

# Enhancing the readiness to practise of newly qualified social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand (Enhance R2P)

## Report on Phase Two The Readiness to Practise of NQSWs

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# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>Demographic details of survey respondents</b> .....	6
NQSW respondents' demographic details.....	6
Managers/professional supervisor demographic details.....	6
NQSW agencies and fields of practice.....	7
<b>Entering the workforce</b> .....	8
<b>Working life</b> .....	9
Motivations.....	9
Job satisfaction.....	10
<b>Workplace support, learning and development</b> .....	13
Team support.....	13
Induction.....	13
Supervision.....	15
Training and development.....	19
Personal Development Plans.....	21
Post-qualifying education.....	21
Other learning and development activities.....	22
Views on improvement.....	24
Protected caseloads.....	26
<b>The transition from student to practitioner</b> .....	28
Preparedness.....	28
Attitudes towards the degree.....	32
Specialisation.....	32
Learning benefits from degree.....	32
Employers' expectations and perceptions.....	33
Knowledge gaps.....	38
What aspects of the degree helped most?.....	44
Important omissions or gaps in knowledge.....	46
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b> .....	48
Policy makers.....	48
Employers.....	49
Induction.....	49
Supervision.....	49
Reduced caseload and staffing issues.....	49
Peer support.....	50
Post-qualifying training and education.....	50
Educators.....	51
Researchers.....	51
Recommendation.....	52
<b>References</b> .....	53
<b>Appendix 1: The NQSW survey questions</b> .....	53
<b>Appendix 2: The manager/professional supervisor survey questions</b> .....	79
<b>Appendix 3: The NQSW interview schedule</b> .....	87
<b>Appendix 4: The manager/professional supervisor interview schedule</b> .....	88

# Introduction

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This report discusses findings from the second phase of the research project *Enhancing the readiness to practise of Newly qualified Social Workers (Enhance R2P)*. Whilst the first phase of this three-year project focused on the content of the social work curriculum in Aotearoa New Zealand, the second phase focused on the following research question: How well-prepared are Newly qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) (social workers in their first two years of practice) to enter professional social work, and how is their learning being supported and enhanced in the workplace?

This phase of the study had two parts: firstly, an online survey of NQSWs and managers /professional supervisors<sup>1</sup> of NQSWs; and secondly, qualitative interviews with NQSWs and managers/professional supervisors of NQSWs. This report draws primarily on the survey data, but also links material from the interview data, where appropriate. The NQSW survey included 84 questions, most of which were closed questions, although a few open-ended questions were also included (see Appendix 1). The NQSW survey was organised into the following sections: respondent demographic details; present employment position; views on workplace supervision; views on workplace induction; views on workplace learning and development; and views on respondent's qualifying degree programmes. The manager/professional supervisor survey included only 19 questions, most of which were closed questions, although a few open-ended questions were also included (see Appendix 2). This shorter survey was organised into two sections: respondent demographic details and views on NQSWs.

The study replicated an English study commissioned by the Department of Health (DH) in 2007 as part of the Social Care Workforce Research Initiative (DH Research Initiative, 2010). The findings of the English study are reported in some detail in Sharpe, Moriarty, Stevens, Manthorpe, and Hussein (2011). Permission to use and adapt the survey questions and items was sought and agreed by the UK Department of Health in 2017. The decision to replicate the English study was made to provide a benchmark or comparator for the Aotearoa New Zealand findings, although it must be acknowledged that the benchmark study was conducted in another jurisdiction some eight years prior to the Enhance R2P study. One of the differences between the methodology of the Sharpe et al. (2011) study and the present study is that the English study included two samples of social work graduates, one in 2008 and another in 2009. For the sake of consistency, any comparisons made between the English study and the Enhance R2P study refer only to data from the more recent 2009 sample.

While most of the questions used in the Enhance R2P study were identical to the English survey, there were some adaptations to questions, or question items, to reflect the distinctive Aotearoa New Zealand practice, policy and cultural context for social work. For example, Question 35 asked *which of these areas of specialist knowledge would you say are relevant to your present job?* and offered respondents a list of specialist knowledge areas. In the Enhance R2P study we added to this list items that are relevant to the Aotearoa New Zealand context such as *working with Māori* and *working with Pacific peoples*. Similarly, Question 75 states that *some new social work graduates have mentioned certain topics they say they wished they knew a lot more about. Could you say which of the following, if any, you personally wish you knew a lot more about?* To this list, the item *working with trauma* was added to reflect recent policy debates in Aotearoa New Zealand about the value of trauma-informed practice connected with the White Paper on Vulnerable Children, and the government review and eventual restructure of the Child Youth and Family Service.

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<sup>1</sup> Since, in Aotearoa New Zealand, many social workers are managed by non-social work managers and many receive professional supervision from external supervisors, we sought input from both roles and did not distinguish between them.

Both surveys were open online surveys, and participants were invited to respond through the use of social media with the invitation circulated to a) all members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, and b) all social workers registered with the Social Workers Registration Board. Both surveys employed inclusion criteria. For the NQSW survey there were two inclusion criteria; respondents needed to have a) completed an approved social work qualification from a New Zealand tertiary education institute within the last two years, and b) have been employed in a social service agency for a minimum of 6 months (at least 10 hours per week) since completing their social work qualification. The manager/professional supervisor survey required respondents to have managed or supervised a NQSW within the last two years (a NQSW was defined as someone who had been qualified as a social worker for two years or less).

There was a total of 195 responses to the NQSW survey; however, 71 (36%) did not meet the inclusion criteria, mostly because they had been qualified for more than two years. Another five respondents were excluded because they dropped out of the survey immediately after adding their demographic details, resulting in a final sample of 119 NQSWs. Since the survey was accessible on the open internet, and promoted widely to the social work community, it may be that the high number of respondents who did not meet the inclusion criteria (despite making the criteria clear on the invitation) can be attributed to curiosity about the nature of the survey.

The survey was structured to exclude respondents who did not meet the inclusion criteria before asking a series of demographic questions and then continuing on to sections about the respondent's present position, followed by more detailed questions about experiences of supervision, induction and views on the new degree. With 84 questions, the NQSW survey was long and, in order to respect a participant's decision not to answer certain questions, no forced questions were used. This inevitably led to missing data in relation to some questions and the attrition of some respondents as they dropped out over the course of the survey. In the results below we simply report the number of participants who did not respond.

The manager/professional supervisor survey required respondents to have managed or supervised a NQSW within the last two years. There was a total of 193 responses to this survey; however, 10 did not meet the inclusion criteria and a further 25 dropped out of the survey immediately after adding their demographic details, resulting in a final sample of 158 managers/professional supervisors. In addition to the survey data, qualitative data was obtained from semi-structured telephone or Skype interviews with 15 newly qualified social workers in the first two years of practice and 17 managers/professional supervisors of newly qualified social workers. The two groups were not matched and pseudonyms are used for participant quotes.

