or *confident* across all units including: liaison with other teams, professionals, networks and systems (85.3%); managing and being accountable for their own work (79.3%); working with individuals and communities to help them make informed decisions (78%); advocating on behalf of individuals and communities (76.8%); assessing and managing risks to self and colleagues (70.3%); assessing

needs and options to recommend a course of action (69.3%). The results then showed that the majority of NQSWs felt *quite confident* or *confident* in areas such as: assessing and managing risks to individuals and communities (86.8%); preparing, producing, implementing and evaluating plans (86.2%); managing complex ethical issues dilemmas and conflicts (85.5%); responding to crisis situations (84.9%); supporting the development of networks to meet assessed needs (79.9%); preparing for and participating in decision-making forums (79.9%); working with individuals and communities to achieve change (79.8%); working with groups to promote individual development and independence (79.1%); researching, analysing and using current knowledge of best practice (78.9%); contributing to the management of resources and services (73%).

Although working to slightly different items than National Occupation Standard categories, it is interesting to note that Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) also found that between 70 and 90 per cent of NQSWs felt 'adequately' or 'well' prepared for areas such as: making and writing assessments; decision making; negotiating with service users; report writing (including court reports); keeping records; planning interventions; evaluating interventions; and working with groups. They also found that NQSWs felt much less prepared for tasks such as: handling small budgets; working with the private sector; dealing with education agencies; and dealing with criminal justice agencies. Indeed, it could be said that more contemporary emphasis on partnership working and developments in understandings of self-directed support, might account for generally higher levels of confidence across these areas in our current study.

The research findings revealed that no significant differences of average levels of confidence where found between undergraduate and postgraduate NQSWs in meeting National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Social Work. However, interestingly NQSW undergraduates were, on average, more confident than postgraduates across all NOS roles - except in relation to 'Advocating with and on behalf of individuals and communities' and 'Contributing to the management of resources and services' (see Appendix 2).

In addition we ran further filtering analysis in relation to levels of confidence which revealed that social workers with specialist adult and older people jobs felt more confident than children and family social workers across all specified NOS categories. Our data indicates that mental health social workers appear to be the *most* confident across the full range of NOS roles and tasks (see Appendix 3). The data about confidence levels across NOS categories also revealed that there were no significant differences between respondents who had gained previous experience in social care settings prior to professional education and those who had not (see Appendix 4).

The confidence level question also revealed some interesting differences between employment route NQSWs and those respondents who had followed a more traditional route. The respondents that qualified following an employment route (Q4 – option 3) are significantly less confident liaising with other teams, professionals, networks and systems (Q23 – option 13) compared to those that have qualified after a PG course (Q4 – option 2). However, the respondents that have qualified following an employment route (Q4 – option 3) are significantly more confident contributing to the management of resources and services (Q23 – option 16) compared to those that have qualified after a PG course (Q4 – option 2).

In summary, the majority of participants reported significant levels of confidence from 'quite' to 'very' across *all* categories of National Occupational Standards. The only noteworthy outlier in this section was a minority of participants (around 20%) who reported to be 'not confident at all' with contributing to the management of resources and services.

6.3 Induction and support in your first employment

This section of the questionnaire focused on induction and support during the first period of employment for NQSWs. For Question 24 respondents were asked to rate the quality of their induction for their first employment post (see Table 9).

Table 9

Excellent	10%
Very Good	23.9%
Satisfactory	33.9%
Not very good	20.1%
Poor	12.0%

Over a third of newly qualified social worker participants (33.9%) rated the quality of their induction as *satisfactory*. Another third felt it was *very good* or *excellent* (33.9%), whereas one third rated it as *not very good* or *poor* (31.9%). Whilst these results would suggest that a promising amount of NQSWs are receiving *satisfactory* to *excellent* experiences of induction, a notable proportion of NQSWs are not. Whilst not directly comparable, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found evidence of widespread dissatisfaction with the quality and inconsistency of induction for NQSWs in Scotland during their study.

Respondents in our study were asked if they had received an induction pack from their employer. The majority of participants reported that they *did* receive an induction pack (60.7%) and the majority suggested that information provided in these packs was sufficient (61.4%). Moreover, the majority of participants suggested that they were able to access a range of induction activities (73.8%).

In relation to the data generated from focus group material, none of the FG1 participants received a formal induction; they were presented with an induction pack, but there was no direction given as to how best to work through this. All said they would have preferred a structured induction within a defined timescale. All except one of the FG2 participants received any formal induction at the start of their job; some received information on sickness monitoring and two stated that they received induction around six-months into their posts. One participant (T) commented: "I organised all my shadowing, I contacted all the agencies that did training. I assessed what I wanted to go on and what I thought my needs were". Examples of good practice from the focus groups emphasised the importance of having a ‘buddy system’ in place. Informal support from colleagues, nurturing emotional support and

shadowing opportunities were consistently mentioned as crucial by participants in both focus groups.

For Question 29 respondents were asked to report on the mentoring arrangements available in their employment agency. The majority of participants reported having no allocated workplace mentor within the first year of practice (78.6%); although many suggested that a nominated individual would be a useful additional support. FG1 stated that no formal mentor was appointed to any of the participants, but informal support was provided by peers.

Several questions (Questions 31-37) were related to the nature of supervision for newly qualified social workers. A significant number of NQSWs (47%) reported to receiving ‘excellent’ (18.2%) or ‘very good (28.9%) supervision from their line manager; however, 34.5% said that supervision was ‘satisfactory, whilst 13.8% suggested it was ‘not very good’ and 4.4% reported that supervision was ‘poor’. The focus groups reported variable experiences of quality, consistency and levels of support from supervision arrangements. Respondent (N) from FG1 commented: "it is mainly informal if you are going to a meeting with your team leader you catch up then or in the corridor or at your desk stuff like that"; whereas another participant (K) reported positively "I get the team leader and she has been very good with that from the start. You have got it in your diary, in your Outlook diary; sometimes it will get cancelled depending on what has come up. But she writes it all down she gives you a copy, gets you to sign it and she also has an open door policy" (FG1). Participant (E) of Group 1 commented on the positive support received from their manager: “my senior is really supportive. Even if it is personal, work related or anything he is there. The first thing he asks me when I go in is how I am, what I have been doing, what my life is like first before we go into caseloads”, but another participant (D) stated there was a lack of support at crucial times for new workers: “certainly fundamental events such as the first time you have removed a child or children from a family home on an unplanned basis. There was no support whatsoever for two weeks I was left to continuously manage what was a very horrific situation for the children involved. I was trying to support them. I managed that but it took two weeks for somebody to sit down and say how have you been finding this” (FG1). Another

respondent (S) commented on the importance of "peer group supervision" (FG1) as a supportive mutual environment.

NQSWs were then asked about the content of supervision sessions. Again, the majority of NQSWs felt that supervision provided promising opportunities for them to critically reflect on practice and to consider ethical issues e.g. 15.7% rated this element of supervision as ‘excellent’ and 25.1% as ‘very good’. However, 27.6% felt that supervision provided ‘satisfactory’ opportunities, whilst 24.5% suggested this to be ‘not very good’ and 6.9% rating this item as ‘poor’.

Participants from FG1 reported that they were provided with formal supervision arrangements, but the level and quality of supervision was varied. One participant stated that their supervision was ‘directive’ and solely about case management; another participant (V) commented that their experience had been: “consistently quite bad, really not very emotional and not very, as you say, nurturing” (FG1). One participant however, stated that their experience was ‘fantastic’ (S: FG1). The majority of participants in FG2 stated that there was some degree of formal supervision, but the quality and frequency of this differed within the group. They also stated that their line managers would, at times, offer informal supervision, but in the main the quality of this supervision was reported as variable. When asked about opportunities to prepare for supervision, a significant majority of participants did feel they were able to adequately prepare for supervision sessions (78.3%); a smaller, but still healthy majority felt that supervision arrangements were adequate and appropriate to meet their needs (67.9%).

Thematically grouped qualitative data from this section of the questionnaire indicates that a significant proportion of participants felt that formal supervision was dominated by case management agendas - with reflection, wellbeing and professional development seen as topics that were not appropriate dealt with or given significant time to consider. When asked what is the main focus and purpose of supervision sessions, the following qualitative data was generated (see Table 10):

Table 10

Case Load	37.1%
Case Discussion	29.4%
Training	18.5%
Case Management	17.3%
Development	15.3%
Work Load	12.1%
Allocation	8.9%
Case Reviews	3.8%

The majority of participants reported that supervision generally provided opportunities for newly qualified social workers to critically reflect on practice and consider ethical issues; however, almost a third of respondents (31%) reported that these opportunities were either 'not very good' or 'poor'.

To try and understand some impediments faced by new entrants in the workplace, respondents were asked (Question 53) to identity the two main organisational resource constraints they had to deal with as newly qualified social workers (see Table 11).

Table 11

Resources and Funding	32.3%
Allocating Services	14.7%
Funding	12.5%
Support	11.0%

In summary, whilst the majority of NQSWs felt that supervision was generally of very good quality and adequate for their needs, qualitative evidence would appear to suggest that a disproportionate emphasis is placed on caseload management during typical supervision sessions. The findings presented here suggest that degrees of inconsistency are present in the spread of supervision experiences for NQSWs across Scotland - with a promising proportion receiving very good supervision, but others less so. These findings however, do suggest a significant improvement on the

previous results from Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) where widespread problems were found in relation to the quality and consistency of supervision for the majority of NQSWs in Scotland.

6.4 Initial professional development

This section of the survey examined initial professional development and workplace support for newly qualified social workers. For Question 38, respondents were asked to report on how important various sources of support, advice and guidance were for their professional development during the first year of employment (see Appendix 5).

Interestingly, whilst a significant majority of participants rated formal supervision as being a '*very important'* source of support (86.7%), a slightly higher figure was noted for the support, advice and guidance from more informal relations with work colleagues (88.6%). Perhaps more striking is the finding that a significant majority of NQSWs feel that support from '*other professionals'* (rated as 98% for *important* or *very important*) is regarded as being equally valuable. This would appear to suggest that NQSWs receive a significant amount of informal assistance and direction outside the traditional social worker / line manager dyad. Another significant finding is that a majority of NQSWs also value the support of friends and family (85.3% rated this item as *important* or *very important*) – perhaps highlighting the significance of seeking emotional as well as professional support. When asked which opportunities were made available in the workplace agency settings to prepare newly qualified social workers for the job, 42% mentioned supervision; 21% training; 17% induction programmes - with 45% saying that no specific opportunities were made available.

In relation to support, the data revealed some interesting differences between NSQWs who had undertaken the employment route to qualification and those who had completed the more traditional route. Compared to those that have qualified after a postgraduate (PG) course (Q4 – option 2), the respondents that have qualified following an employment route (Q4 – option 3) appear to rely more on colleagues elsewhere in the organisation (Q38 – option 3) and on other

professionals (Q38 – option 4) as sources of support, guidance and advice during the first year of employment.

Qualitative responses from the focus groups tended to confirm the survey findings about the importance of informal support networks. In FG2, a discussion on this point highlighted that the majority felt that their training and continuing professional development needs were largely self-managed. They commented that it was often their *own* responsibility to apply for training, and it was clear from their comments that all had taken ownership and responsibility for addressing their own training needs. The majority of participants in FG1 stated that opportunities for both training and development were made available, and that respective employers operated electronic databases of training options that they could access. A majority consensus emerged that some form of confidence building in the early stages of their career would have been helpful. Deficits in relation to professional training appeared to be around completion of PRTL requirements - with some of the participants commenting that line managers did not know what it was, or what was expected of the NQSW for its completion. As an example of best practice, one respondent from FG2 reported that "an assistant services manager held a newly qualified workers' meeting every month in which they discussed all their issues, including their PRTL". Another respondent from the same group reported that a group of NSQWs from their agency had "started a peer-group-like supervision" at which they could "exchange practice ideas" (P: FG2).

Additional qualitative data asked respondents in open-ended questions to report on how the first year of employment could be improved for newly-qualified social workers. 24% said a protected workload system; 20% better mentoring opportunities - with 9% mentioning the need for regular supervision. With regard to professional development courses, respondents report that workplace learning is often expected to fill 'knowledge gaps'. Participant (D) from FG1 commented: "I find there are lots of courses available again it is something that you self-manage. The one thing I have struggled with is trying to get courses that meet my learning needs in terms of when you have gone through so much focus at university so you really want to get your teeth into some training and I think a lot of the time it could be very basic".

6.5 Issues for continuing professional development

The penultimate section of the questionnaire focused on issues of continuing professional development for newly-qualified social workers and paid particular attention to the role of higher education institutions in preparing them for operational practice. A range of questions (Questions 45-47) were asked about the extent to which their qualifying course prepared them for front-line practice.

Question 45 asked "to what extent did the qualifying course prepare you to face the realities of front line practice situations?" (see Table 12).

