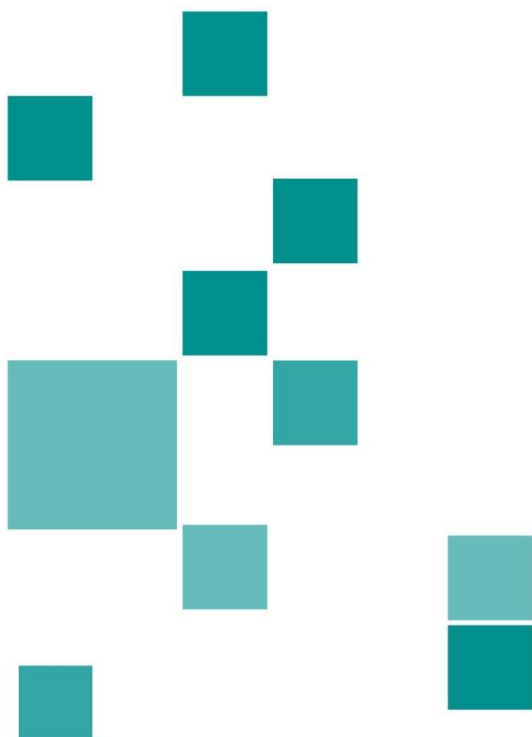


# **Review of Social Work Education**

Statement on progress 2014-2015

August 2015



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# Executive summary

## Introduction and context

In 2013, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) announced a broad intention:

‘to develop a new and different approach to professional learning in Scotland through a learning strategy that addresses qualifying and post-qualifying learning for the social service workforce in Scotland.’

The review of social work qualifying education is part of this programme of work.

This review takes place in the context of a number of challenges:

- an ageing population
- deeply entrenched social inequalities
- increasing demand for and expectations of social services
- significant public service funding cuts
- market-orientated and risk-averse public sector regimes and practices.

There also exist considerable strengths, capacity, activity and opportunity:

- integration
- personalisation and self-directed support
- citizenship and co-production
- values and social justice
- participation and community empowerment.

A formal review working group with a wide membership was established in September 2014.

While it was agreed that social work qualifying education in Scotland is ‘fit for purpose’ and should retain its generic approach, a number of emerging issues were identified.

## Emerging issues

Entry to the profession

Attracting the right people to the profession by:

- widening access to people from diverse backgrounds and with different skill sets enhancing the consistency and robustness of selection and admissions criteria
- establishing entry requirements and the necessary experience, resilience and skills.

Developing qualifying education and improving consistency by:

- revising the Standards in Social Work Education (SiSWE) to reflect changes in policy and practice
- providing consistency across degree programmes through a core curriculum
- emphasising the central importance of research for practice
- developing and resourcing innovative teaching and learning approaches across universities
- developing integrated professional learning (academic and practice), preparation for practice learning, and collaboration and exchange between universities, practitioners and employers
- addressing practice learning availability and quality assurance through a national framework
- exploring whether a statutory placement for all students should be mandatory
- introducing practice educator registration.

## **Transition and post-qualification**

Improving education and professional development in the transition and post-qualification periods by:

- addressing inconsistencies in induction and support through a supported year
- revising post registration training and learning (PRTL) requirements
- developing a professional development framework
- facilitating the professional identity of social workers as practitioner, professional and social scientist.

## **The way forward**

Integrated learning

There are many examples of excellent collaborations between social work employers and universities but there are also many opportunities to increase the sharing of responsibility and accountability across both sectors. This relationship could be reinvigorated and redefined through coming to a collective understanding about what everyone is working together to achieve.

- SSSC will commission research into the efficacy of an integrated learning model, exploring ways in which this has been used in other countries, and also in Scotland.
- Agree a definition of integrated learning.
- Develop an options appraisal in relation to how a transition to an integrated learning model for social work education might be achieved.