IBM SPSS Statistics Version 24 was used for the analysis of survey data; however, cell sizes were too small on almost every test conducted. Once it was apparent that cell sizes were consistently too small, any further statistical analysis of this nature was discontinued, and the tables below report descriptive statistics. The interview data was subject to thematic analysis using NVivo software.

# Demographic details of survey respondents

## NQSW respondents' demographic details

The majority of the NQSW survey respondents (55.4 %) were under 35 years of age and 83.2% identified as female. Respondents were invited to select up to three ethnicities with which they identified: most identified as NZ European (64.7 %), 13.4 % identified as Māori, 5% as Chinese, 5% as British/Irish, and smaller proportions identified with over thirteen other ethnicities. Survey questions also asked respondents whether they regarded themselves as having special needs or disabilities (2.5% noted that they did) and whether they had caring responsibilities for others (39.5% stated that they did and some had several) Caring responsibilities included looking after pre-school children (10.1%), looking after school age children (27.7%), looking after adults or children with long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability (8.4%), and looking after older people (5%).

In terms of the tertiary education institutions where respondents gained their social work qualifications, sixteen tertiary institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand were represented in the sample with 55.5% attending universities, 37.0% institutes of technology or polytechnics, 5.0% wānanga and 1.7% a private tertiary institute. Of the qualifications gained two-thirds were undergraduate qualifications (66.4%) and one-third were postgraduate (33.6%), with 82.4% attending in a full-time capacity. Half of the NQSW respondents (50.4%) completed their social work qualification less than twelve months before taking the survey and the remainder qualified between twelve and twenty-four months prior to taking the survey (49.6%).

## Managers/professional supervisors' demographic details

Almost all of the manager/professional supervisor survey respondents (96.3 %) were over 35 years of age, with a third aged 45–54 years (32.9%) and a third aged 55–64 years (32.3%). The majority (81.6%) identified as female. Respondents were invited to select up to three ethnicities with which they identified; most managers/professional supervisors identified as NZ European (66.5 %), a quarter (24.7%) identified as Māori, 5.7% as British/Irish, and smaller proportions identified with over eighteen other ethnicities.

Over a third (35.4%) of the manager/professional supervisor respondents worked in non-governmental agencies; a quarter (24.1%) in Oranga Tamariki<sup>2</sup>, 13.9% in district health boards, 5.7% in Iwi/Māori agencies and the remainder in other settings. In terms of the fields of practice in which they worked, a quarter worked in the field of child protection, 13.3% in community, 11.4% in health and the remainder in other settings.

## NQSW agencies and fields of practice

As shown in Table 1, almost half of NQSW respondents worked in non-governmental agencies with approaching one-third in Oranga Tamariki and a further 16% in District Health Boards. The majority were working in full-time positions (85.7%) with permanent contracts (87.4%).

<sup>2</sup> Oranga Tamariki is the te reo Māori name for the Ministry for Children; the central government agency responsible for child protection services in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Table 1. In which type of agency/organisation are you currently employed? (Q21)**

Response	n	%
Non-government agency	58	48.7
Oranga Tamariki	38	31.9
District Health Board	19	16.0
Iwi/Māori agency	3	2.5
Private sector	1	0.8
Total	119	99.9

**Table 2. Which of the following best describes the field of practice in which you work? (Q22)**

Response	n	%
Child protection	42	35.3
Mental health	20	16.8
Community	18	15.1
Health	13	10.9
Family violence	5	4.2
Youth	3	2.5
Justice	1	0.8
Education	1	0.8
Other	16	13.4
Total	119	99.8

While Table 1 shows the *agency context* for respondents' practice, Table 2 shows their responses to a question asking them to select their primary *field of practice* and illustrates that around one-third (35.3%) were engaged in child protection related practice. In addition, over a third (36.1%) stated that their post was a statutory one where they exercised legal powers as a social worker.

Identifying the field of practice gives a sense of the focus of the work of our respondents; however, Table 3 adds more detail by identifying the main service user groups with which the NQSWs worked. In this question respondents could select up to three responses; working with children, young people and families predominates, but people who use mental health services (27.1%) and people who misuse drugs, alcohol or substances (20.3%) are also significant, along with working with Māori people (18.6%).

**Table 3. Which of the following best describes the main service user group with which you work? (Q23)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Children and families (including child protection)	54	45.8
Young people	35	29.7
Children who are in care	33	28.0
People who use mental health services	32	27.1
Children and families (excluding child protection)	25	21.2
People who misuse drugs, alcohol or substances	24	20.3
Māori people	22	18.6
Community/neighbourhood	21	17.8
People experiencing family violence	21	17.8
Pacific peoples	12	10.2
People who have committed offences	12	10.2
Older people	11	9.3
People with learning disabilities	9	7.6
Refugees and/or asylum seekers	9	7.6
People with physical disabilities or sensory impairments	9	7.6
Other	6	5.1
Total	335	

In response to a further question asking whether they work mainly with children, adults or both, Table 4 shows that around half (48.7%) work with both, just over a third work mainly with adults, and only 16% work mainly with children.

**Table 4. Do you work mainly with children, or mainly with adults? (Q24)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Adults	42	35.3
Children	19	16.0
Both	58	48.7
Total	119	100

## Entering the workforce

For almost two-thirds of respondents their current social work post was the first held since they graduated (70.6%). Perhaps surprisingly, given the recency of their qualification, just over a quarter stated they were in their second job since graduating (26.9%). In response to a question about how they had found their current position, over a third (36.1%) stated that it was through an external job advertisement (see Table 5) and a further 30.3% that they had found it through a practice placement experience. In terms of job preferences, almost half (45.4%) stated they had had a strong preference for the service user group with which they were currently working, over a third (37%) had a mild preference and only 17.6% had no preference.

**Table 5. How did you find out about your current job? (Q29)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
External job advertisement: Newspaper/internet	43	36.1
Through practice placement: I worked here on placement	36	30.3
Informally through friends or other personal contacts	13	10.9
Internal job advertisement	11	9.2
Through an employment agency	2	1.7
Other	14	11.8
Total	119	100.0

Having started work within their current position, over half of NQSWs (58.0%) indicated that they had had no probationary period (Table 6), while a third (33.6%) indicated a probationary period of three months. The rates were higher in the English study where six months was found to be the most common probation period (51%) and only 22% reported no probationary period.

Almost half of NQSWs (45.4%) stated they had had no mentor assigned to them on commencement of their post, a quarter (24.4%) that they had a mentor during their induction period, and a quarter (27.7%) had a mentor for a period longer than their induction period.

**Table 6. How long is/was your probationary period in this present job? (Q31)**

Response	n	%
No formal probationary period	69	58.0
Three months	40	33.6
Six months	1	0.8
Other	9	7.6
Total	119	100.0

## Working life

### Motivations

Table 7 displays responses made when NQSW respondents were asked to select – from a list of 13 factors – what motivated them to become social workers. The most highly rated factors, as in the English study, were those related to the worthwhileness of the job including *helping people to improve their quality of life* (80.7%), *stimulating work* (69.7%) and *tackling injustice* (61.3%). Factors that are more directly related to career, such as *well-paid job* (7.6%) and *good career prospects* (27.7%), were less significant. These findings concur with the English study that: “The strength and persistence of altruistic motivations towards social work as a career is a key finding”. (Sharpe et al., 2011, p. 61).