Table 12

Good preparation	30.3%
Adequate preparation	50.3%
Not Good preparation	19.3%

Whilst the majority of respondents said that the qualifying course provided either *adequate* or *good* preparation for the realities of front line practice, a significant proportion of some 19% disagreed. Interestingly, Marsh and Triseliotis (1996) found that around 90% of their sample also reported to be 'well' or 'very well' prepared by education. Nevertheless, the 19.3% in our study who felt that university education was *not good preparation*, and the 50.3% who suggested that university only provided *adequate preparation* for the realities of front-line practice, are findings of some concern.

The majority of participants from both focus groups felt that they were well-prepared in relation to theories of intervention, anti-oppressive practice and social work values. The majority valued the opportunity to apply their learning within practice placement opportunities before entering their first formal role.

Question 46 asked respondents: "to what extent did the qualifying course prepare you for making difficult, and complex professional judgements?" (see Table 13).

Table 13

Good preparation	30.5%
Adequate preparation	57%
Not Good preparation	12.7%

Whilst the majority of newly-qualified social worker respondents said that the qualifying course provided either *adequate* or *good* preparation for making difficult and complex judgements, 12.7% said that it did not provide good preparation. Again, these findings are concerning as it would appear that just over half of NQSWs only felt *adequately* prepared, and only a third reported to be well-prepared. In FG1, some participants stated that in relation to managing complex cases they felt that they had a good theoretical grounding, but that 'on the job' training was invaluable for building their knowledge and confidence.

For Question 47 respondents were asked whether the qualifying course prepared them to be resilient and confident practitioners (see Table 14).

Table 14

Yes	56.6%
No	24.8%
Don't Know	18.4%

More promisingly, over half of NQSWs (56%) felt that their course had prepared them to be resilient and confident practitioners; however, notable proportions either disagreed or were unsure.

Respondents were asked whether their qualifying course properly prepared them to write reports and undertake assessments. 71% responded positively and only 29% responded negatively. Responses to this question from FG2 were unanimously positive. The majority of participants stated that their placement experience aided their knowledge as to what the expected content of reports should be. They also stated that working on written assignments helped to develop their

writing skills, but that experience within statutory settings was the best way to sharpen their report writing skills.

A specific question (Question 50) also asked about contemporary issues and policies, and the extent to which the qualifying courses prepared NQSWs to deliver outcome-based services with a personalised approach to care. We found that 28% of respondents said they received ‘good preparation’, with the majority (60%) saying the preparation was ‘adequate’; thus leaving 12% to suggest it was ‘not good preparation’. When asked about the extent to which the qualifying course prepared them to understand the impact of the *integration agenda* between health and social care, 24% said it provided ‘good preparation’; 45% said the preparation was ‘adequate’ - with 30% saying it was ‘not good preparation’. Indeed, given the contemporary context of social work practice under the dominance of personalisation and individualisation of care, and taking stock of the forthcoming and somewhat significant changes to the social care landscape in Scotland over the next few years, these results are clearly concerning for HEIs tasked with ‘preparing’ future generations of NQSWs.

However, and in some contrast to the quantitative findings presented above, a more positive picture emerged when this issue was discussed in detail within both focus groups. The majority of participants felt very confident in their knowledge of outcomes-based practice and in their preparedness for the integration of health and social care. FG1 said they were, in many ways, ahead of other professional colleagues (including experienced social workers) in their knowledge base. All of the participants said that in comparison to nursing and teaching staff, they had a much stronger grasp of the need to work together, and that their knowledge of social policy initiatives/drivers e.g. GIRFEC was generally better in comparison. The majority of participants attributed this more beneficial position to the emphasis placed on these contemporary issues within the core content of university material.

When asked whether they considered themselves to be research-minded practitioners (Question 51), encouraging findings revealed that 68% responded affirmatively - with only 15% negatively, and 17% saying they ‘didn't know’. Even more remarkably, when asked whether they were confident in reflecting on their

values and managing value dilemmas, 94% said *yes* and only 2% responded negatively - with 4% saying they ‘didn't know’.

Focus group material in reply to this question was also very positive from both groups. Unanimously, respondents felt that research played an important part in their current practice; that the skills they acquired at university were used in practice, and that they were confident in using research to enhance their knowledge base. In relation to the use of research, (T) from FG2 commented: "I think university gives you that skill to cut through the rubbish and get to the point". Another participant (N) stated: "Everybody at some level should be able to look at that evidence base and critique it whether it is good evidence or high quality evidence". The completion of their PRTL helped to maintain a degree of research mindedness and they recognised that research was essential to keeping their practice relevant. They also commented on the fact that many of their employers (all local authorities) do not have access to Athens[1] accounts. The majority of participants suggested that it would be helpful if local authorities/employers were to invest or be funded to provide access to journal articles. All participants were able to provide examples of where research was able to inform their current practice. Respondents in both focus groups reported that team meetings were often an important conduit for dissemination of recent and relevant research findings as well as providing feedback from research training events.

In summary the results show that social work education appears to be adequately preparing NQSWs for the challenges of operational practice; however, concerning numbers of NQSWs responded with either negative or neutral answers in the quantitative section of our study. These findings require further examination, and perhaps further investigation to help understand the more nuanced as well as the more pronounced skew towards negative reporting by NQSWs in this section of our questionnaire. However, it should be noted that more positive findings did emerge within focus group discussions.

[1] Athens (access and identity management service) is a service supplied by *Eduserv* to provide single sign-on access to protected resources such as journals and other educational material. HEIs adopted this service in 2000. The NHS followed suit in 2003. To date, social work has no formal arrangement in place for its staff.

The survey finally asked respondents to identify the two most important things to help a newly-qualified social worker survive the first few weeks of the job (Question 54) with a resounding 58% stating supportive teams and collegial environments (see Table 15).

Table 15

Supportive Team	30.9%
Colleagues	27.6%
Manager	25%
Good Support	17.7%
Induction	11.1%
Shadowing	8.5%
Confidence	7.2%

Qualitative responses to this question frequently mentioned the challenging nature of having to deal with and respond to crisis situations - suggesting the need to develop more advanced and critical decision-making skills. This was also reflected in respondents who mentioned the importance of a confident approach and the need to develop resilience strategies. The need for supportive team leaders and colleagues were consistently raised as paramount. Participant (D) from FG2 gave a flavour of this when commenting “I do not feel that the emotional support is there, they are very good at providing practical support to enable the needs of the family and the children that you are working on to be looked after, and to ensure that you can manage the case load but not necessarily to ensure you are getting that emotional support so that the stress does not overwhelm you”. Participants from both focus groups stated that support was also sought from family and friends (consistent with earlier quantitative findings on this item). Overall, there appeared to be little emotional support provided for the participants through existing formal channels in the workplace.

In drawing out some preliminary conclusions, the findings reported here support the case that newly qualified social workers are generally well-prepared by professional qualifying programmes. Areas for improvement include better teaching on the integration of health and social care, self-directed support and complex

decision-making. Nevertheless, newly-qualified practitioners appear confident across all categories of National Occupational Standards for Social Work. However, the findings that relate to issues of transition demonstrate that once newly qualified social workers enter the workforce, they experience inconsistent approaches to formal structures of supervision, induction and mentoring, and in turn they appear to seek out support and guidance from less formal sources (such as colleagues, other professionals and even family and friends). Some NQSWs also find themselves engaging in work that might be beyond their ability (such as complex child protection and adult protection cases); and perhaps more worrying is the fact that a proportion report that workloads are unprotected. Lastly, it would appear that opportunities for continuous professional development are generally not provided in a structured way (with perhaps too much emphasis on the use of shadowing and not enough on developing specialist skills and knowledge).

6.6 Monitoring data

Between January and February 2014 a total of 572 Newly Qualified Social Workers were contacted via email from the SSSC and asked to participate in a web-based survey. Of this population, 205 responded - giving a healthy response rate of 36% (most survey rates target a response rate of between 15-20%). The following is a breakdown of the data collected in respect of Age, Gender, Racial Origin, Ethnic Origin and Disability.

Where possible we have compared the figures from our survey to those presented in the *Scottish Social Services Sector: Report on 2012 Workforce Data.*

Age: There were a total of 156 responses to this question and the breakdown was as follows:

Table 16

Age 20-24 Years	10.9%
Age 25-34 Years	48.7%
Age 35-44 Years	23.0%
Age 45 Years +	17.3%

As expected - given their status as newly-qualified social workers - the sample reflects a younger composition (almost 50% between 25-34 years old) than the age average figure overall for Scotland's workforce (currently at 44). The Public Sector age is 47 (SSSC 2012).

Gender: There were a total of 155 responses to this question and the breakdown was as follows:

Table 17

Male	13.5%
Female	86.4%

The figures represented in the survey mirror the wider composition within the social work sector. As of 2012, the average percentage for the whole workforce was 84% women and 16% men. Within fieldwork services the figures again mirror current work trends e.g. fostering is currently 88% female staff, fieldwork is 83% female. The majority of male staff representation lies within criminal justice and residential schools (SSSC, 2012).

Racial Origin: There were a total of 155 responses to this question and the breakdown was as follows:

Table 18

Black	0.6%
White	98.7%
Other	0.6%

The survey figures show a higher incidence of white workers than would be expected - had it reflected the composition of the wider social work workforce. The overall Scottish figures are White 82% and 1% for Asian, Black and other.

Ethnic Origin: There were a total of 147 responses to this question and the breakdown was as follows:

Table 19

African	0.0%
Caribbean	0.0%
Chinese	0.0%
(UK)European	93.8%
Indian	0.6%
(Other) European	2.0%

Pakistani	0.0%
Bangladeshi	0.0%
Other	3.4%

There are no similar figures provided by the SSSC to compare this category to national workforce statistics.

Disability: There were a total of 153 responses to this question and the breakdown in terms of categories of disability was as follows:

Table 20

No Disability	90.2%
Dyslexic	5.9%
Blind/ Sight Impairment	0.0%
Deaf/ Hearing Impairment	2.6%
Wheelchair user	0.0%
Mobility Difficulties	0.6%
Unseen Disability	0.0%
Disability not listed	0.6%

The Scottish Social Services Council data[2] does not provide figures which breakdown into the categories listed above. They only cover 'No disability- 86%', 'Disability- 2%' and 'Unknown-12%' (SSSC, 2014).

[2] See Scottish Social Services Sector: Report on 2012 Workforce Data, Official Statistics Publication.

7. References

Ashbrook Research and Consultancy (2011) *Take up and use of the Continuous Learning Framework* (April 2011), prepared for the Scottish Social Services Council. Available at: http://www.continuouslearningframework.com/component/option,com_docman/ Itemid,21/gid,1821/task,doc_download/ [Last accessed 16 January 2014]

Association of the Directors of Social Work / Scottish Executive (2005) *Improving Frontline Services: A Framework for Supporting Frontline Staff*, Edinburgh: ADSW / Scottish Executive.

Bates, N., Immins, T., Parker, J., Keen, S., Rutter, L., Brown, K. and Zsigo, S. (2010) 'Baptism of fire': The first year in the life of a newly qualified social worker', *Social Work Education*, **29**(2), pp.152-170.

Bartlett, H. P., Simonite, V., Westcott, E. and Taylor, H. R. (2000) 'A comparison of the nursing competence of graduates and diplomates from UK nursing programmes', *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, **9**(3), pp. 369–79.

Benner, P. (1984) *From Novice to Expert*, London: Addison-Wesley.

Biggerstaff, M. A., Wood, L. and Fountain, S. (1998) 'Determining readiness for child protective services practice: Development of a testing program', *Children and Youth Services Review*, **20**(8), pp. 697–713

Brandon, J. and Davies, M. (1979) 'The limits of competence in social work: The assessment of marginal students in social work education', *British Journal of Social Work*, **9**(3), pp. 295-347.

Braye, S. and Preston-Shoot, M. (2004) *Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Law in Social Work Education. SCIE Guide 13*, London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Brown, S. D. (2002) 'Michel Serres: Science, Translation and the Logic of the Parasite', *Theory, Culture & Society*, **19**(3), pp. 1-27.

Brown, K., McCloskey, C., Galpin, D., Keen, S. and Immins, T. (2008) 'Evaluating the impact of post-qualifying social work education', *Social Work Education*, **27**(8), pp. 853–867.

Bunge, M. and Ardila, R. (1987) *Philosophy of Psychology*, New York: Springer-Verlag.

Burgess, H. (2004) 'Redesigning the curriculum for social work education: Complexity, conformity, chaos, creativity, collaboration?', *Social Work Education*, **23**(2), pp. 163-183

Callon, M. (1981) 'Struggles and negotiations to define what is problematic and what is not: The socio-logic of translation'. In K. Knorr, R. Krohn and R. Whitley (eds.) *The Social Process of Scientific Investigation*, Dordecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Co.

Carpenter, J., Shardlow, S. M., Patsios, D. and Wood, M. (2013) 'Developing the confidence and competence of newly qualified child and family social workers in England: outcomes of a national programme', *British Journal of Social Work*, Advance access first published June 19, 2013, doi:10.1093/bjsw/bct106.

Chang, L. and Krosnick, J. A. (2009) 'National Surveys Via Rdd Telephone Interviewing Versus the Internet: Comparing Sample Representativeness and Response Quality', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, **73**(4), pp. 641-678.