## Design and delivery of qualifying and post-qualifying programmes

University providers, social work employers, social work students and people who use social work services will be asked to partner together to produce a series of papers, collating the evidence we need to answer the following key questions.

- How can universities best select the right people for social work programmes?
  - Identify models of best practice.
  - Address widening access agenda.
  - Identify values, skills, knowledge and understanding to be effective social workers.
- How can the collective experience of people who have used social work services be maximised in the design, development and delivery of programmes?
  - Identify models of good practice in Scotland and abroad.
  - Enhance the voice and direct involvement of care experienced people.
- Should social work education have a stronger focus on community development and engagement?
  - Identify international experience of the role of social workers in community development and engagement.
  - Frame the social work role in education and practice in Scotland in relation to community development and engagement.
  - Support active and participative citizenship through community development and engagement.
- Is there a shared philosophy of learning across all social work programmes and post-qualifying learning?
  - Explore the philosophies of learning currently used across qualifying and post-qualifying programmes.
  - Consider the potential to develop a shared philosophy of learning.
  - Ensure that approaches to learning remain future focused.
- Should there be a core curriculum and what should be in it?
  - Explore the benefit of having a core curriculum for delivering generic social work degree programmes.
  - Consider how universities might share the delivery of modules to benefit from collective strengths.
  - Consider how these might become part of the integrated learning approach for all students.

- How much of the qualifying programme should be undertaken with students from other professional groups and how can these opportunities be maximised?
  - Identify the range of inter-professional education in universities.
  - Explore the extent to which inter-professional education is, or should be, driven by the professional needs of social workers.
  - Share an options appraisal with related professions of how inter-professional education could be enhanced,
  - Ensure that all students have access to the same quality and quantity of inter-professional learning.
- What new skills will social workers of the future need?
  - Explore new skills linked to advances in technology, eg digital literacy, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.
  - Identify innovative practice in social work education in the use of technology.
  - Identify which skills should be included, or developed further, in social work programmes, and how this should be achieved.
- What should practice learning look like?
  - Explore good practice in Scotland and abroad.
  - Identify key challenges in practice learning in Scotland.
  - Identify solutions to improve the quality and consistency of practice learning experiences.
- What are the key characteristics of effective university/employer partnerships?
  - Explore the characteristics of effective partnerships.
  - Share good practice to ensure effective university/employer partnerships.
- What role can social work education play in developing the concept and practice of social workers as leaders in their own profession, in multi-professional groups, and supporting leadership development in others?
  - Explore ways that leadership can be embedded throughout social work education.

## **Resources and frameworks**

Four specific areas for further study requiring additional specialist input were identified.

- A financial analysis of funding, and costings and options appraisal for the implementation of different models of degree programmes.

- An options appraisal for a probationary year for newly qualified social workers (NQSW), to include costings and potential models of delivery.
- Revise the SiSWE and develop a benchmark standard for NQSW.
- A study of retention of social workers and social work managers, factors which lead social work staff to leave employment, and organisational support and self-support mechanisms.

## **Involving a wider constituent group**

The Review Group would like to include a much wider group of social work professionals and care experienced people in taking the review forward. A strategic group will oversee the review activities, along with at least three workstreams. In addition to the workstreams, there will be opportunities for everyone to contribute including focus groups and online discussions.

# Introduction

In 2013, the SSSC announced a broad intention: to develop a new and different approach to professional learning in Scotland through a learning strategy that addresses qualifying and post-qualifying learning for the social service workforce in Scotland. Other elements being developed concurrently include: the development of a supported first year in practice for NQSW and the development of a framework for continuous professional learning. Work has already been undertaken to review the Standard in Childhood Practice (completed in 2015), and to develop a Chief Social Work Officer Award (first cohort to start in September 2015). The review of social work qualifying education is part of this programme of work.