Of course, motivation is one thing but whether a job allows an employee to satisfy those motivations is another. Table 8 displays the extent to which the motivational factors identified were found to be fulfilled. In some cases, the number of respondents stating that a motivation was fulfilled was higher than the number of respondents seeking that motivational fulfilment, and in other cases it was lower, but the variation was usually within a range of plus or minus 10%. However, the most significant outlier was the motivation to *tackle injustice and inequalities in society*; 61.3% of respondents identified this factor as a motivator, but only 38.7% found it to be fulfilled – a gap of 22.6%. In the English study this factor was also one of the least likely to be fulfilled with 69% identifying it as a motivator but only 22% considering it to have been realised – a gap of 47%.

**Table 7. What attracts or motivates you towards social work as a career? (Q70 N=119)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives	96	80.7
Interesting, stimulating work	83	69.7
Variety of work day-to-day	75	63.0
Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society	73	61.3
Personal ability to get on with people	67	56.3
Working in a team	59	49.6
High job satisfaction	44	37.0
Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions	42	35.3
Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine	41	34.5
Good career prospects	33	27.7
Encouragement from family or friends	25	21.0
Opportunities for flexible working patterns (part-time, career breaks etc)	20	16.8
Well-paid job	9	7.6
Total	667	

**Table 8. Which of these have you actually found to be fulfilled in your social work career so far? (Q72)**

Response	Responses	
	<i>n</i>	% of cases
Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives	82	68.9
Interesting, stimulating work	79	66.4
Variety of work day-to-day	75	63.0
Personal ability to get on with people	69	58.0
Working in a team	67	56.3
Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions	49	41.0
Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society	46	38.7
High job satisfaction	37	31.1
Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine	36	30.3
Encouragement from family or friends	34	28.6
Good career prospects	22	18.5
Opportunities for flexible working patterns (part-time, career breaks etc)	22	18.5
Well-paid job	11	9.2
Total	629	

### Job satisfaction

In common with the English study, at a general level, the majority of NQSWs held very positive attitudes towards their current job with almost half of NQSW respondents stating they enjoyed their current position very much (48.7%) and over a third quite enjoying it (35.3%) (Table 9).

**Table 9. Taking everything into consideration, how are you enjoying your present job so far? (Q33)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Enjoying it very much	58	48.7
Quite enjoying it	42	35.3
Not enjoying it much	19	16.0
Total	119	100.0

Evidence of a positive disposition towards their current position is also reflected in Table 10 where the majority of respondents agree that *good day-to-day working relationships exist with professionals from other agencies* (89.1%), *staff are encouraged to take part in learning and development activities* (88.2%), that *service users' views and perspectives are taken seriously* (82.4%) and that *the values of the agency/service are clear to everyone* (80.7%). The most negative responses relate to there being a lot of *organisational restructuring* (69.9%), the *working environment is very pressured* (64.7%) and (for 41.2%) there being *a lot of unfilled staff vacancies*.

**Table 10. Which of the following would you say was true of your present job? (Q34)**

Response	True		Not true		Don't know		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Good day-to-day working relationships exist with professionals from other agencies	106	89.1	9	7.6	4	3.4	0	0.0
Staff are encouraged to take part in learning and development activities	105	88.2	12	10.1	2	1.7	0	0.0
Service users' views and perspectives are taken seriously	98	82.4	13	10.9	8	6.7	0	0.0
The values of the agency/service are clear to everyone	96	80.7	20	16.8	2	1.7	1	0.8
There is/has recently been a lot of organisational restructuring	82	68.9	31	26.1	6	5.0	0	0.0
Your line manager is a qualified social worker	79	66.4	38	31.9	2	1.7	0	0.0
The working environment is very pressured	77	64.7	35	29.4	7	5.9	0	0.0
The IT system generally works well	73	61.3	36	30.3	9	7.6	1	0.8
There are a lot of unfilled staff vacancies	49	41.2	63	52.9	7	5.9	0	0.0

Table 11 digs a little more deeply into potential sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and, once again, suggests fairly high overall levels of satisfaction with many aspects of respondents' current positions. For example, over 80% of respondents state they are very or fairly satisfied with the *accessibility of their line manager* (86.5%), *professional support and guidance from colleagues* (85.7%) and *friendliness of other staff in the workplace* (85.7%).

Sources of dissatisfaction can be identified by focusing on variables about which respondents feel fairly or very dissatisfied; these only reach two figures in relation to five variables and the top three are *conditions of employment* (pay, superannuation, annual leave, etc.) (32%); *coping with workload* (23.5%); and *prospects for advancement and promotion* (18.5%). In the English study NQSWs also identified *coping with workload* (25%) and *conditions of employment* (21%) as significant sources of dissatisfaction. However, *prospects for advancement and promotion* were perceived as less problematic with only 10% of English NQSWs dissatisfied. Conversely, the *amount of contact time with service users or carers* was the main source of dissatisfaction in the English study, with 36% expressing dissatisfaction, compared with only 17.6% in the Aotearoa New Zealand study.

**Table 11. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job? (Frequencies Q37)**

Response	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Neutral		Fairly dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Professional support and guidance from colleagues	57	47.9	45	37.8	10	8.4	5	4.2	1	0.8	1	0.8
Friendliness of other staff in the workplace	52	43.7	50	42.0	12	10.1	4	3.4	0	0.0	1	0.8
Accessibility of your line manager when necessary	50	42.0	53	44.5	10	8.4	4	3.4	1	0.8	1	0.8
Opportunity to put your own social work values into practice	49	41.2	46	38.7	13	10.9	8	6.7	2	1.7	1	0.8
Professional support and guidance from line manager	48	40.3	39	32.8	18	15.1	7	5.9	6	5.0	1	0.8
Being able to fulfil your CPD commitments for the SWRB (if applicable)	46	38.7	49	41.2	17	14.3	6	5.0	0	0.0	1	0.8
The amount of contact time with service users or carers	44	37.0	43	36.1	9	7.6	15	12.6	6	5.0	2	1.7
Widening your knowledge of areas of social work practice	43	36.1	48	40.3	22	18.5	3	2.5	2	1.7	1	0.8
Working in partnership with service users to take their wishes into account	43	36.1	50	42.0	17	14.3	8	6.7	0	0.0	1	0.8
Teamworking	42	35.3	44	37.0	22	18.5	8	6.7	1	0.8	2	1.7
Ability to transmit your social work values to workers from other professions	28	23.5	56	47.1	24	20.2	8	6.7	2	1.7	1	0.8
Coping with your workload	20	16.8	49	41.2	21	17.6	18	15.1	10	8.4	1	0.8
Your conditions of employment (pay, superannuation, annual leave, etc.)	18	15.1	43	36.1	19	16.0	29	24.4	9	7.6	1	0.8
Your prospects for advancement and promotion	15	12.6	41	34.5	40	33.6	14	11.8	8	6.7	1	0.8

# Workplace support, learning and development

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## Team support

As noted in Table 11 above, many of the sources of job satisfaction for our NQSWs derive from peer and team support including *professional support and guidance from colleagues* (85.7%), *friendliness of other staff in the workplace* (85.7%) and *teamworking* (72.3%). Strong support from managers is also indicated in levels of satisfaction with *accessibility of your line manager when necessary* (86.5%) and *professional support and guidance from line manager* (73.1%).