Clark, C. (1995) 'Competence and discipline in professional formation', *British Journal of Social Work*, **25**(5), pp. 563–80.

Clark, T. and Holmes, S. (2007) 'Fit for practice? An exploration of the development of newly qualified nurses using focus groups', *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, **44**(7), pp. 1210–20.

Collins, E. and Daly, E. (2011) *Decision making and social work in Scotland: The role of evidence and practice wisdom*, Glasgow: Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services.

Cook-Sather, A. (2006) 'Newly betwixt and between: Revising liminality in the context of a teaching program', *Anthropology and Education*, **37**(2), pp. 110-127.

Cote, J. (1996) 'Sociological perspectives on identity formation: the culture-identity link and identity capital', *Journal of Adolescence*, **19**, pp. 417-428.

Couper, M.P. (2008) *Designing Effective Web Surveys*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Crisp, B., Anderson, M., Orme, J. and Green Lister, P. (2003) *Learning and Teaching Assessment Skills in Social Work Education. SCIE Knowledge Review 01*, London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Croisdale-Appleby, D. (2014) *Re-visioning social work education: An independent review*, London: Department of Health. Retrieved on 27 February 2014 from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/nsystem/uploads/attachment_data/file/ 285788/DCA_Accessible.pdf

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D. and Christian, L. M. (2014) *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method (4th Edition),* Oxford: Wiley.

Dreyfus, H. L. and Dreyfus, S. E. (1986) *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Age of the Computer*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Duchscher, J.E. and Cowin, L. S. (2006) 'The new graduates' professional inheritance', *Nursing Outlook*, **54**(3), pp. 152–158

Dunk-West, P. (2013) How to be a Social Worker: A Critical Guide for Students, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Effken, J. A. (2001) 'Information basis for expert intuition', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **34**(2), pp. 246-255.

Fook, J. (2000) 'Deconstructing and reconstructing professional expertise', in B. Fawcett, B. Featherstone, J. Fook and A. Rossiter (eds), *Practice and Research in Social Work*, London: Routledge.

Galvani, S. and Forrester, D. (2008) *What works in training social workers about drug and alcohol use? A survey of student learning and readiness to practice*. Final report for the Home Office (October 2008). London: Home Office. Last accessed 14 January 2014. Available at: www.beds.ac.uk /departments/appliedsocialstudies/staff/sarah-galvani/galvani-forrester-horeport2008pdf

Gosling, S. D., Vazire, S., Srivastava, S., and John, O. P. (2004) 'Should we trust Web-based studies? A comparative analysis of six preconceptions about Internet questionnaires', *American Psychologist*, **59**(2), pp. 93-104.

Greenwood, J. (2000) 'Critique of the graduate nurse: an international perspective', *Nurse Education Today*, **20**(1), pp. 17–29.

Hansard (2009) *Written Ministerial Statements, Children Schools and Families, 26 January 2009, Column 1WS, Social Work Taskforce*, London: Hansard. Last accessed 16 January 2014. Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/ cmhansrd/cm090126/wmstext/ 90126m0001.htm.

Hewson, C. (2003) *Internet Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social and Behavioural Sciences,* London: Sage.

Hewson, C. and Laurent, D. (2012) 'Research Design and Tools for Internet Research (re-print)'. In J. Hughes (Ed.) *Sage Internet Research Methods: Volume 1*. Sage: London.

Jack, G. And Donnellan, H. (2010) 'Recognising the person within the developing professional: Tracking the early careers of newly qualified childcare social workers in three local authorities in England', *Social Work Education*, **29**(3), pp. 305-318.

Kelly, L. and Jackson, S. (2011) 'Post-qualifying social work education in child protection in Scotland', *Social Work Education*, **30**(5), pp. 480-496.

Kitzinger, J. (1995) 'Qualitative Research: Introducing focus groups', *British Medical Journal*. Available at: http://www.bmj.com/content/311/7000/299. [Accessed: 12 December 2013].

Laming, H., Lord (2009) *The Protection of Children in England: a progress report*, Norwich: TSO (The Stationery Office).

Lofmark, A., Smide, B. and Wikblad, K. (2006) 'Competence of newly-graduated nurses: A comparison of the perceptions of qualified nurses and students', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, **53**(6), pp. 721–8.

Luckock, B., Lefevre, M., Orr, D., Jones, M., Marchant, R. and Tanner, K. (2006) *Teaching, Learning and Assessing Communication Skills with Children and Young People in Social Work Education. SCIE Knowledge Review 12*, London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Lymbery, M., Charles, M., Christopherson, J. and Eadie, T. (2000) 'The control of British social work education: European comparisons', *European Journal of Social Work*, **3**(3), pp. 269–82.

Lyons, K. and Manion, K. H. (2004) 'Goodbye DipSW: Trends in student satisfaction and employment outcomes. Some implications for the new social work award', *Social Work Education*, **23**(2), pp. 133-148.

Marsh, P. and Triseliotis, J. (1996) *Ready to Practise? Social Workers and Probation Officers: Their Training and First Year in Work*, Aldershot: Avebury/Ashgate Publishing.

McKenna, H., Thompson, D., Watson, R. and Norman, I. (2006) 'The good old days of nurse training: Rose-tinted or jaundiced view?', *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, **43**(2), pp. 135–137.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Stevens, M. and Hussein, S. (2011) 'Making the transition: Comparing research on newly qualified social workers with other professions', *British Journal of Social Work*, **41**, pp. 1340-56

Moriarty, J. and Manthorpe, J. (2013) 'Shared expectations? Reforming the social work qualifying curriculum in England', *Social Work Education*, **32**(7), pp. 841-853.

Moriarty, J. and Manthorpe, J. (2014) 'Controversy in the curriculum: What do we know about the content of the social work qualifying curriculum in England?', *Social Work Education*, **33**(1), pp. 77-90.

Munro, E. (2011) *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A child-centred system*, London: Department for Education. Retrieved 12 January 2014 from http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/8875_DfE_Munro_Report_TAGGED.pdf.

Narey, M. (2014) *Making the education of social workers consistently effective: Report of Sir Martin Narey's independent review of the education of children's social workers*, London: Department for Education. Retrieved 13 February 2014 from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/287756/Making_the_education_of_social_workers_consistently_effective.pdf

Nisbet, H. (2008) 'A model for preceptorship: The rationale for a formal, structured programme developed for newly qualified radiotherapy radiographers', *Radiography*, **14**(1), pp. 52–6.

O'Connor, S. E., Pearce, J., Smith, R. L., Voegeli, D. and Walton, P. (2001) 'An evaluation of the clinical performance of newly qualified nurses: A competency based assessment', *Nurse Education Today*, **21**(7), pp. 559–68.

Orme, J., MacIntyre, G., Green Lister, P., Cavanagh, K., Crisp, B. R., Hussein, S., Manthorpe, J., Moriarty, J., Sharpe, E., and Stevens, M. (2009) 'What (a) difference a degree makes: The evaluation of the new social work degree in England', *British Journal of Social Work*, **39**, pp. 161-178.

Payne, M. (2014) *Modern Social Work Theory*, (4th Edition), Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pithouse, A. and Scourfield, J. (2002) 'Ready for practice? The DipSW in Wales: Views from the workplace on social work training', *Journal of Social Work*, **2**(1), pp. 7-27.

Polanyi, M. (1969) *Knowing and Being*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Purkis, M. E. (1994) 'Entering the field: intrusions of the social and its exclusion from studies of nursing practice', *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, **31**(1), pp. 315-336.

Rudge, T. (1992) 'Reflections on Benner: a critical perspective', *Contemporary Nursing*, **1**(1), pp. 84-88.

Scottish Executive (2003) *The Framework for Social Work Education in Scotland*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (2005) *National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005 – 2010*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive (2006) *Changing Lives: Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review*, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Social Services Council (2003) *Rules for Social Work Training 2003*, Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Scottish Social Services Council (2004) *Continuing Professional Development for the Social Services Workforce*, Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Scottish Social Services Council (2005) *Rules and Requirements for Specialist Training for Social Service Workers in Scotland*, Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Scottish Social Services Council/Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (2008) *The Framework for Continuous Learning in Social Services*, Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council/Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services.

Scottish Social Services Council (2009) *Codes of Practice for Social Workers and Employers*, Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Scottish Social Services Council (2011a) *Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements for Social Workers: Guidance Notes* (October 2011), Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Scottish Social Services Council (2011b) *Post Registration Training and Learning Requirements for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs): Guidance Notes for NQSWs* (October 2011), Dundee: Scottish Social Services Council.

Sharpe, E., Moriarty, J., Stevens, M., Manthorpe, J. and Hussein, S. (2011) Into the Workforce: Report from a study of newly qualified social work graduates (September 2011), London: Kings College London, Social Care Workforce Research Unit. Last accessed: 15 January 2014, available from http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/kpi/scwru/dhinitiative/projects/sharpeetal2011itwfinalreport.pdf

Social Work Reform Board (2010) *Building a Safe and Confident Future: One year on. Detailed proposals from the Social Work Reform Board*, London: Department for Education. Retrieved 12 January 2014 from http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/1%20Building%20a%20safe%20and%20confident%20future%20%20One%20year%20on%20-%20detailed%20proposals.pdf.

Social Work Task Force (2009a) *Building a Safe Confident Future: the final report of the Social Work Task Force*, London: Department for Children, Schools and Families. Retrieved 12 January 2014 from http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/swtf/downloads/FirstReport.pdf.

Social Work Task Force (2009b) *Facing up to the Task: the interim report of the Social Work Task Force*, London: Department for Children, Schools and Families. Retrieved 12 January 2014 from http://www.education.gov.uk/publications//eOrderingDownload/DCSF00752-2009.pdf.

Social Work Task Force (2009c*) First Report of the Social Work Task Force*, London: Department for Children, Schools and Families. Retrieved 12 January 2014 from http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/f/first%20report%20of%20the%20social%20work%20task%20force%20-%20may%202009.pdf.

Thompson, J. L. (1990) 'Hermeneutic Inquiry', in Moody, E. *Advanced Nursing Science Through Research, Vol. 2*, Newbury Park: Sage.

Trevithick, P., Richards, S., Ruch, G. and Moss, B. (2004) *Teaching and Learning Communication Skills in Social Work Education. SCIE Knowledge Review 06*, London: Social Care Institute for Excellence.

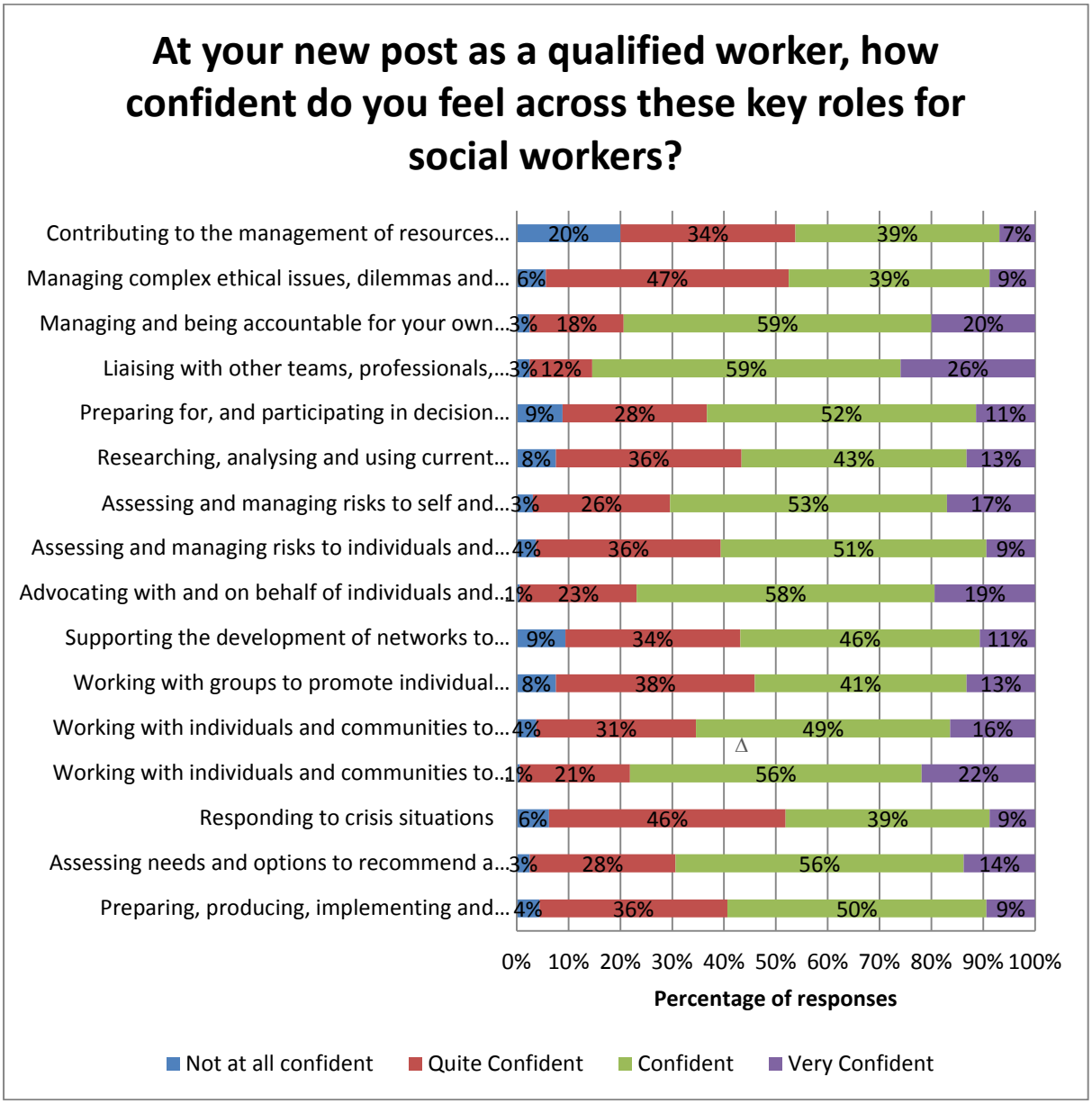
Turner, V. (1969) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*, Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

Wilson, G. (2012) 'Reforming social work education: some reflections on the contribution of practice learning', *Practice: Social Work in Action*, **24**(4), pp. 225-237.