The SiSWE, on which the social work degree programmes are based, were approved in 2003, and have subsequently not been formally reviewed. Since that time, the social work landscape has changed significantly, with the introduction of policies and systems which have impacted significantly on social work practice. This includes: Getting It Right For Every Child; the human rights approaches underpinning self-directed support; the need for public service reform; specific responsibilities in child and adult protection; changes to the Children's Hearing system and criminal justice system; the introduction of mental health tribunals and the integration of health and social care.

Social work practice is changing in Scotland in response to these policy and system changes, and also in the rest of the UK. Significant reviews of social work education have already taken place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in response to these changes. The Council of the SSSC approved a similar review of social work education in Scotland in June 2014 in order that changes in social work practice are reflected in the qualifying programmes.

The Chief Social Work Adviser published **the Vision and Strategy for Social Services** in Scotland early in 2015. One of the priorities of the vision and strategy is to: "support and inform Scottish Social Services Council work to review approaches to social work services education to make sure that social services workers joining the workforce have relevant skills, knowledge and values and continuously update them throughout their careers." In relation to social work, the Vision and Strategy document contains a specific action to "support the implementation of the recommendations agreed as an outcome of the current review of the social work degree."

This paper reports on the work of the Review of Social Work Education (RSWE) Group. It is intended to serve as a summary narrative which describes our ambition, activity and recommendations in progressing an integrated and collaborative approach to professional social work learning. In doing so, it outlines the evolving context in which the review of social work qualifying



education is taking place, the journey so far, our developing ambition and proposed next steps.

## **Context: constraints, opportunity and ambition**

The current review of social work qualifying education takes place in a global context of social, political and economic change, fiscal austerity and transformative ambition for public services. The impact of these changes on social work services, the people who use services and social work education are significant, multi-layered and contradictory. There are both opportunities and challenges that need to be understood and grasped as we move forward.

In Scotland, and in the UK, the challenges and constraints facing social work services are well documented. Scotland, like many other liberal democracies, is grappling with the challenge of an ageing population, deeply entrenched social inequalities, increasing demand for and expectations of social services, significant public service funding cuts, and what has come to be referred to as 'system churn' – that is, the same individuals being seen by a range of services in the system with little in the way of positive outcomes. At the same time, recent years have seen the rise and spread of neo-liberal, managerial, market-orientated and risk-averse public sector regimes and practices, often to the erosion of more creative, participatory, person-centred and progressive approaches. The effect of these shifts on the capacity, morale and outlook of those working across the social work sector in Scotland has been significant.

Yet, running alongside these challenges there also exist considerable strengths, capacity, activity and opportunity. The policy landscape for social service provision in Scotland is being redrawn. There is a renewed language of integration, personalisation, self-directed support, citizenship and co-production and there exists a perhaps generational opportunity for the social service workforce, and its partners, to take hold of this evolving framework and make it real. Relatedly, there is a strong and demonstrable appetite for change across political, professional, community and citizen actors, and a developing consensus within and across these groupings regarding the changes needed and how we can begin to progress those. Central to these debates is a renewed emphasis on citizenship, values, social justice, integration, participation and community empowerment. Together these concepts, and the practices developing around them, have the potential to radically shape the future identity, form and function of social services.

Many of the above trends, challenges and opportunities pertain also to the higher education sector. Social work education providers now operate under acute financial and resource pressures, within which they must deliver an ever expanding, inter-disciplinary and flexible portfolio of learning, while at the same

time meeting wider university drivers. Substantial changes in policy and practice, *viz.* personalisation and the integration of health and social care, place new demands on social work education providers as each change to the external landscape has to be accommodated within the curriculum. In addition, some of the progressive partnerships upon which professional learning depends are showing signs of strain, and new opportunities for post-qualifying learning, funded research and knowledge exchange are constrained by broader public sector priorities and pressures. Amidst these tensions, public services, universities included, continue to be dominated by a narrative that suggests such issues can be overcome through 'efficiency gains' and smarter working.