Positive attitudes towards teams were also reflected in some of the comments in qualitative interviews with NQSWs:

And also, we have an approach on our site called the one team approach, even though we have four teams. But in most of the cases we go for a one team approach, at the site somebody just stands up and calls out loudly, “there’s a one team approach”. That means anybody can come and help. So, across the teams we just have each other, all the seniors, juniors have your back, so it is really, really helpful, and I don’t find any way it could be done better. (Brent, NQSW)

## Induction

Just over two-thirds of respondents (77.3%) stated that they had access to some form of induction on commencing their present position with over half (65.5%) indicating that their induction was still in progress. Most of those experiencing induction considered it to be excellent or good (67.4%), although 21.7% were neutral. Question 54 inquired into the content of induction sessions and the results are displayed in Table 12. The top five topics were: *other policies and procedures of your organisation* (87%), *organisational values* (85.9%), *general health and safety* (82.6%), *record-keeping* (81.5%) and *confidentiality* (79.4%). The findings from the English study included a similar set of emphases leading the researchers to conclude that, “This pattern of responses suggests that in some employer organisations, induction lacked specific social work orientation, focusing more strongly on corporate issues and priorities” (Sharpe et al., 2011, p. 73).

**Table 12. Which of the following were, or definitely will be, covered during your induction? (Q54)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Other policies and procedures of your organisation	80	87.0
The values of your organisation	79	85.9
General health and safety	76	82.6
Record-keeping	75	81.5
Confidentiality	73	79.4
Your own job role	70	76.1
Risk assessment procedures	68	73.9
Arrangements for your support and supervision	63	68.5
The goals and future plans of your organisation	62	67.4
General security	62	67.4
Communication with service users	55	59.7
Identifying abuse and neglect	53	57.6
Relationships with other workers	50	54.4
Arrangements for your continuing professional development	49	53.3
Implementing person-centred approaches	45	48.9
'Whistle-blowing'	16	17.4
Other	3	3.3
Total	979	

Attitudes towards induction expressed by NQSWs in the qualitative interviews were mixed:

That induction is very, very good, and that's for everyone, even those who have had their practicum there during their course, or those newcomers. Anyway, those inductions helped me, and I could learn a lot of things. Everybody could learn because things are changing every day, so even the senior people, they go through these trainings. They're gaining much. (Brent, NQSW)

I've been there just over three months, I still haven't had induction training or any form of starting training, which is generally two weeks. When I first started, the day everyone moved in their new teams because [name of organisation] are now working from a different model of practice. (Karen, NQSW).

In the managers/professional supervisors' survey (see Table 26 below), 41.8% considered that induction programmes for NQSWs were something their agency did well, although another 40.5% believed they could do this more or better. This mixed view was reflected in comments made by managers/professional supervisors participating in the qualitative interviews:

They have an orientation package, onboarding it's called. So, they do the orientation programme, so they go out with other social workers, they get all this written policy information alongside it, they get training as it comes along. (Fiona, Manager/Supervisor)

So, they get a two-week orientation, as opposed to some other places you're not just shown your desk and here's your caseload and off you go. They get a two-week orientation to meet and greet people and find out what in-house players' roles are. For the first two to three months they are encouraged to do quite a bit of networking if they haven't already established some networks. Most times, somebody kind of is available. We have a lot of

experienced social workers at our hospital, so usually somebody is available to kind of be, not a designated buddy and maybe that's something we need to consider. But people are available to pick their brains, give you support, help guide you through some of the multiple layers of processes that we have in our organisation, and dealing with the multiple layered personalities that we have to deal with. And also, usually, they're supervised. (Sam, Manager/Supervisor)

They certainly wouldn't be expected to pick up every referral on their first week or two. We have a two-week orientation programme for new staff, and then they'd slowly build up in picking up a caseload. (Jax, Manager/Supervisor)

Well they have that induction programme. It looks great on paper, and...they do the presentation stuff, but the reality is a lot of those social workers skim through that stuff and they don't have time to think about it. It's just more stuff piled on top of their caseload really. They don't get much time to breathe in that first six months because they get those caseloads. (Pat, Manager/Supervisor)

## Supervision

The programme recognition standards of the SWRB (2018) require that a social work student undertaking field education should be supervised for at least one hour per week. The SWRB also has a policy on supervision expectations for registered social workers including "...an expectation that a practitioner will access regular and appropriate supervision at least monthly and in a manner that is consistent with reasonable expectations of the levels of skill and practice ability of the individual". This supervision policy includes a section on NQSWs that notes:

A period of supervised social work practice following qualification complements the knowledge, skills and practical experience gained during the programme of study. It provides an opportunity for graduates to reflect on the link between theory and practice, ensures their ongoing learning is grounded and relevant and their professional development focused and continues to challenge their thinking and practice. (SWRB, 2015, p.3)

The section does not mention anything with regard to increased supervision frequency for NQSWs, but it seems reasonable to assume that the monthly minimum is imperative for new graduates and that perhaps a higher frequency, say once every two weeks, might be appropriate. Questions 40 to 52 of the online survey inquired into NQSWs' views on workplace supervision in terms of frequency, content and expectations. Table 13 shows that the majority (87.5%) of respondents were having formal supervision meetings at least once a month with almost half (48.8%) meeting at least fortnightly. A smaller proportion (7.6%) were accessing supervision less than monthly. About half of respondents (see Table 14) stated that supervision frequency was less than when they commenced the job.

**Table 13. How regularly do you have formal supervision meetings? (Q40)**

Response	n	%
Once a week	27	22.7
Once every two weeks	31	26.1
Once a month	46	38.7
Less often	9	7.6
Not stated	6	5.0
Total	119	100.1

**Table 14. Has this frequency changed since you started this job? (Q41)**

Response	n	%
More often now than when I started	8	6.7
About the same as when I started	37	31.1
Less often now than when I started	61	51.3
Don't know yet – not been in the job long enough	7	5.9
Not stated	6	5.0
Total	119	100

The main focus for supervision (83.2%) identified by most NQSWs was *advice and guidance on more difficult cases*, although *personal support* (68.9%) and *case review* (61.3%) were also frequently identified. Less frequently identified were *performance against targets* (26.1%), *help in applying theory to practice* (33.6%) and *agency policies* (36.1%) (see Table 15). *Help in applying theory to practice* also emerged as an aspect of supervision that most NQSWs (62.2%) would like to see more of in their supervision sessions (see Table 16). In addition, around half wanted a lot or a little more discussion on training needs (53.8%) and *suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness* (50.5%). Taken together these three items suggest a strong expectation that more attention is paid to the educational and developmental aspects of professional supervision.