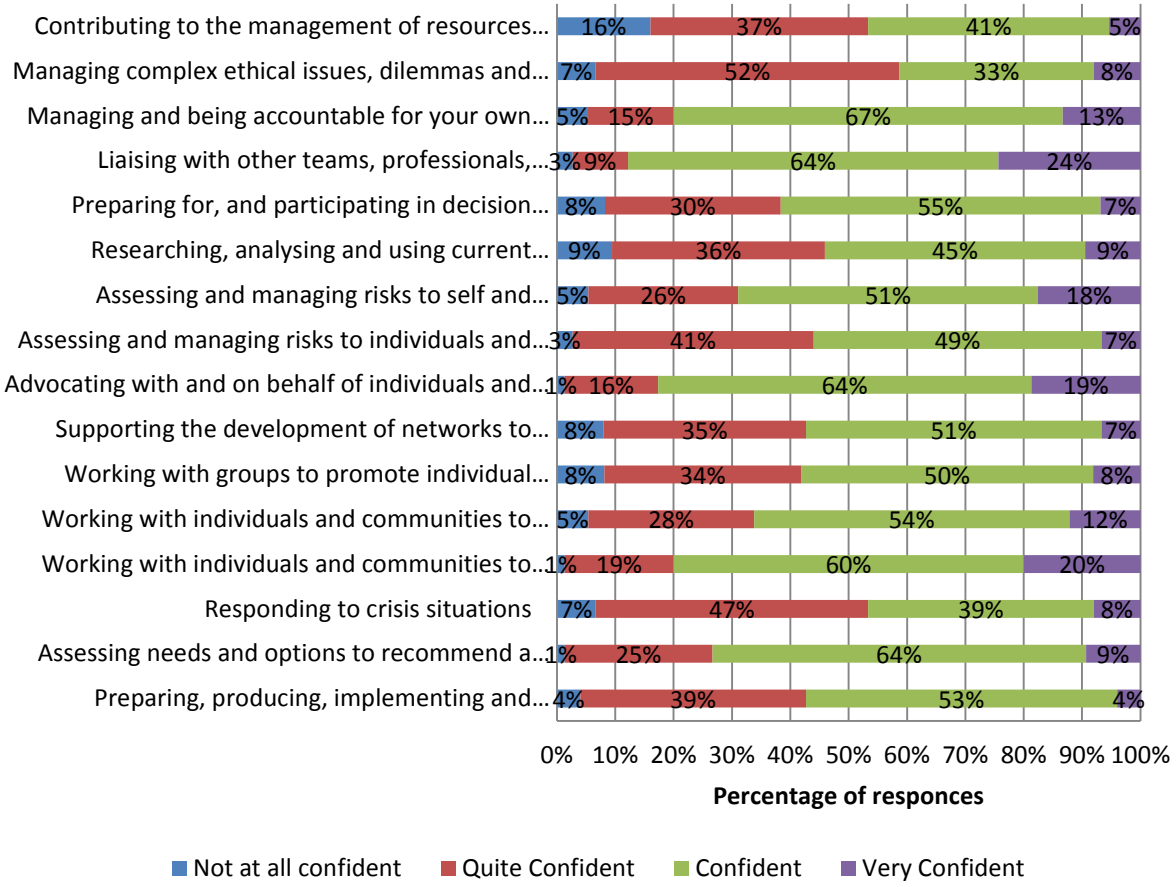
Wolff, A. C., Pesut, B. and Regan, S. (2010) 'New graduate nurse practice readiness: Perspectives on the context shaping our understanding and expectations', *Nurse Education Today*, **30**(2), pp. 187-191.

Appendix 1

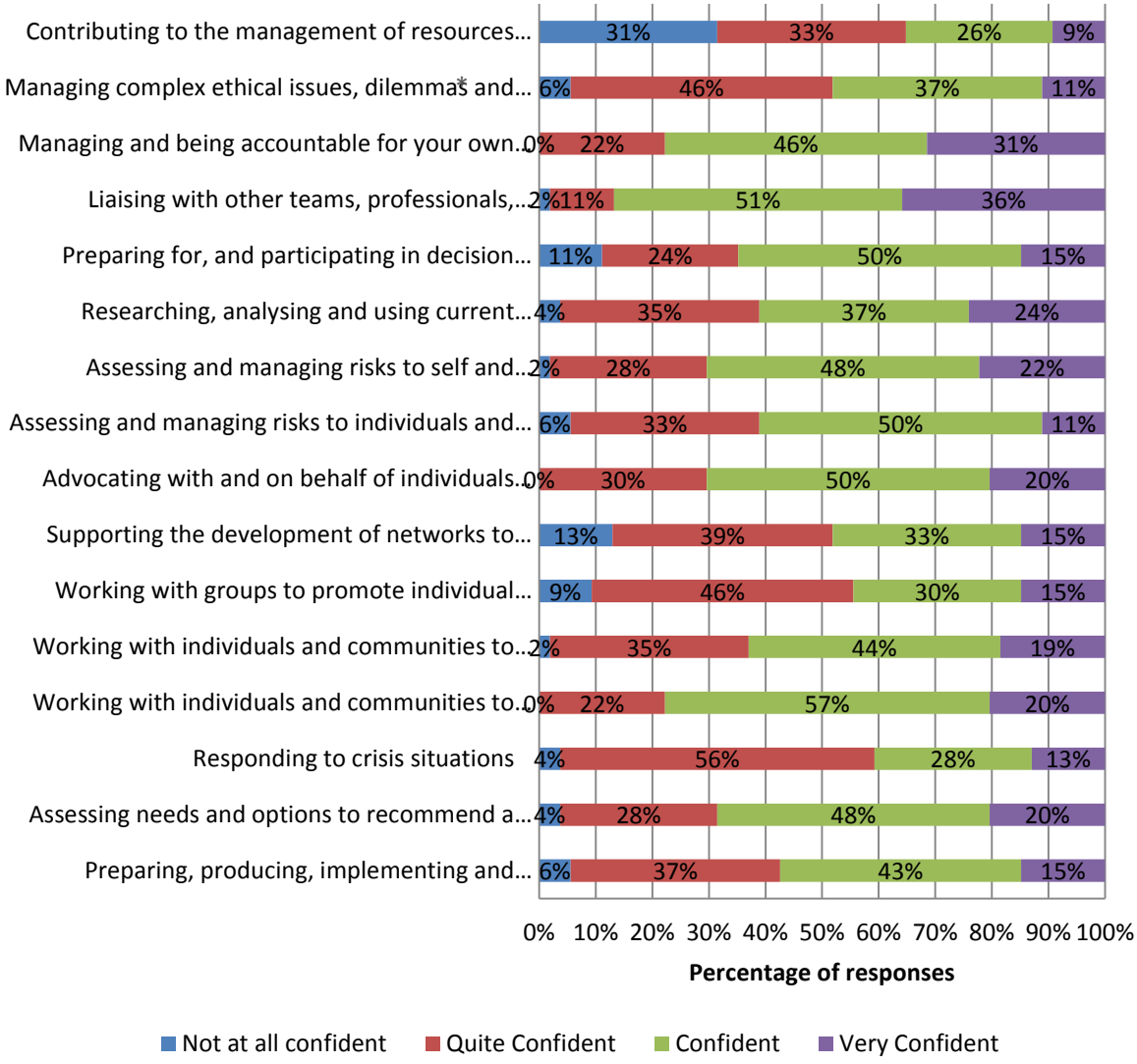
Levels of confidence of NQSWs in key roles taken from National Occupational Standards for social work.



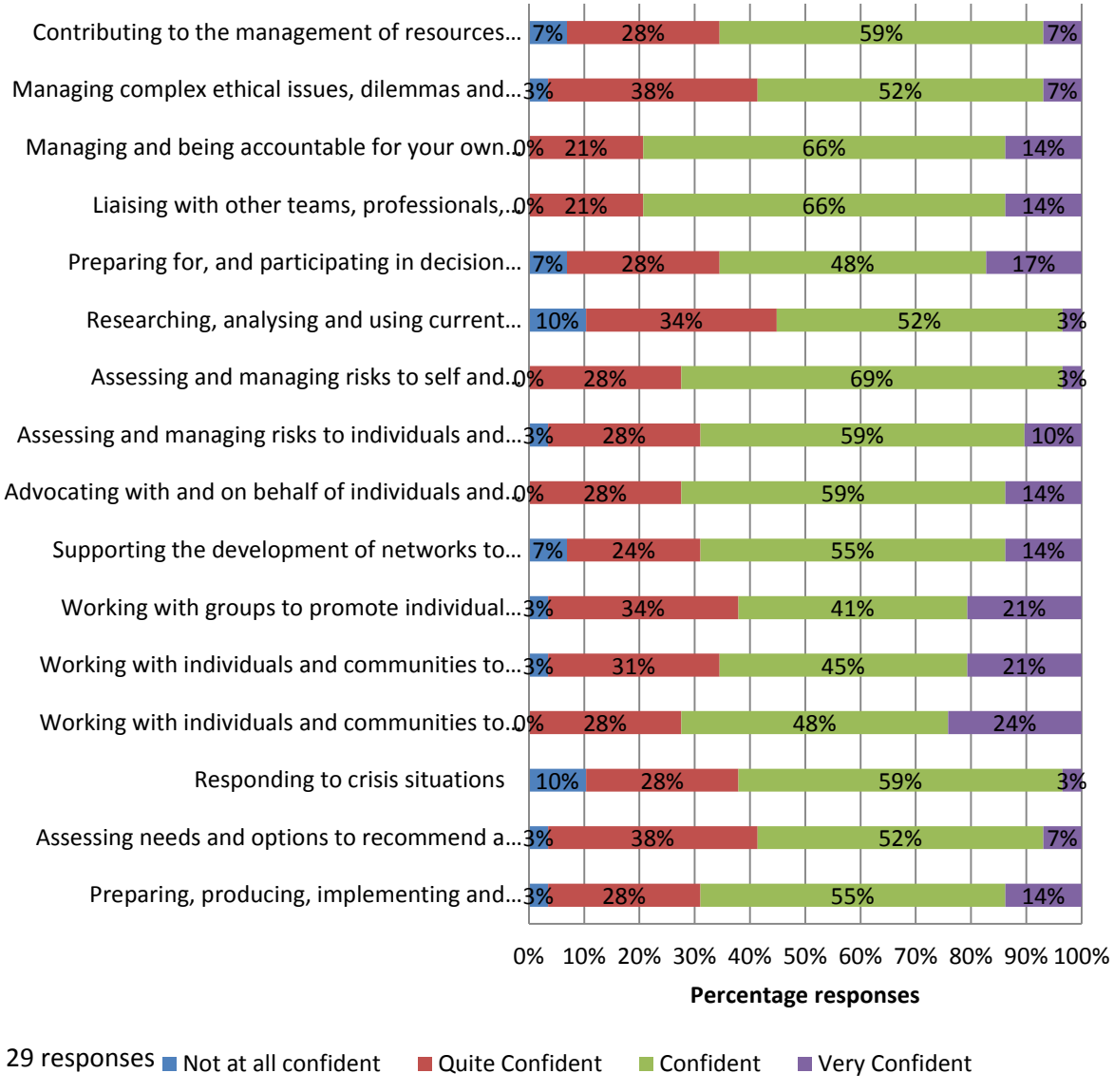
Undergraduate level:
At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