Again, the above pressures sit amidst significant activity, achievement and opportunity. Resource pressures continue to prompt innovation and partnership; new drivers around internationalisation support a more global approach to professional learning, and in recent years we have seen increasing alignment across education, research, knowledge exchange and wider impact activity. Further, as social work services are subjected to increasing demand, scrutiny and critique, social work education, research and evidence has a key role to play in helping the profession articulate its identity, contribution and method in a changing social landscape.

Without negating the significance of the above trends and shifts, it might be observed that they speak mostly to the present. Perhaps the most significant feature of the context for social services and social work education is that it is changing rapidly and will continue to do so. In November 2014, the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) produced a scenario planning tool entitled *Imagining the Future: a creative exploration* (<http://content.iriss.org.uk/2025/>). The tool imagines and explores four different worlds that might emerge depending on the interplay of social, political and economic factors. The aim and ambition of this work is to support social service actors and partners to engage with our future and to act collaboratively to shape it. It is within this context of change, opportunity, ambition and collaboration that this review is situated. The future of work qualifying education is in our hands.

## An opportunity

Contextualised within the above noted national, political, practice and academic opportunities and constraints, the RSWE represents a significant opportunity to reflect on social work education and to consider what it should and could be. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the RSWE process raised similar questions about the state of social work itself, prompting worrying assessments and predictions related to the significant economic, cultural and organisational barriers facing the profession at the present time; notwithstanding the continued commitment of practitioners and managers to providing high quality, humane social work

services. In addition, RSWE discussions to date identified key aspects of the social work degree programmes which merited further investigation and highlighted gaps in the evidence base that require further attention in order to make specific recommendations about the future of social work qualifying education. They also identified a need for further collaboration with key parties, including students, social workers, people who use services and employers, in order to ensure ownership of the recommendations. As such, despite the original timeframe for the review, the stakeholders involved thus far reached the conclusion that the RSWE should not be rushed. Rather, the potential afforded by this opportunity to come together, to understand the lessons learned, and set out more transformative aspirations should be maximised.

## The journey to date

To date the review has entailed an 18-month period of research, consultation and evaluation to envision the future of social work qualifying education and identify the key structures and elements required to make the resulting aspirations a reality. It has addressed fundamental philosophical and ethical issues, reaffirmed our shared commitment to social justice, and considered the practical implications of different courses of action.

To take the process forward, a formal RSWE working group was established in September 2014, with a remit to report its findings by April 2015. Membership of RSWE was designed to reflect the views of all key stakeholders, including social workers, students, people who have used services, carers, employers, academics, the SSSC, Social Work Scotland, the Scottish Organisation for Practice Teaching, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Government (Appendix One). RSWE met on a monthly basis and explored a wide range of evidence, which included: the reviews of social work education carried out in England in 2014; a series of research projects specifically commissioned by SSSC to inform the review of social work education in Scotland; and involvement from people who use services, carers, students, social workers, employers, academics and practice educators through face-to-face and online activities (Appendix Two). In addition, RSWE was guided by the Shared Vision and Strategy for Social Services in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2015), in recognising the unique role for social services and the importance of strengthening and protecting the professionalism of social work, in the context of a distinctive Scottish approach to public service reform and transformation.

In summary, the headline message arising from this series of research and consultation events is that social work education in Scotland is 'fit for purpose' but is facing significant challenges similar to those facing the social work profession as a whole. Core emerging questions relate to the nature of social work education, the relationship between education and practice, the changing

demands on social workers and the adequacy of current arrangements and processes that support social work education. After analysis and discussion by RSWE, particular themes and questions have emerged, which are ranged across and are pertinent to key stages of the social work pre and post-qualification journey. They are presented below. While these themes and questions have generated valuable debate, their further consideration will be used to inform the next stage of the review.

## Entry

A shared desire to ensure social work education and social work practice attract the right people emerged as a strong theme from the RSWE. The main issues that arose are encapsulated in the following questions:

- How can access to social work education be widened to include people from diverse backgrounds and with different skills-sets?
- How can the consistency and robustness of universities' selection and admissions criteria be enhanced?
- Should the changing demands of the professional social work role necessitate increased entry requirements and more emphasis on experience, resilience and skills?