**Table 15. What do formal supervision meetings usually cover? (N=113) (Q42)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Advice and guidance on more difficult cases	99	83.2
Personal support, encouragement and appreciation	82	68.9
Review of each of my cases	73	61.3
Discussion of my training needs	63	52.9
Suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness	63	52.9
Closing cases	54	45.4
Agency policies	43	36.1
Help in applying theoretical approaches or explanations to my practice	40	33.6
My performance against targets	31	26.1
Not stated	6	5.0
Total	554	

**Table 16. Which of these aspects of supervision would you like more of, or less? (N=113) (Q43)**

Response	Much more		A little more		Just the same		Less		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Help in applying theoretical approaches or explanations to my practice	35	29.4	39	32.8	38	31.9	0	0.0	7	5.9
Discussion of my training needs	25	21.0	39	32.8	46	38.7	1	0.8	8	6.7
Suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness	24	20.2	36	30.3	50	42.0	1	0.8	8	6.7
Advice and guidance on more difficult cases	22	18.5	30	25.2	58	48.7	0	0.0	9	7.6
Personal support, encouragement and appreciation	18	15.1	34	28.6	60	50.4	0	0.0	7	5.9
Agency policies	17	14.3	25	21.0	63	52.9	5	4.2	9	7.6
My performance against targets	12	10.1	19	16.0	69	58.0	9	7.6	10	8.4
Review of each of my cases	8	6.7	30	25.2	68	57.1	4	3.4	9	7.6
Closing cases	5	4.2	20	16.8	81	68.1	3	2.5	10	8.4

The desirability of an educational and developmental emphasis in supervision is also reflected in comments made by the NQSWs who participated in qualitative interviews:

But what my current supervisor does is that she, as I say she is much more affirming. She affirms what I did, but still invites me to reflect on what I did. And we don't just talk about cases and we don't just talk about what I'm currently doing. She's helped me to think a lot more about my core values and where those come from, and why I practise the way that I do. And what in my environment and what in my upbringing has made me the way I am and made me think about things the way I do. Which has been very beneficial, I'd say not just in my professional life, but also in my personal life. (Dirk, NQSW)

So, we can talk about theories and what guides my practice, and also look at critically analysing things. So, if something's struck a chord with me, or something's upset me or something's bothered me, she's really good at looking at why and how do we overcome that, and what does that look like for your practice. And I can be completely honest if I've done something that's questionable, I can talk to her about that and what I should do. It's fantastic, I always like going to supervision. (Ginny, NQSW)

Well I'm very much satisfied because we have, it covers all aspects, like our personal wellbeing, self-care. He's asking how is your health, family, everything, there's a personal bond. The second part is the caseload, any advice or anything that is required, there's a case discussion. And any other thing, any other thing regarding learning, if I say I'm not comfortable dealing with trauma, or trauma-informed practice or that sort of thing, then as soon as training comes, I'll be sent for that. So, all supervision, personal aspects and professional aspects are discussed, so I am very happy and satisfied with the supervision. (Brent, NQSW)

Table 17 explores respondents' views on the extent to which supervision helps them to undertake certain professional tasks and *improving professional practice* is the most highly rated with over three-quarters (79.9%) stating that supervision helps a great deal or a little. Supervision was found to be not much, or not at all helpful, by 32.8% of respondents in relation to *work with cultural issues* and, somewhat surprisingly, by 23.5% with regard to *prioritising workload*.

**Table 17. To what extent do you feel your supervision helps you to... (Q44)**

Response	A great deal		A little		Not much		Not at all		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Improve your professional practice	59	49.6	36	30.3	10	8.4	6	5.0	8	6.7
Maintain professional boundaries with service users	43	36.1	43	36.1	16	13.4	8	6.7	8	6.7
Cope with stress	40	33.6	47	39.5	14	11.8	10	8.4	8	6.7
Work with the cultural issues in your practice	38	31.9	33	27.7	25	21.0	14	11.8	9	7.6
Prioritise your workload	33	27.7	49	41.2	23	19.3	5	4.2	9	7.6

The New Zealand survey (Q45 and Q46) also asked questions about *cultural supervision* and one quarter of NQSW respondents (25.2%) stated they had received cultural supervision, or kaupapa supervision, to support their work with Māori and/or other cultural groups. Of those who had received cultural supervision, the overwhelming majority (90%) found it very or quite helpful (see Table 18). In addition, of those who had not received cultural supervision, the majority (72.3%) agreed that it is something that would be helpful to them.

**Table 18. If you have received additional supervision – cultural supervision or kaupapa supervision – to support your work with Māori and/or other cultural groups, how helpful was this? (Q46)**

Response	n	%
Very helpful	14	46.7
Quite helpful	13	43.3
Not very helpful	2	6.7
Not stated	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

The finding that routine supervision is less helpful with cultural issues, taken together with the strong NQSW support for cultural supervision (amongst both the minority who accessed it and the majority who have not), suggests strongly that agencies should consider reviewing access to cultural supervision for NQSWs. One of the NQSW interviewees expressed this point very clearly:

I guess the one thing I've been thinking about recently is that she's Pākehā, I'm Pākehā, half of my clients are Māori. Actually, it'd be really good to have someone who can speak to best practice with Māori and what that looks like. And she's not terrible at that, but I'm just starting to think, actually, it would probably be better if I had a Māori social worker. (Bex, NQSW)

Since social work practice is essentially a relational and interpersonal practice that most often occurs in places out of the view of supervisors (for example, in closed offices and family homes), then the observation of practice by a supervisor can be a good source of information about a practitioner's strengths and areas for development. Question 48 asked NQSWs to report how frequently their supervisor observed their practice and the results (see Table 19) indicate clearly that this is not a routine part of supervisory practice; around a quarter stated that they were observed at least once a month (24.3%), another quarter less often (23.5%) and approaching half (46.2%) stated that their practice had never been observed.

**Table 19. How often does your supervisor actually observe your practice? (Q48)**

Response	n	%
About once a week	6	5.0
About once every two weeks	11	9.2
About once a month	12	10.1
Less often	28	23.5
Never	55	46.2
Not stated	7	5.9
Total	119	99.9

Asked whether they had had a formal appraisal by their supervisor (Q49), over half (54.6%) stated they had not. However, in response to question 50 asking *how well do you think your supervisor rates your performance so far in your present job?* almost all considered that they were rated either very highly (32.8%) or quite highly (58.8%) by their supervisor. Furthermore, 81.5% considered this assessment of their performance to be a fair assessment.

## Training and development

As already indicated, the majority of NQSWs considered that it was true of their current job that *staff are encouraged to take part in learning and development activities* (88.2%), over three-quarters were satisfied with *being able to fulfil your CPD commitments for the SWRB* (79.9%) (see Tables 10 and 11 above), although fewer, just over half (54.6%), agreed that *my employer takes my professional development seriously* (Table 11). Also, as noted above, just over half of respondents stated that supervision sessions included *discussion of training needs* (52.9%) and half (53.8%) sought greater discussion of training needs in supervision sessions (Tables 15 and 16).