Postgraduate level:
At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



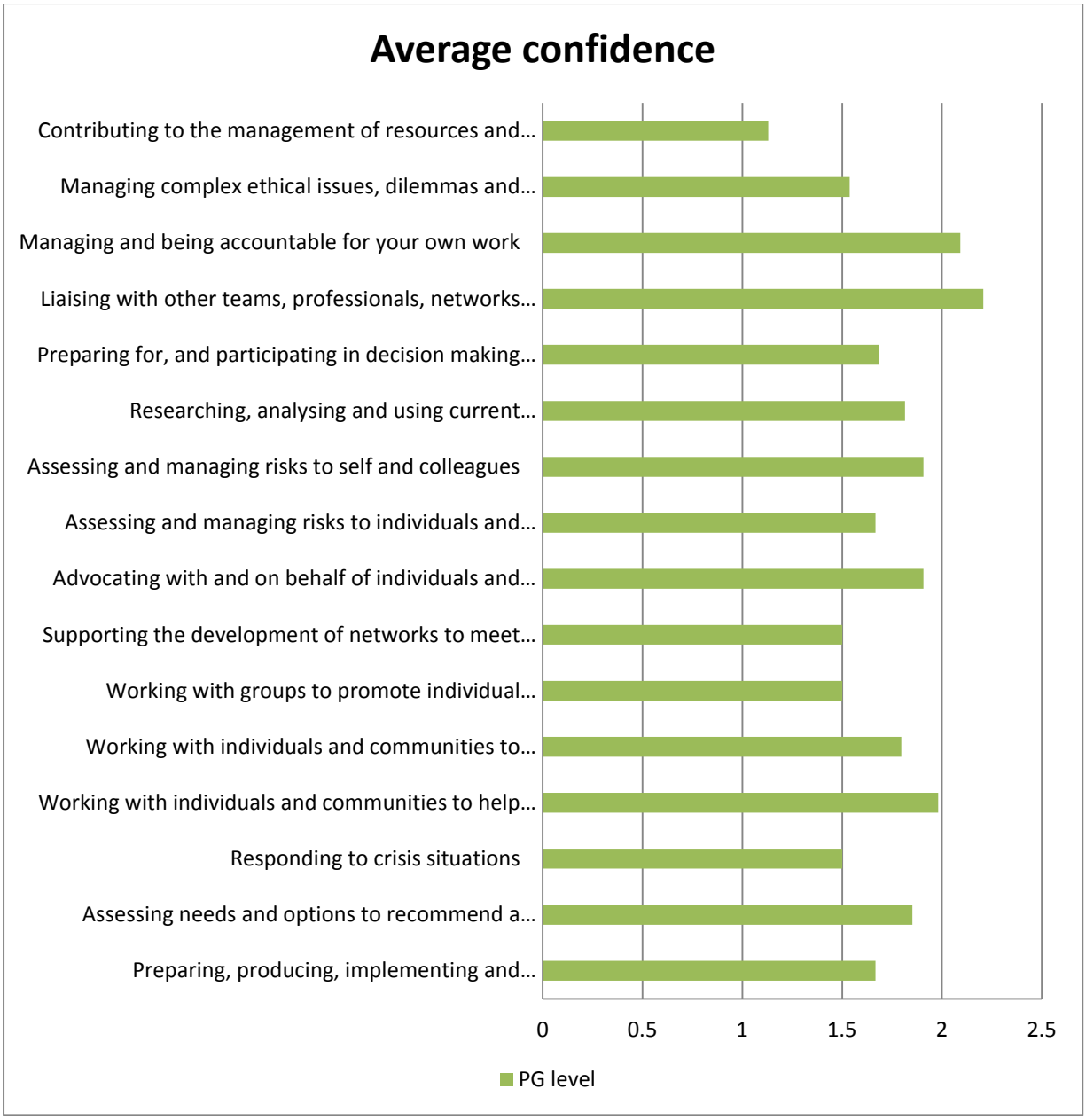
Employment based route: At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



Appendix 2

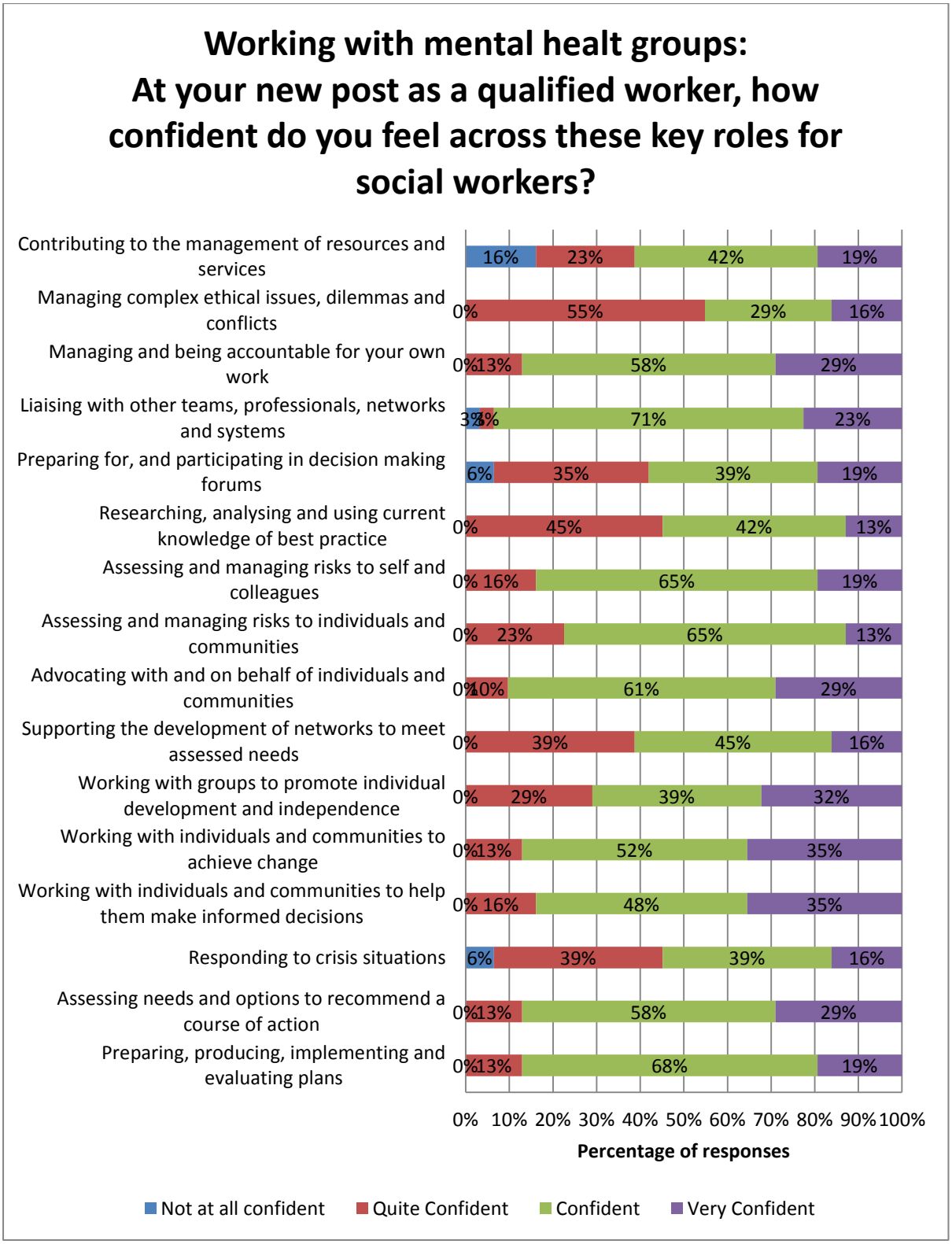
Average Levels of Confidence with National Occupational Standard categories across undergraduate, postgraduate and employment based populations of NQSWs.

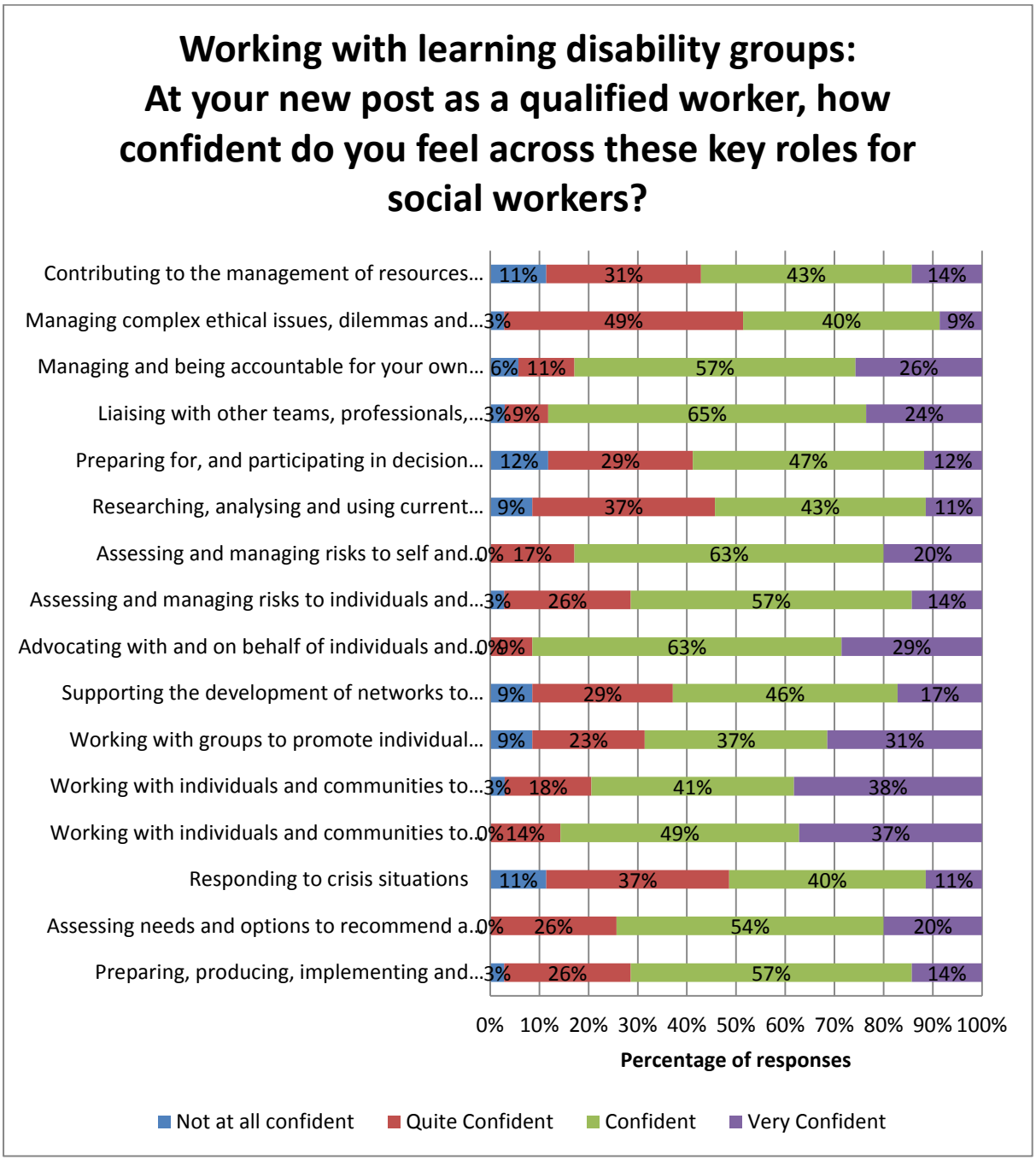

Average confidence
Contributing to the management of resources...
Managing complex ethical issues, dilemmas and...
Managing and being accountable for your own...
Liaising with other teams, professionals, networks...
Preparing for, and participating in decision...
Researching, analysing and using current...
Assessing and managing risks to self and colleagues
Assessing and managing risks to individuals and...
Advocating with and on behalf of individuals and...
Supporting the development of networks to meet...
Working with groups to promote individual...
Working with individuals and communities to...
Working with individuals and communities to...
Responding to crisis situations
Assessing needs and options to recommend a...
Preparing, producing, implementing and...
0
0.5
1
1.5
2
2.5
UG level


Average confidence
Contributing to the management of resources and...
Managing complex ethical issues, dilemmas and...
Managing and being accountable for your own work
Liaising with other teams, professionals, networks...
Preparing for, and participating in decision making...
Researching, analysing and using current...
Assessing and managing risks to self and colleagues
Assessing and managing risks to individuals and...
Advocating with and on behalf of individuals and...
Supporting the development of networks to meet...
Working with groups to promote individual...
Working with individuals and communities to...
Working with individuals and communities to help...
Responding to crisis situations
Assessing needs and options to recommend a...
Preparing, producing, implementing and...
0
0.5
1
1.5
2
2.5
PG level