## Qualifying programmes

The RSWE held wide-ranging debates on the philosophy, structure and content of qualifying social work programmes. These acknowledged the many strengths of educational provision, but also the need and opportunity to revise what we do currently and to develop an innovative and cohesive national strategy for social work education.

Key questions emerged, related to articulating the social work role and professional identity, meeting the demands of practising in increasingly complex and inter-disciplinary working environments, ensuring that core knowledge, skills and values inform social work degrees across the country and re-affirming our commitment to research-informed social work practice. These are summarised as follows:

- How can the SSiSWE be revised to reflect changes in policy and practice, including: more clearly articulating the values and role of social work in inter-professional contexts; placing more emphasis on personal capabilities of social workers and enabling practitioners to look after their wellbeing?
- How might a 'core curriculum' be developed to provide consistency across degree programmes in relation to key subject areas,

including inter-professional working and managing complexity, whilst retaining flexibility in social work education?

- How might a core curriculum reflect the central importance of research for practice?
- Are additional resources needed to share and develop innovative teaching and learning approaches across universities, for example, to increase the direct involvement of people who have used social services?
- Could perceived gaps between social work education and practice be addressed by: placing greater emphasis on 'integrated professional learning' (academic and practice); increasing preparation for practice learning and applied skills attainment (report writing, interviewing skills and dealing with complexity); and increasing collaboration and exchange between universities, practitioners and employers?
- Would a national framework address current availability and quality assurance issues with practice education?
- Should a statutory placement for all students be mandatory and should practice teacher registration be introduced?

## Transition and post-qualification

While the focus of the RSWE was on qualifying programmes, the group recognised that the skills, knowledge and values social workers need in order to practise effectively are contingent upon having access to improved education and professional development in the transition and post-qualification periods. It acknowledged that whilst there are some examples of excellence here, provision across the county is inconsistent and fragmented and its improvement is imperative for nurturing and sustaining the current and future workforce. The research evidence and RSWE discussions gave rise to the following questions:

- Would a probationary year address current inconsistencies in induction and support arrangements and improve transition for NQSWs?
- Should the post registration training and learning (PRTL) requirements be revised to overcome the current 'tick-box' approach, that captures quantity rather than quality?
- Should a professional development framework with central funding be developed to address the current limited and fragmented post-qualifying social work education provision?
- Could the professional identity of social workers as 'practitioner, professional and social scientist' (Croisdale Appleby, 2014) be facilitated through a professional development framework linked to registration?

Inevitably, the responses of the RSWE group members to these questions and themes have varied considerably. There was a high degree of consensus in many areas, for example, in relation to retaining generic pre-qualifying social work education. It was recognised, however, that engaging in wider systemic changes, for example, implementing a core curriculum and developing a national practice learning framework, necessitated further exploration and consideration, not least about their feasibility and funding. As such, the RSWE group recognised that the work undertaken thus far represents a staging post, and additional consultation and research activity is now required before more considered and detailed recommendations can be made.

As indicated above, the RSWE group also acknowledged the importance of ensuring that all stakeholders had sufficient involvement in the process and accepted that the 'voices' of students, social workers, employers and people who use services needs to be strengthened. The aim here is not only to gather more evidence, but also to share in the potential benefits of participating in the review. The consensus among the members of RSWE is that participation in the review group has been an extremely rewarding and stimulating experience; one that has provided a long overdue, national space for critical discussion about social work education and practice. As such, it has engendered some very valuable, if unexpected outcomes, including a renewed sense of collegiality and common-purpose among stakeholders. Consequently, it has been recognised that the benefits of taking part in the review process should be extended as widely as possible, notwithstanding the time and resource constraints that apply.