Questions 56 and 57 enquired into respondents' experiences of training courses. Over two-thirds (69.8%) received some form of training, apart from induction, with most of this training (62.7%) being provided in-house (Table 20).

**Table 20. Apart from induction, have you received any other training provided by your employer? (Q56)**

Response	n	%
Yes – in-house training	52	43.7
Yes – externally provided training	31	26.1
No	9	7.6
Not stated	27	22.7
Total	119	100.1

The overwhelming majority (90.2%) of those on the receiving end of training considered it to be *excellent or good*.

**Table 21. Overall, how would you rate the quality and relevance of this training provided to you in your present job? (Q57)**

Response	n	%
Excellent, very good	31	37.8
Good	43	52.4
Neutral	7	8.5
Poor	1	1.2
Very poor	0	0.0
Total	82	99.9

In the interviews with NQSWs, the question of training costs emerged as a constraint on accessing training, which may account for a higher proportion of in-house training:

I think they value it, but because they've been under such a huge amount of restructuring and everything it's about the dollar. At the moment I think there's just considerable constraint as to what the staff can, and what I can, access. (Dee, NQSW)

I guess it comes back to the finance as well, especially working in a non-government organisation who has to fight for putea. And being Māori and Pacific Island as well, a lot of us don't have that much money to pay so much for registration. But it's fine, I guess it's finances in terms of learning. (Delia, NQSW)

Probably just funding here at the organisation. If I put in an application for training, I will only do that if I know that it's free. And that's not the rule, I'm allowed to put in applications for training that costs, but I know the reality for this organisation and that's just the decision I make. So, if we had more support through the funding that we get to be able to offer training without that worry there for staff that would be really good. Because training is so important, and it's expensive as well. (Rae, NQSW)

In the managers/professional supervisors' survey, nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) agreed that their agency did well in relation to providing further training opportunities for qualified social workers, but around a third (32.3%) considered their agency could do more or better in this regard (see Table 26).

The idea of *protected development time* for independent study was less common, with only a third of NQSWs (35.3%) stating that they had such time and over half of that number (52.4%) that the time was insufficient or that they were not always able to use the time allowed (Table 22).

**Table 22. Have you been allowed “protected development time” in this job? (Q63)**

Response	n	%
Yes, plenty of time off for study or learning	20	16.8
Yes, but not enough time off for study or learning	7	5.9
Yes, but not always able to spend the time allowed for development	15	12.6
No	66	55.5
Not stated	11	9.2
Total	119	100.0

In the NQSW interviews time was identified as a major constraint and linked to high caseloads:

Time, is the big one. Luckily, I could probably get approval for training if I wanted to, but it's just knowing what training you want to go to, it's just knowing how to sort that out. Or you see things which are interesting, but you don't have time to take out of your day-to-day role. Yeah, time. (Helen, NQSW)

High caseload. Because if I wanted to learn something on the practice centre, so I can learn more about the policy and the practice and how we do things and why we do things so I can then explain it to the families I'm working with, that is a lesser priority than all the things I need to get done for that family. All the court reports that I have to write, or the visits I have to make or the school meetings, because there's a lot of school ones...Yeah, time's huge. (Karen, NQSW)

## Personal Development Plans

As shown in Table 23, less than half of respondents (47.9%) stated they had a professional development plan (PDP), but for those who had one, most had discussed it with their supervisor (75.4%) and the majority stated that the supervisor was helping them to implement the plan (61.4%). In the English study, in a context where personal development planning had a strong policy emphasis, a higher proportion of NQSWs had a PDP (61%), yet only 41% had discussed it with a line manager and only 35% agreed that a line manager helped them to implement the plan.

**Table 23. Do you have a Professional Development Plan (PDP)? (Q58)**

Response	n	%
Yes	57	47.9
No	50	42.0
Not stated	12	10.1
Total	119	100

One of the NQSW interviewees highlighted the value of their agency's commitment to the PDP process:

We have the standard personal development plan, which most workplaces will have, but they've put a lot of value into that and into what learning you want to get and what will help you to continue your learning, continue to feel like you are – I don't know. To give meaning to your work, and to what you're doing and then yourself. And the conversations that we have, even just with the manager there, when he is – we were in the car the other day and what we were talking about was – I just know how much he values that and then how much in the organisation that is a really strong value. That's my sense (laughing). (Ailsa, NQSW)

## Post-qualifying education

Agency commitment to further post-qualifying study for NQSWs was less developed in this study than in the English study. Only a quarter of NQSWs (26.9%) in this study stated that their supervisor had discussed post-qualifying social work education with them (Table 24), whereas the English study reported that half of NQSWs had had such discussions. This may reflect both lower supply and the absence of an explicit policy commitment to post-qualifying social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Table 24. Has your supervisor (and/or line manager) discussed post-qualifying social work education with you at all? (Q52)**

Response	n	%
Yes	32	26.9
No	80	67.2
Not stated	7	5.9
Total	119	100

One NQSW commented on staffing as a constraint on access to post-qualifying study:

Just that we've been short-staffed consistently, the whole time I've been here. And so that does not help study, because if you know you've got two people's worth of work to go to everyday, but you're only at work four days a week, that stress doesn't help the study stress. You're just kind of compelled and it becomes a hard situation to deal with. (Rae, NQSW)

Despite these constraints, Rae had been able to access post-qualifying study, and commented positively on being able to pursue a specialist area of practice in greater depth:

So that was a huge gap, so that's why I went and did my post-graduate study in mental health and addictions, and that's been amazing. It is, yes. And I need it. I just thought, I don't want to judge other people, but I don't understand how someone could go and work in that field without getting that extra training or education on that specific field of practice. Because I don't know if it's just mental health or addictions, but it's a specific set of knowledge that is quite separate from what we learned in our social work degree. (Rae, NQSW)

## Other learning and development activities

There are other forms of learning and development activities, such as working alongside more experienced peers or attending group sessions for newly qualified workers, that an employer can set up for NQSWs. Table 25 shows responses to seven different types of learning and development activities and indicates that around half of participants had access to *shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague* (54.6%), *peer supervision* (51.3%) and *co-working a case with more experienced social work colleague* (47.9%). Group sessions for NQSWs were far less commonly reported.

**Table 25. Have you had experience of any of the following, in your current job? (n=97) (Q64)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from your own team	65	54.6
Peer supervision – when several social workers from your team share experiences with your professional supervisor	61	51.3
Co-working a case with more experienced social work colleague/s	57	47.9
Shadowing a colleague – from a different profession	28	23.5
Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from a different team	27	22.7
Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – within your own team	18	15.1
Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – involving NQSW from other teams or agencies	9	7.6
Total	265	

The manager/professional supervisor survey also asked a question (Q16) about the kinds of learning and development activities offered by employers and their views on how well this was done. As can be seen from Table 26, most employers identify that they did the following well: *taking students on placement* (63.9%); *provide 'shadowing' for social work students* (55.1%); *recruiting newly qualified social workers from among those having undertaken a student placement in your organisation* (53.2%); and *providing closer supervision for newly qualified social workers than for more experienced recruits* (50%). Of the items that respondents thought their agencies could do more or better, the highest rated were *providing induction programme for newly qualified social workers* (40.5%); *qualified social workers on your staff giving (occasional) lectures/seminars to students on social work programmes* (37.3%); and *closer supervision for newly qualified social workers than for more experienced recruits* (36.1%).