Appendix 3

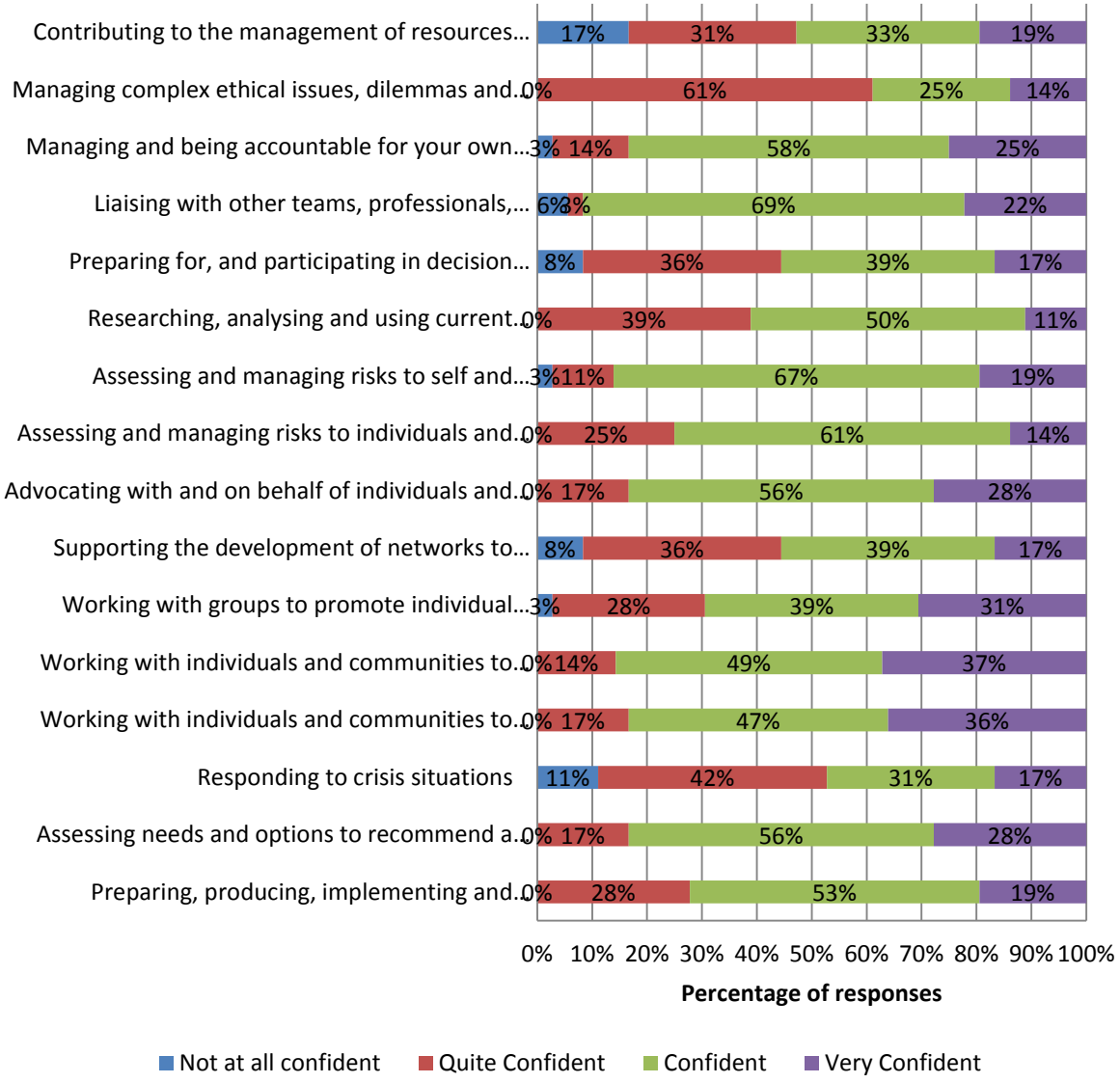
Levels of Confidence with roles of National Occupational Standards for NQSWs working with different service user groups.



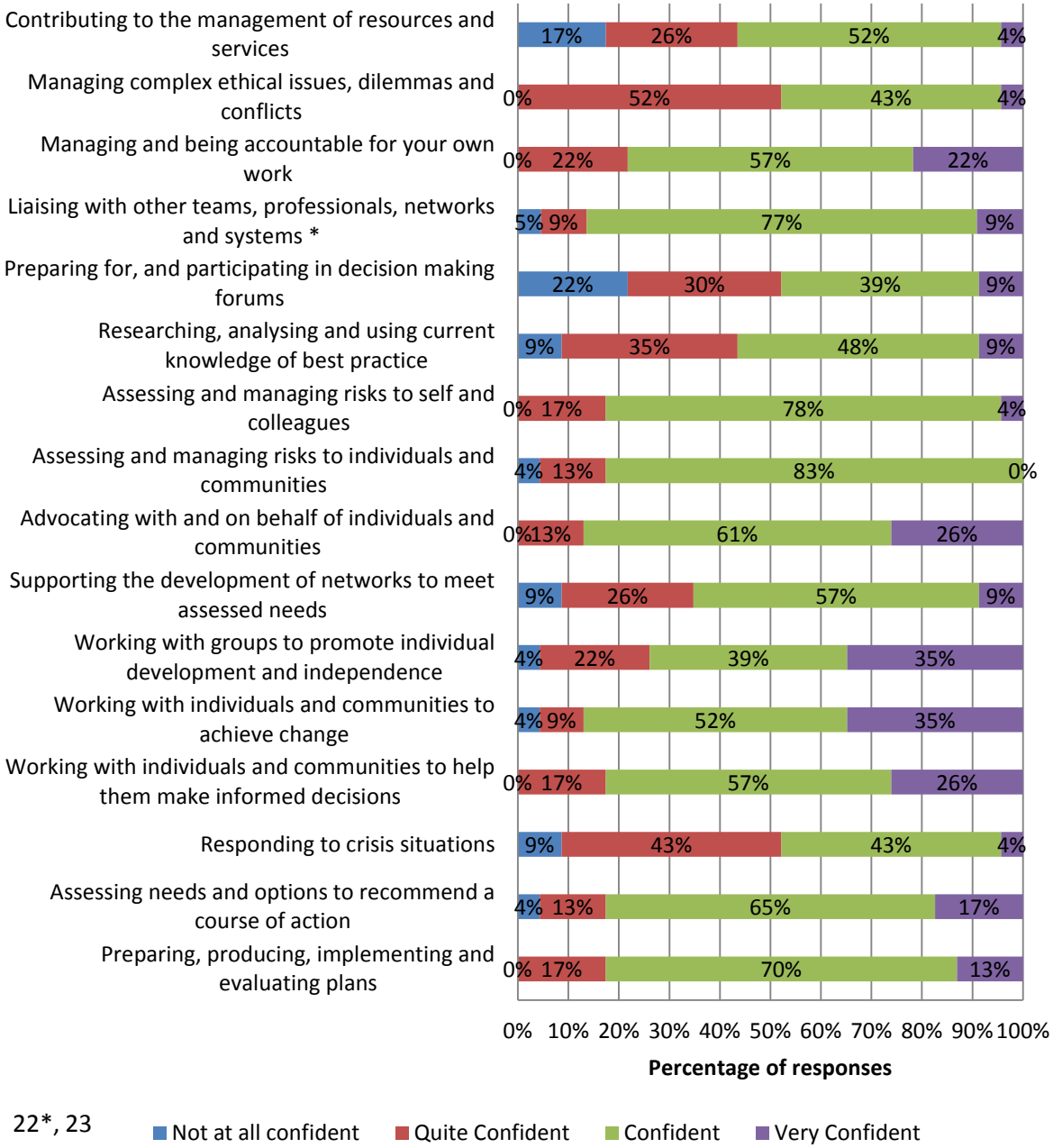

Working with learning disability groups:
At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?
Contributing to the management of resources...
Managing complex ethical issues, dilemmas and...
Managing and being accountable for your own...
Liaising with other teams, professionals,...
Preparing for, and participating in decision...
Researching, analysing and using current...
Assessing and managing risks to self and...
Assessing and managing risks to individuals and...
Advocating with and on behalf of individuals and...
Supporting the development of networks to...
Working with groups to promote individual...
Working with individuals and communities to...
Working with individuals and communities to...
Responding to crisis situations
Assessing needs and options to recommend a...
Preparing, producing, implementing and...
11% 31% 43% 14%
3% 49% 40% 9%
6% 11% 57% 26%
3% 9% 65% 24%
12% 29% 47% 12%
9% 37% 43% 11%
0% 17% 63% 20%
3% 26% 57% 14%
0% 9% 63% 29%
9% 29% 46% 17%
9% 23% 37% 31%
3% 18% 41% 38%
0% 14% 49% 37%
11% 37% 40% 11%
0% 26% 54% 20%
3% 26% 57% 14%
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Percentage of responses
Not at all confident
Quite Confident
Confident
Very Confident

Working with children, young people and families:
At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?

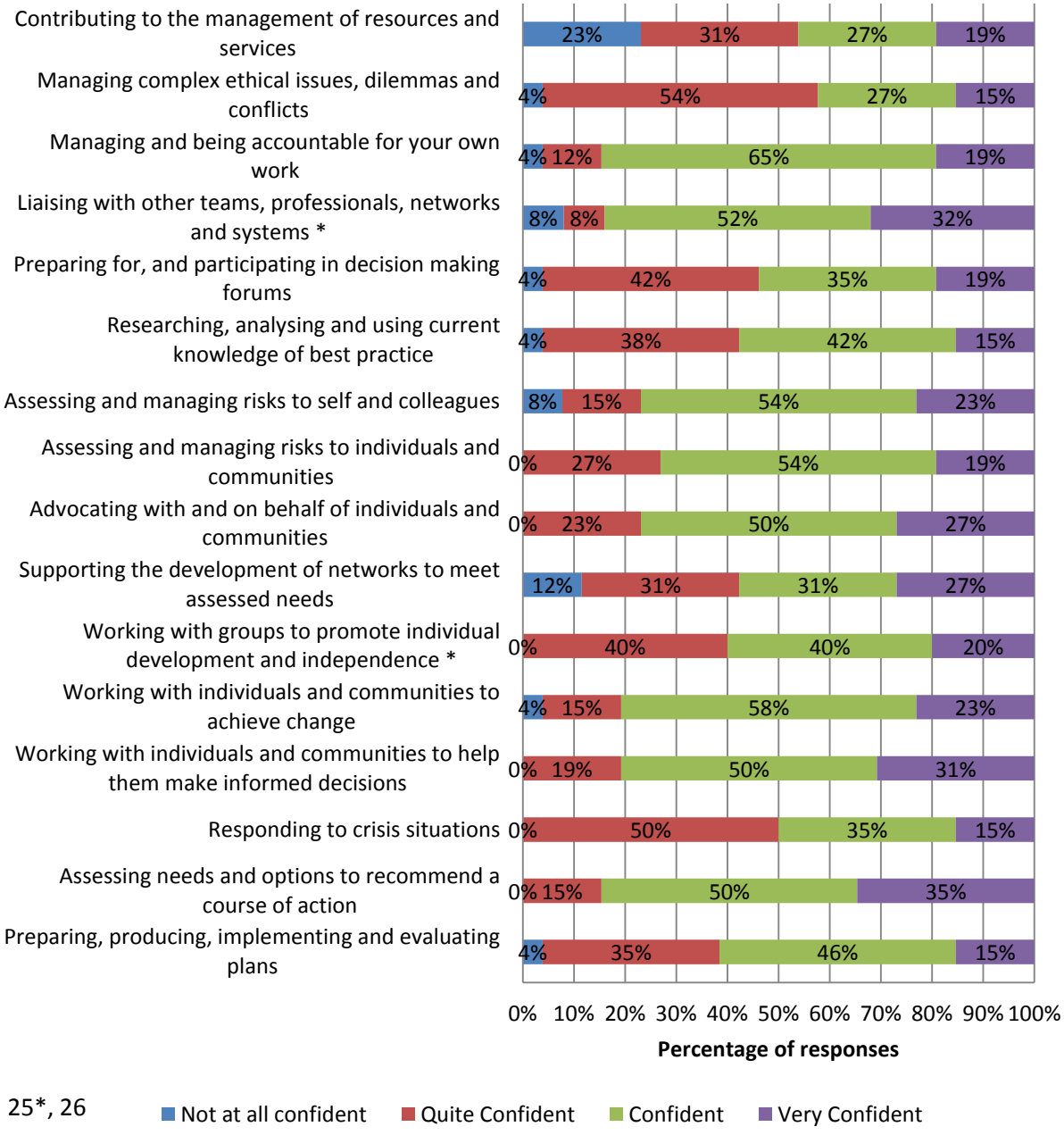
Working with adults: At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



Working with older people: At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?