The positive experiences of RSWE group members, through regular opportunities to consider, discuss and contribute to shaping this national debate, carry an important message for social work as a whole, as it seeks to set out its stall in the changed political landscape of Scotland. A similar sense of positivity was also seen to emerge from the first national conference for final year students and NQSWs in Scotland in January of this year; the message here was one of emphatic need and resounding enthusiasm for spaces and opportunities in which to come together to consider and debate the pressing issues in social work.

## The way forward

It is within this broader context of aspiration, ambition and developing direction for the future of social work that we move forward. The Review Group deliberately employed an iterative approach to its work, supported by a collaborative culture, and active participation. This is 'our' profession, owned by everyone practising and supporting the practice of social work in Scotland: we are not only part of its present, but have a responsibility for its future. The next phase will give everyone a range of opportunities to contribute, be involved, and to influence the direction of social work education and the social work profession in Scotland. One member of the group talked about 'passive-ism'. He defined

this as a pervading lack of active participation in promoting the profession. The RSWE group didn't experience passive-ism, and would encourage everyone to be active in their participation in this work, and to take advantage of the opportunity – and the responsibility – for promoting and protecting the social work profession in Scotland.

The next phase of our review not only requires answers to key questions about the education of future social workers, but from the profession itself in relation to its purpose, scope and intent. We must articulate a redefined aspiration for social work that we can share with our colleagues in other professions that we can believe in, and that will shape the life changing work we seek to do.

## **Integrated learning**

Phase two of this work will start to flesh out the detail of our inquiry, with a view to engaging a much broader group in the process. The first part of phase two will involve developing a collective understanding of the approach we want to adopt in social work qualifying education, and how we are going to work together to do this. One of the features of social work education currently is the perceived separation between academic learning and practice learning.

There are many examples of excellent collaborations between social work employers and universities, but there are also many opportunities to increase the sharing of responsibility and accountability across both sectors. This relationship could be reinvigorated and redefined through coming to a collective understanding about what everyone is working together to achieve. What this will look like is not yet clear, and SSSC will commission research into the efficacy of an integrated learning model, exploring ways in which this has been used in other countries, and also in Scotland, because we know that good examples exist already. This evidence will be used to collectively agree a definition of 'integrated learning' and develop an options appraisal in relation to how a transition to an integrated learning model for social work education might be achieved.

## **Design and delivery of qualifying and post-qualifying programmes**

The second part of phase two relates to the design and delivery of qualifying social work education programmes. As indicated earlier, our discussion was wide ranging and interesting, but we concluded that we need to focus on a number of key areas and draw together specific and detailed evidence on these issues. In order to gather as many views as possible, university providers, social work employers and people who use social work services will be asked to partner



together to produce a series of papers, collating the evidence we need to answer key questions:

- **How can universities best select the right people for social work programmes?** We will explore the ways in which universities currently select students for entry and identify models of best practice. This will include exploration of the benefits and challenges of introducing a national approach to selection. Maximising the 'widening access' agenda is essential while, at the same time, ensuring that students have the appropriate values and the capacity to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to be effective social workers.
- **How can we maximise the impact of the collective experience of people who have used social work services in the design, development and delivery of social work programmes?** Each university currently works with people who have experience of using social work services, and does this in different ways. Where does this work well in Scotland, and what has been found to work well in other countries and other professions in ensuring that care experienced people have a strong voice in the design, development and delivery of social work programmes? Knowing more about this will help strengthen any recommendations in relation to the voice and direct involvement of care experienced people in social work education.
- **Should social work education have a stronger focus on community development and engagement?** Internationally, social workers have a much stronger community development and engagement identity than they do in Scotland and, albeit it is partly covered in some curricula, this does not feature as a significant factor in current social work education or practice. There is significant and increasing emphasis on the role of the social worker in supporting community development in some of the more recent key Scottish Government policies, such as self-directed support. More evidence about the role of social workers in community development internationally will help frame further thinking about how and whether social work should focus more intently on community development and engagement (in education and in practice) in Scotland as a means to supporting active and participative citizenship.
- **Is there a shared philosophy of learning across all social work programmes and post-qualifying learning?** It would be helpful to explore the philosophies of learning currently used across qualifying and post-qualifying programmes, and think more about the potential to develop and regularly review a shared philosophy of learning across the social work programmes. This would ensure that approaches to learning for social work education remain future focused.