**Table 26. Employer activities as reported by managers/professional supervisors (Q16)**

Response	We don't do this at all		We do this well		We could do this more, or better		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sponsor unqualified staff to qualify as social workers by paying their salaries while they are studying	77	48.7	32	20.3	32	20.3	17	10.8
Encourage staff to gain a qualification in supervision	39	24.7	54	34.2	49	31.0	16	10.1
Qualified social workers on your staff giving (occasional) lectures/seminars to students on social work programmes	32	20.3	49	31.0	59	37.3	18	11.4
Provide further training opportunities to qualified social workers	16	10.1	75	47.5	51	32.3	16	10.1
Recruit newly qualified social workers from among those having undertaken a student placement in your organisation	15	9.5	84	53.2	42	26.6	17	10.8
Provide 'shadowing' for social work students	14	8.9	87	55.1	38	24.1	19	12.0
Induction programme for newly qualified social workers	12	7.7	66	41.8	64	40.5	16	10.1
Take social work students on placement	12	7.7	101	63.9	26	16.5	19	12.0
Limited initial caseload for newly qualified social workers	11	7.0	77	48.7	53	33.5	17	10.8
Closer supervision for newly qualified social workers than for more experienced recruits	6	3.8	79	50.0	57	36.1	16	10.1

It was evident from the NQSW interviews that learning from peers and more experienced colleagues was very highly valued:

At my workplace actually, it's very, very generous, not only my buddy, but anybody I can approach. Anybody, all of the newbies can approach any of the senior social workers and they are all more than ready to help us, and that's really helping us. (Brent, NQSW)

...but also having internal supervision and having just colleagues, social worker and counselling colleagues there as support to learn off and they're very good at wanting to help all the time. ... And there's quite a few people that are social work trained around here as well, so it means that I can just run things past them if I need to. We've got quite a few

people who used to work at Child, Youth and Family, so because I'm kind of working in that environment now I can go and pick their brains about it as well. (Teri, NQSW)

But I think as a new graduate, the key learning is not necessarily going to a training course, but it's the on-the-job, during the day "this has come up with a client, how do I manage this, what do I do about this?" and talking with senior colleagues. (Bex, NQSW)

Always learning from colleagues, so even through peer supervision and things like that. Always learning all the time, so that's really awesome. (Josie, NQSW)

## Views on improvement

In order to assess the extent to which NQSWs believed they had been able to improve their practice since starting employment, questions 66, 67 and 68 focused on personal development. As shown in Table 27, respondents identified significant improvement across all six factors listed, but the three which had most improved (either a great deal or a little) were *personal confidence* (82.3%), *overall quality of practice* (82.3%) and *own professional abilities* (84.1%).

Table 28 displays respondents' perceptions of the extent to which they received help and support from their workplace to improve the six factors. It indicates that most participants received a great deal or a little support in relation to all six factors. Whilst this is reassuring, it is also worthy of note that two in ten NQSWs considered that they had not much or no help and support in relation to *feedback from service users and carers on your practice* (22.6%) and *the accuracy and analytical insights of your case assessments* (20.1%).

**Table 27. Since starting work in this present job, how much would you say each of the following has improved for you personally? (Q66)**

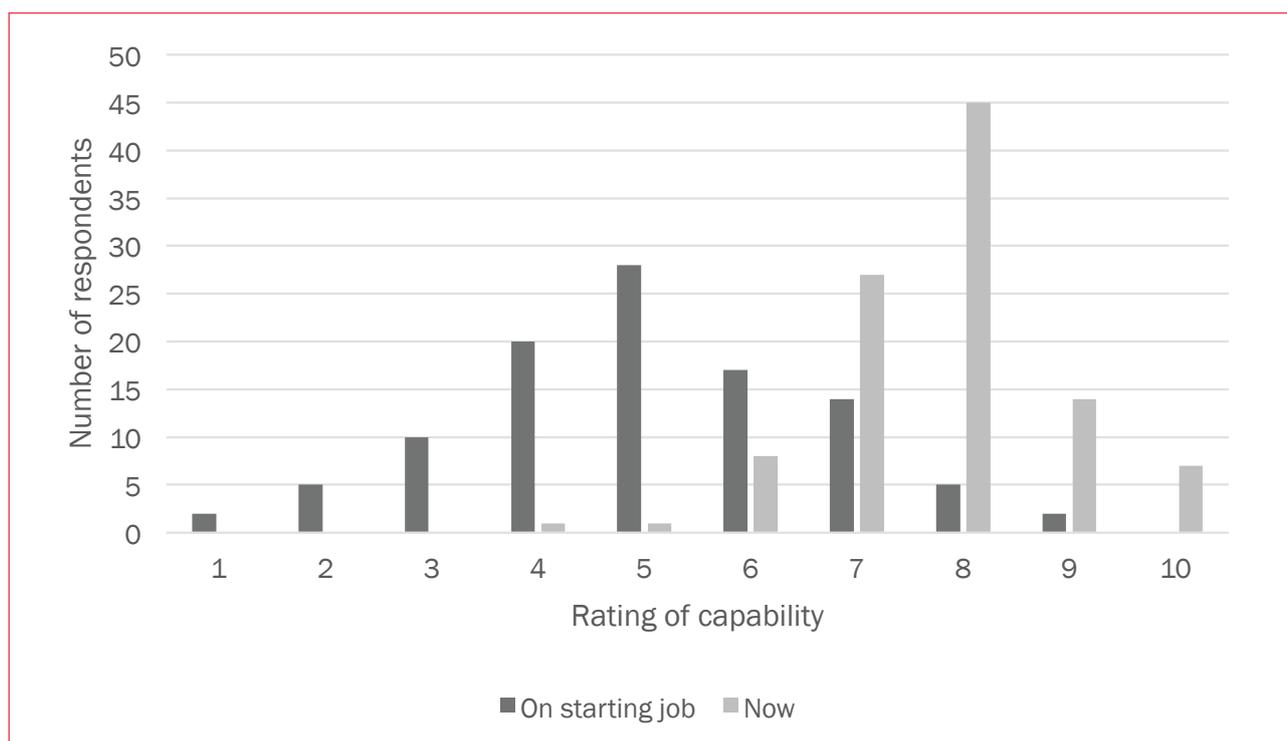
Response	Improved a great deal		Improved a little		Not improved very much		Not improved at all		Not applicable		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Your personal confidence	72	60.5	26	21.8	3	2.5	1	0.8	0	0.0	17	14.3
The overall quality of your practice	70	58.8	28	23.5	2	1.7	2	1.7	1	0.8	16	13.4
Your own professional abilities	66	55.5	34	28.6	1	0.8	1	0.8	1	0.8	16	13.4
Your choice of suitable interventions more likely to lead to better outcomes for the service users and carers on your caseload	61	51.3	33	27.7	5	4.2	2	1.7	1	0.8	17	14.3
The accuracy and analytical insights of your case assessments	52	43.7	41	34.5	8	6.7	1	0.8	0	0.0	17	14.3
Feedback from service users and carers on your practice	50	42.0	40	33.6	2	1.7	2	1.7	9	7.6	16	13.4