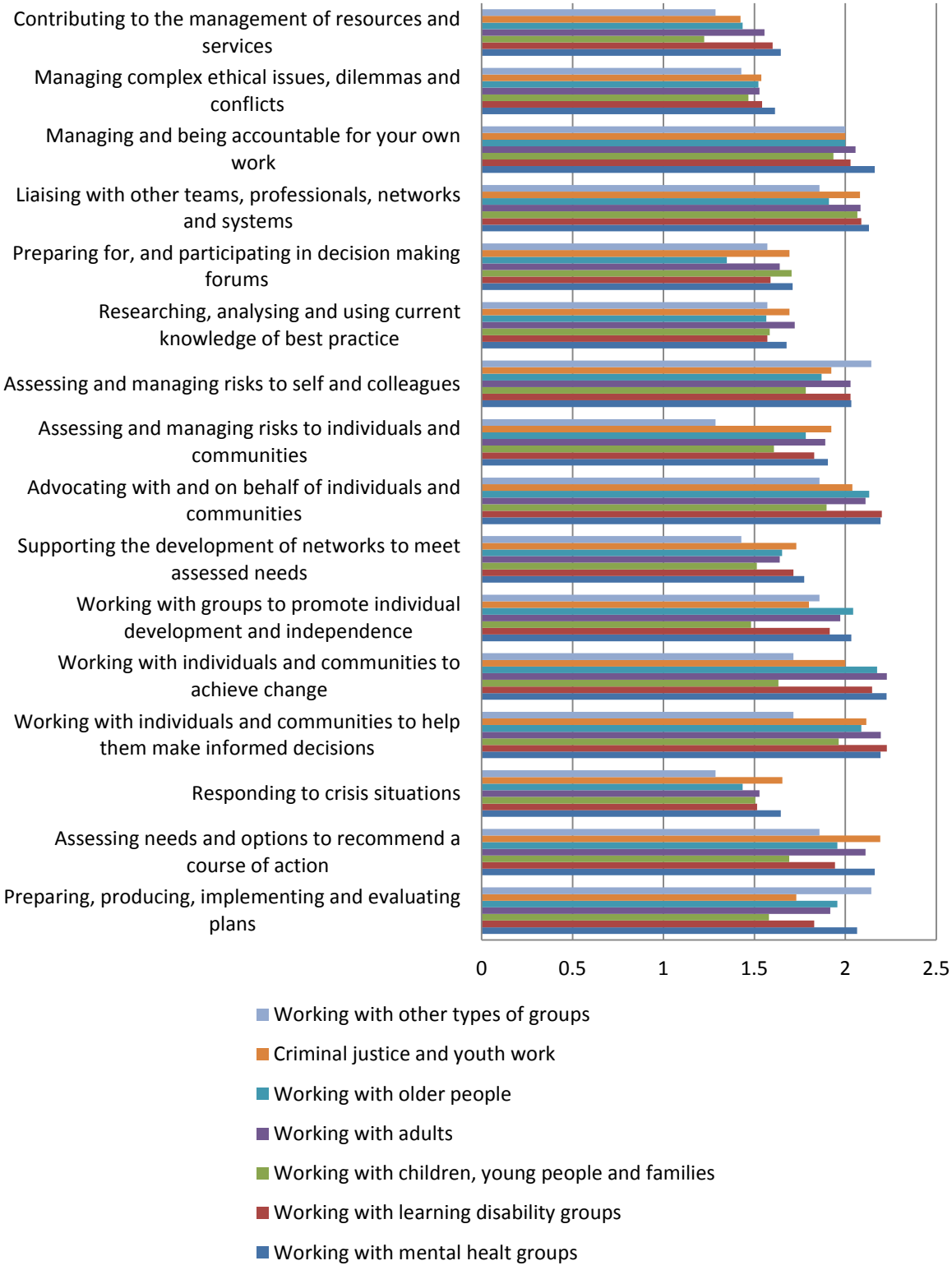


Criminal justice and youth work: At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



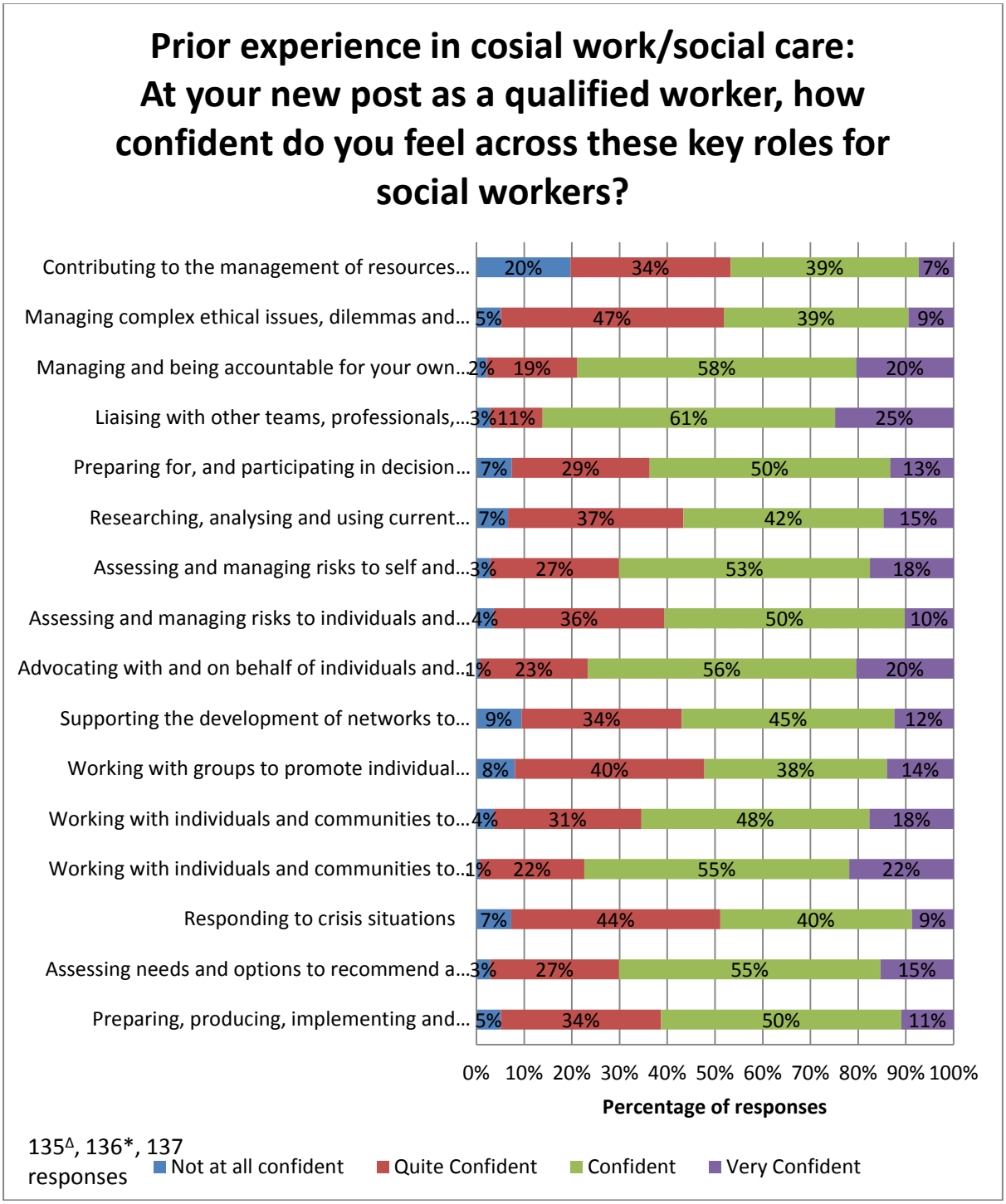
25*, 26

Average confidence:
At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?

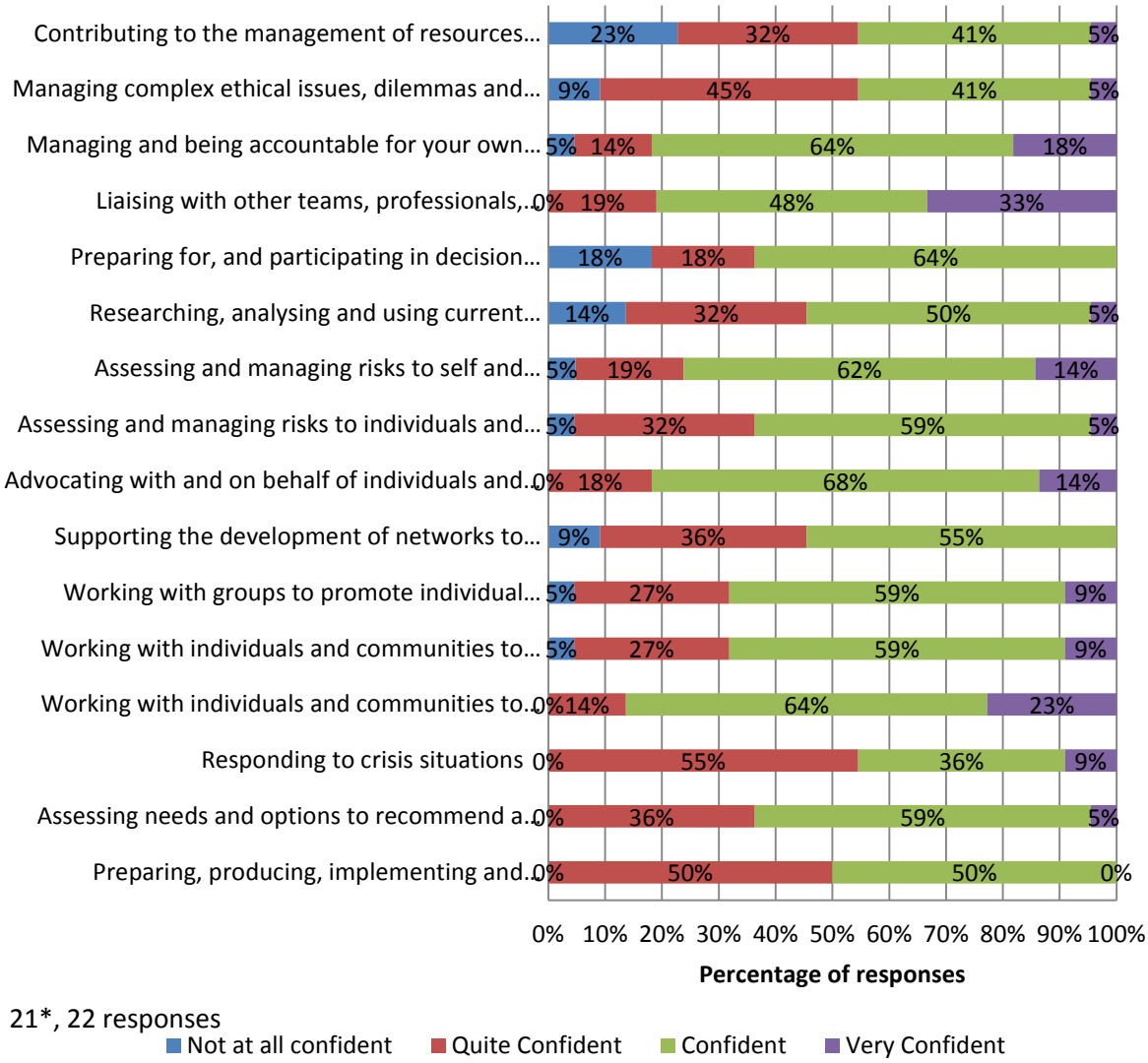


Appendix 4

Levels of Confidence of National Occupational Standards for NQSWs with prior experience in social care settings *before* professional education and qualification and those respondents with *no prior* experience.

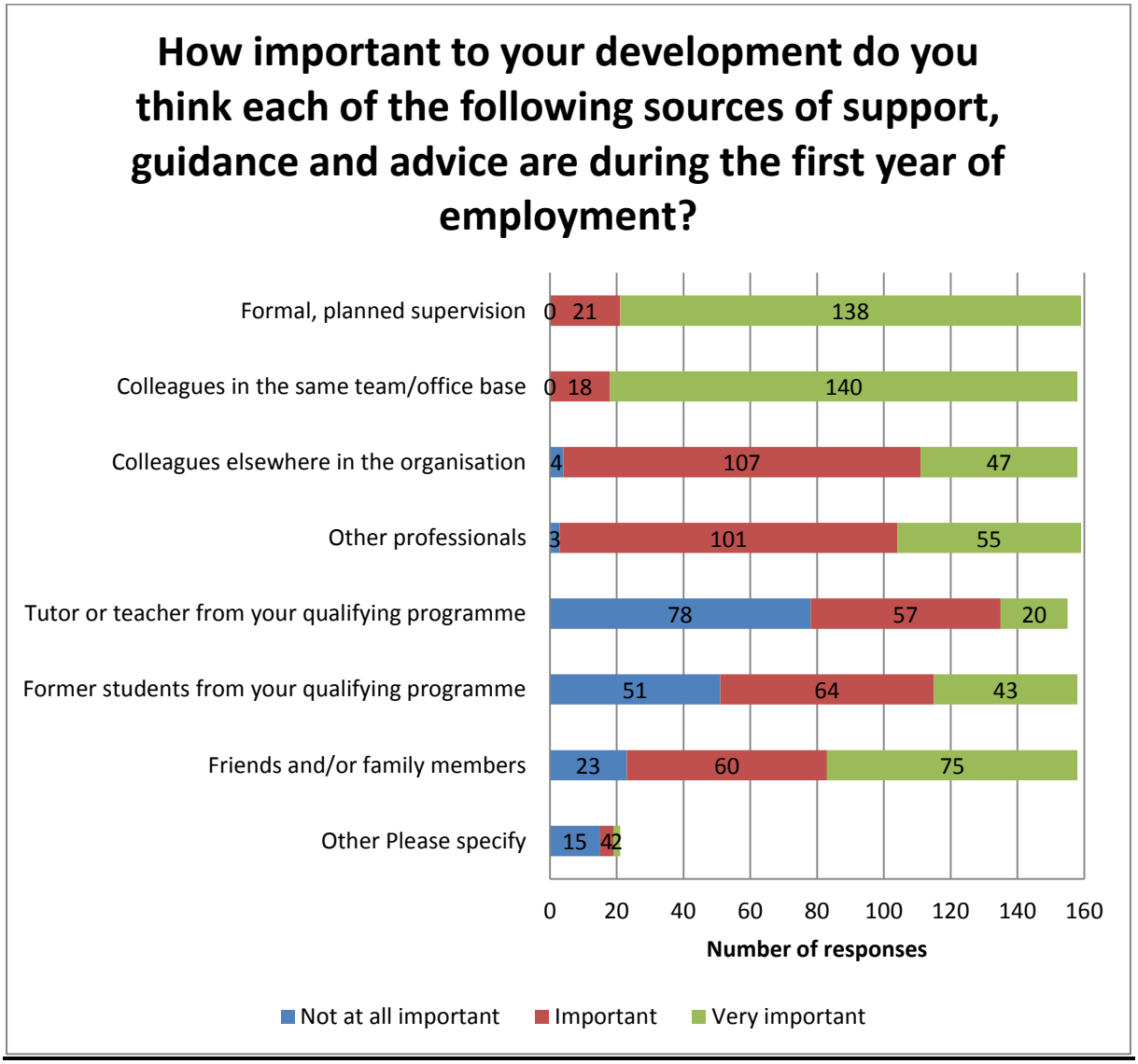


No prior experience in cosial work/social care: At your new post as a qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?