- **Should there be a 'core curriculum' and what should be in it?** Social work programmes all need to meet the same standards for approval, but each university delivers a different type of programme. There may be scope for all students to benefit from the collective strengths of the social work programmes through universities sharing in the delivery of some modules. There may be benefit in exploring whether having a 'core curriculum' would be of value in delivering a generic social work degree programme, and could become part of the 'integrated learning' approach for all students.
- **How much of the qualifying programme should be undertaken with students from other professional groups, and how can these opportunities be maximised?** Inter-professional education is currently a feature of all of the social work programmes, to varying degrees. Finding out more detail about the inter-professional education in each of the universities, and the extent to which inter-professional education is, or should be driven by the professional needs of social workers, will provide essential evidence and rethink inter-professional education in social work programmes. An options appraisal which could be shared with colleagues in other related professions could explore ways in which this could be enhanced, potentially resulting in students experiencing programmes which provide a firm foundation of inter-professional working, while protecting their specific professional development. This would also ensure that all students have access to the same quality and quantity of inter-professional learning.
- **What 'new' skills will social workers of the future need?** Social work programmes have traditionally focused on the development of 'social work skills', however advances in technology and practice mean that skills required for the future include: digital literacy, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. Evidence provided to the RSWE pointed to some qualified social workers feeling that they did not have sufficient skills in these emerging areas. There is evidence of some innovative practice in social work education in the use of technology; however this is not explicitly referenced in the SiSWE and is not a feature of all programmes. Exploring this further will help to identify which 'new' skills should be included or developed further in social work programmes, and how this can be achieved.
- **What should 'practice learning' look like?** Practice learning experiences vary greatly across Scotland. The quality of practice learning provision, whatever shape it may take, can always be improved. Looking more broadly at 'practice learning' or 'work based learning' in other countries and professions, and using evidence-informed practice will assist

in identifying the key challenges and some potential solutions for Scotland.

- **What are the key characteristics of effective university/employer partnerships?** University and employer partnerships exist all over Scotland delivering social work education, and the quality of these partnerships can have a significant impact on the practice experience of students. Understanding the characteristics of effective partnerships, why they work, and thinking about how this learning can be shared, would help to ensure that all university/employer partnerships are as effective as possible.
- **What role can social work education play in developing the concept and practice of social workers as leaders in their own profession, in multi-professional groups, and supporting leadership development in others?** Leadership of self, and of others is a significant factor in all public service work, and particularly in social work. Because of this, leadership should be embedded throughout social work education and this will provide the opportunity to explore ways in which this could happen.

## Resources and frameworks

The third part of phase two relates to specific areas of further study which will require some additional specialist input.

- A financial analysis of the funding currently available for social work training in Scotland, along with costings and an options appraisal for the implementation of different models of social work degree level programmes will provide information which will inform recommendations for the social work degree.
- An options appraisal for a probationary year for NQSW, to include costings, potential models of delivery and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each model, along with implications for implementation, will help inform a recommendation.
- During phase one of RSWE, the group concluded that this was a good opportunity to revise the Standard in Social Work, in line with the research findings from the Dunworth and Gordon (2014) study. A benchmark standard for NNQSW will be written alongside the Standard in Social Work to ensure articulation and consistency. Standards are technical documents that provide the blueprint for programme development.

- Having a well-qualified and experienced workforce is dependent on the people who come into the social work profession staying in it for a period of time. The resilience of social workers could be better protected and promoted throughout their careers if we have more evidence about the length of time that social workers stay in employment as (a) social workers and (b) social work managers or other related jobs. This would also involve exploring the extent to which social workers leave employment as a result of stress and the identification of better organisational and self-support mechanisms.

## Involving a wider constituent group

This is the roadmap for the next stage. The RSWE Group would like to include a much wider group of social work professionals and care experienced people in phase two, because each of us has something unique to offer this review, from our experience, our knowledge and our perspective, and as a profession there is strength in ensuring that everyone has a voice. There will be a strategic group which will oversee the RSWE activities, along with at least three workstreams. One workstream will take forward the focused gathering of additional evidence, another will concentrate on developing a collective understanding of what 'integrated learning' might look like, and the third workstream will progress scoping the resources and frameworks that would need to be in place to make potential changes to the system. There will be opportunities for everyone to contribute including Twitter, email, focus groups and online discussions. If you have any initial comments, or if you would like to contribute to this next stage, please email: [RSWE@sssc.uk.com](mailto:RSWE@sssc.uk.com).

This briefing is a summary of the collective work undertaken by the RSWE Group between September 2014 and June 2015. Grateful thanks go to Moira Dunworth and Jean Gordon for their assistance with providing us with a record of the discussion, and to Rob Rae from IRISS and Mairi McTaggart from the Care Inspectorate for facilitating some of our sessions. We look forward to the next stage of RSWE, and hope that you will find a way to be involved.

This narrative was written on behalf of the RSWE Group by Mairi-Anne Macdonald, SSSC, Trish McCulloch, University of Dundee and Pearse McCusker, Glasgow Caledonian University who were part of the RSWE Group. We thank them for their time and their willingness to adapt and change this narrative until it accurately reflected our collective thoughts and views.

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# Appendix one

## Membership of RSWE

Chair: Andy Kendrick	University of Strathclyde
Audrey Taylor	NHS Education Scotland
David Rennie	Scottish Care
Diane White	Scottish Government
Sarah Gledhill	Scottish Government
Jill Brannan	Aberdeenshire Council
Joanne McMeeking	CELCIS/University of Strathclyde
John Byrne	Social Work Practitioner, City of Edinburgh Council
Judy Kerr	University of Stirling
Pearse McCusker	Glasgow Caledonian University
Robert Peat	Care Inspectorate
Ros Surtees	Dumfries and Galloway Council/ScOPT
Surinder K Saroya	Service User
Tony Miller	Student Social Worker
Trish McCulloch	University of Dundee
Mairi-Anne Macdonald	Scottish Social Services Council
Gordon Brechin	Office of the Children's Reporter
John Sawkins	Service User
In attendance:	
Karen McLaughlin	Scottish Social Services Council
Anne Tavendale	Scottish Social Services Council

# Appendix two

## Sources of evidence considered by RSWE phase one

Brannan, J. November 2014. Review of the social work degree: Feedback from employers, SWS Organisational Development Standing Committee.

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Minutes of meeting between SSSC and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration – 6 December 2014.

Imagining the Future session, facilitated by Rob Rae, IRISS, January 2014.

# Appendix three

## Review of social work qualifying education – work to be taken forward

### Strategic group overview

#### Governance strand 1 to incorporate:

- integrated model
- practice learning
- university /employer partnerships
- standards.

#### Governance strand 2:

- entry to the profession
- qualifying programme
  - learning philosophy
  - core curriculum
  - community development and engagement
  - new skills.

#### Further reference groups:

- finances and resources
- NQSW – probationary year
- retention and resilience.

### Timescale

#### July – August 2015:

- distribute statement of review progress
- SSSC to issue briefs for papers and begin procurement process
- identify membership of Strategic Review Group
- identify membership of governance groups
- identify membership of reference groups
- decide on process for wider engagement.

#### September – December 2015:

- work undertaken by governance groups and reference groups
- papers completed and commissioned work completed
- final report and recommendations drafted
- wider engagement event alongside other engagement processes.

#### January – March 2016:

- review report and recommendations finalised and disseminated.





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