Appendix 5

Ratings of importance of different sources of support for NQSWs (see overleaf).



Appendix 6 - Copy of Questionnaire (Please note that the question numbers of the hard copy version of the questionnaire do not correspond to those of the on-line survey or those reported on above due to formatting changes incurred in translating hard to electronic versions)

00-0000

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
READINESS FOR PRACTICE OF NEWLY QUALIFIED SOCIAL WORKERS

January 2014

This Questionnaire forms part of an evaluation project being undertaken by the Glasgow Caledonian University in conjunction with the Scottish Social Services Council.

The research aims to map the experiences of newly-qualified social workers, entering first employment from degree training programmes, to identify the components that impact on their continuing professional development in the workplace. It will examine the perspectives of recently qualified social workers related to their preparedness to enter professional social work practice and their experiences of post-qualifying support and learning.

The project began in November 2013, with a final report delivered to Scottish Social Services Council and relevant stakeholders and participants in March 2014

Notes for participants on completing the Questionnaire

For each question, please put a tick (✓) in **one** box against the answer you wish to select from the lists offered or enter your own description where space is provided. Where more than one option may be selected from a given list, you are specifically invited to tick 'all the boxes that apply'.

We estimate the questionnaire will take approximately 25 minutes to complete.

To help you work through the form, the questions have been grouped together in the following six sections:

- **Qualifying training and background**
- **Choosing and entering your first employment**
- **Induction and support in your first employment**
- **Initial professional development**
- **Issues for continuing professional development**
- **Monitoring data**

Please remember that all responses and individual data generated are confidential and responses reported are anonymised.

Section One: QUALIFYING TRAINING AND BACKGROUND

1. In the two years prior to starting your qualifying training, did you have any experience of working in a social work/social care setting?

☐ No ➡ **Go to Question 2**
☐ Yes ⬇

1A. How did you gain your pre-qualifying experiences?

☐ In paid work
☐ In voluntary work
☐ Other: *Please specify*
……

2. At which level did you undertake your qualifying training?

☐ Undergraduate (First degree – BA/BSc)
☐ Post graduate (Master's degree – MA/MSc)

☐ Employment based route (e.g. Open University)

3. Please describe each of the practice learning opportunities/placements that you undertook in your qualifying training, including sector (e.g. local authority) and service user group

.....
.....
.....

Section Two: CHOOSING AND ENTERING YOUR FIRST EMPLOYMENT

4. Which of the following factors influenced your choice of first employment?

☐ Pre-qualifying interests and experience
☐ Experiences from learning opportunities during qualification
☐ Existing commitment through secondment arrangements
☐ Reflection on experiences after qualification
☐ Local job opportunities, vacancies / advertisements

☐ Other: *Please specify*
……

5. In which sector are you now working?

☐ Local authority (e.g. Social Services)

□ Health
□ Education
□ Voluntary organisation
□ Independent / Private business
□ Other: *Please specify*
……..……

6. Which groups do you work in your current employment?
Please tick all the boxes that apply

□ Mental health
□ Learning disability
□ Children, young people and families
□ Adults
□ Older people
□ Criminal justice and youth work

□ Other: *Please specify*
……

7. Please enter today's date: …..…/..……/……

As of today, how long have you been in post? …… weeks …….. months

8. How is your current post described?

Job Title:
……..

Setting: □ Fieldwork - Short-term (*e.g. Advice & Assessment/Help Desk/Intake*)
□ Fieldwork - Long-term (*e.g. Adult care or Criminal Justice*)
□ Residential Services
□ Day / Community Services
□ Other *Please specify*……..…….

Contract type: □ Permanent
□ Temporary

Contract hours: (per week) □ 0 – 15hrs □ 16 – 23hrs □ 24 – 37hrs

Probationary Period: …….. months
Other job contract requirements or arrangements:

9. As a newly-Qualified worker is your workload protected in any way?

□ Don't know ➡ **Go to Question 10**
□ No ➡ **Go to Question 10**
□ Yes ⬇

9A. Are there particular areas of work from which you are protected?

□ No
□ Yes *Please provide specific examples*

……
……

9B. Are there particular tasks that you are not expected to carry out on your own?

□ No
□ Yes

If YES *Please provide specific examples*

……
……
……
……

9C. How were the tasks in Questions 12A & 12B above identified?

□ As part of agency policy for induction of new staff
□ From supervision /appraisal / assessment of your development needs
□ Other: *Please specify*
……

9D. How long will any protection be held in place?

…….. months

10. Which experiences do you think are most helpful during the first year in post?

……
……
……
……

11. What knowledge do you think is most helpful during the first year in post?

……
……

……
……
……

12. What skills and values do you think are most helpful during the first year in post?

……
……
……
……

13. The following statements are all taken from the National Occupational Standards for social work. At your new post as a Qualified worker, how confident do you feel across these key roles for social workers?

Please put a cross on the line at the point which best describes your current level of confidence. <u>For example</u>:

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ***X*** ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ *Very confident*

- (i) Preparing, producing, implementing and evaluating plans

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (ii) Assessing needs and options to recommend a course of action

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (iii) Responding to crisis situations

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (iv) Working with individuals and communities to help them make informed decisions

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (v) Working with individuals and communities to achieve change

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (vi) Working with groups to promote individual development and independence

Not at all confident ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very confident

- (vii) Supporting the development of networks to meet assessed needs

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (viii) Advocating with and on behalf of individuals and communities

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (ix) Assessing and managing risks to individuals and communities

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (x) Assessing and managing risks to self and colleagues

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xi) Researching, analysing and using current knowledge of best practice

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xiii)Preparing for, and participating in decision making forums

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xiv) Liaising with other teams, professionals, networks and systems

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xv) Managing and being accountable for your own work

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xvi) Managing complex ethical issues, dilemmas and conflicts

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

- (xvii) Contributing to the management of resources and services

Not at all confident ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

Section Three: INDUCTION & SUPPORT IN YOUR FIRST EMPLOYMENT

14. Please rate the quality of your induction

□ Excellent
□ Very good
□ Satisfactory
□ Not very good
□ Poor

15. Were you provided with an induction pack on joining the organisation?

□ Yes □ No

15A Was there sufficient information?

□ Yes □ No

if NO please give examples of what was needed

.....
.....

15B Have you had contact with the Staff Development/Training as part of agency induction?

□ Yes □ No

15C Have you been able to access a range of induction activities?

□ Yes □ No

If YES give examples

.....
.....

16. In addition to your line manager or supervisor, do you have a mentor, allocated to you from within the organisation?

□ No ➡ **Go to Question 17**
□ Yes ⬇

16B. In what ways do you think a mentor is most useful?

……
……
……

17. Please rate the quality of your planned formal supervision

□ Excellent
□ Very good
□ Satisfactory
□ Not very good
□ Poor

18. To what extent does supervision provide opportunities for you to critically reflect on practice and consider ethical issues?

□ Excellent
□ Very good
□ Satisfactory
□ Not very good
□ Poor

18A. What is the position of the person who undertakes supervision with you?

……..……..……..……

18B. Are you able to prepare sufficiently for supervision sessions?

□ Yes □ No

18C. What is the main focus and purpose of your supervision sessions at the moment? *Please provide specific examples*

……
……
……
……

19. Do you consider that the supervision arrangements outlined in Q18 (A – C) are adequate and appropriate to meet your needs?

□ Yes ➡ **Go to Question 20**
□ No ⬇

19A. What things would you would like to change about supervision?

……
……
……
……

Section Four: INITIAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

20. How important to your development do you think each of the following sources of support, guidance and advice are during the first year of employment?

Please put a cross on the line at the point which best describes your opinion of the importance of each source of support. For example:

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ **X** ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ *Very important*

- (i) Formal, planned supervision

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (ii) Colleagues in the same team/office base

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (iii) Colleagues elsewhere in the organisation

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (iv) Other professionals

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (v) Tutor or teacher from your qualifying programme

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (vi) Former students from your qualifying programme

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (vii) Friends and/or family members

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

- (viii) Other *Please specify* …….....

Not at all important ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ ▯ Very important

21. Thinking about preparation for practice in your qualifying course work prior to arriving in the workplace

21A. Which areas were highlighted as important in preparing you for practice at the end of your qualifying training?

……..……
……..……
…..……

22. Have you been offered any opportunities to discuss the preparation for practice in the new job?
Please tick all the boxes that apply

□ In supervision
□ In training sessions
□ In your induction programme
□ None
□ Other opportunities

Please describe any occasions on which you have either been offered or have introduced for yourself the opportunity to discuss your personal development plan

……
……
……

23. Do you think that preparation for practice in college or university is useful to make links between your qualifying training and your first employment?

□ Yes ➡ **Go to Question 24**
□ No ⬇

23A. In what ways could preparation for practice have been changed to improve your readiness for employment?

……
……

24. How would you improve the experience of newly qualified social workers during the first year in employment?

……..
……
……..

Section Five: ISSUES FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

25. To what extent did your qualifying course prepare you to face the realities of front line practice situations?

Good preparation ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ Not good preparation

26. To what extent did your qualifying course prepare you for making difficult, and complex professional judgements?

Good preparation ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ ▫ Not good preparation

27. What is the most difficult or challenging professional judgement you have had to make during the first months of your new job?

.....
.....
.....

28. Did your qualifying course prepare you to be a resilient and confident newly qualified practitioner?

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**
- ☐ **Dont know**

If No, why not?

.....
.....
.....

29. Did your qualifying course properly prepare you to write reports and undertake assessments?

- ☐ **Yes**
- ☐ **No**

If No, why not?

.....
.....
.....

30. To what extent did your qualifying course prepare you to deliver an outcomes based service with a personalised approach to care?

Good preparation_□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □_Not good preparation

31. To what extent did your qualifying course prepare you to understand the impact of the integration agenda between health and social care?

Good preparation_□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □_Not good preparation

32. Do you consider yourself to be a research-minded practitioner?

- □ **Yes**
- □ **No**
- □ **Don't know**

33. Are you confident in reflecting on your values and managing value dilemmas?

- □ **Yes**
- □ **No**
- □ **Don't know**

34. What have been the two main organisational resource constraints you have had to deal with as a newly qualified social worker?

(i)
……
……
……
(ii)
……
……
……

35. During the first year of employment what are the two most important things to help a newly qualified social worker survive the first few weeks of the job

(i)
……
……
……
(ii)
……
……
……

Section Six: MONITORING DATA

36. Age

□ 20 – 24 years □ 25 – 34 years □ 35 – 44 years □ 45 years & over

37. Gender

□ Male □ Female

38. Racial Origin

□ Black □ White □ □ Other

39. Ethnic Origin

□ African □ Caribbean □ Indian □ Pakistani □ Bangladeshi

□ Chinese □ European (UK) □ European (Other) □ Other

40. Disability

□ No disability □ Dyslexic □ Blind/sight impaired

□ Deaf/hearing impairment □ Wheelchair user □ Mobility difficulties

□ Mental health difficulties □ Multiple difficulties

□ Unseen disability (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes)

□ Disability not listed above ……...

Thank you for completing the questionnaire

□ **Please tick this box if you would be willing to take part in the next phase of this evaluation project which will involve focus group activities in February 2014**. If you indicate your initial interest here, we will contact you by email with further details and to make an appointment.

The focus group meeting will last for 40 minutes.

Please provide an email address where we can contact you to be involved in the focus group part of the evaluation

……

Please remember that your responses are anonymous and all individual data is confidential. A copy of the final project report will be sent in April 20014, when the project is due to be completed.

If you have any queries about the questionnaire or research project please contact:-

Professor Stephen Webb, Room A406, Glasgow Caledonian University, Cowcaddens Road Glasgow, G4 0BA. Telephone 0141 273 1937 Email Stephen.Webb@gcu.ac.uk