**Table 28. How much appropriate help and support have you received in your current workplace for improving... (Q67)**

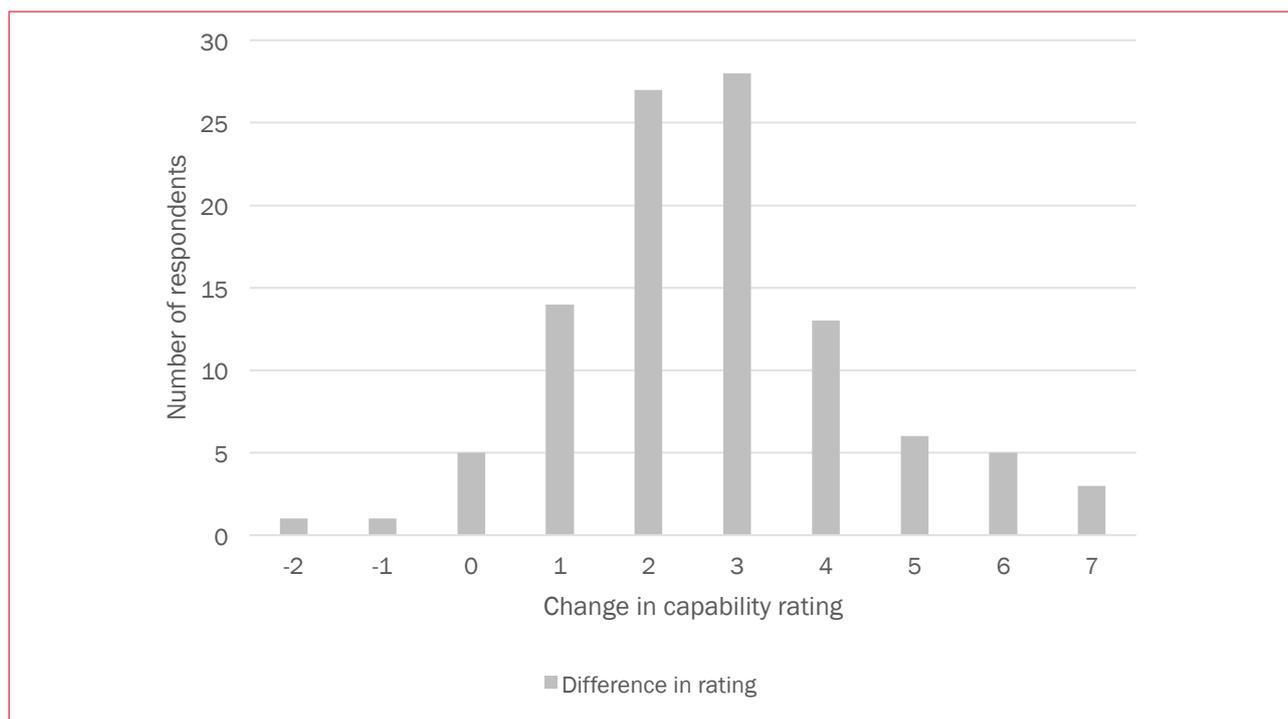
Response	A great deal of help and support		A little help and support		Not much help and support		No help and support at all		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The overall quality of your practice	36	30.3	53	44.5	9	7.6	4	3.4	17	14.3
Your choice of suitable interventions more likely to lead to better outcomes for the service users and carers on your caseload	32	26.9	50	42.0	14	11.8	6	5.0	17	14.3
Your personal confidence	32	26.9	50	42.0	13	10.9	8	6.7	16	13.4
Your own professional abilities	30	25.2	55	46.2	15	12.6	3	2.5	16	13.4
The accuracy and analytical insights of your case assessments	29	24.4	49	41.2	18	15.1	6	5.0	17	14.3
Feedback from service users and carers on your practice	25	21.0	49	41.2	16	13.4	11	9.2	18	15.1

As another indication of overall improvement in their capabilities over time, NQSWs were asked on a scale of 1 to 10 *where would you place yourself now*, and *where would you place yourself when you first started in this current job*? Figure 1 shows graduates' (n=103) self-rating of their capability now, in comparison with their self-rated capability when they started in their current position. An upward shift in perceived capability over time is very evident. In addition, Figure 2 displays the increase in points out of ten indicating that the over half (55%) had increased in self-perceived capability by at least three points, only five (4.9%) remained the same and 2 (1.9%) went backwards. These findings on the progressive development of graduate capability over time are very similar to the findings of the English study.

**Figure 1. Self-rating of social worker capability 'now' and when first started in job**



**Figure 2. Changes in social worker capability 'now' and when first started in job**



## Protected caseloads

A common way of supporting the transition of NQSWs into professional practice is to offer them protected caseloads. Question 38 asked NQSWs whether their level of experience in social work practice was taken into account in allocating cases to them, and question 39, whether they were pleased with their caseload allocation. As shown in Tables 29 and 30, three-quarters stated that their level of experience was taken into account in allocating caseloads, and around three-quarters stated they were pleased with the caseload allocation.

**Table 29. Was your level of experience taken into account in allocating caseload? (Q38)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Yes, to a great extent	42	35.3
Yes, to a limited extent	50	42.0
No	26	21.8
Not stated	1	0.8
Total	119	99.9

**Table 30. Were you pleased about your caseload allocation or not? (Q39)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Pleased	86	72.3
Not pleased	31	26.1
Not stated	2	1.7
Total	119	100.1

Although the majority of NQSWs appear to have protected caseloads and to be pleased about that, two in ten stated that no account was taken of their level of experience (21.8%) and a quarter (26.1%) were not pleased with caseload allocation. Some concerns about caseload were evident in both the NQSW interviews and in interviews with managers/professional supervisors:

It is what it is, but it's not good. And you can advocate for yourself, but it's also difficult when your colleagues are very busy, frustrated for various reasons. And you're just getting told very different things. It's not clear and then sometimes if you seek clarity it gets even messier. Plus, on top, everyone's got a huge workload so it does make it very difficult. (Helen, NQSW)

The huge caseloads and to say no, well they couldn't say no I don't think. We had a bit of a conversation and I said "you've got to look after your health first, number one you've got to learn to say no". I mean they're not meant to get those caseloads, and they're not meant to go on after hours duty until they've finished induction, but it never happened. They all went on after hours duty before they completed induction, and they all say yes...I think they feel they can't say no, yes, well they did say it's hard to say no really. You might have 25 on your caseload by the end of the year, and that's a horrendous caseload actually. It shouldn't happen, but it does happen. (Pat, Manager/Supervisor)

# The transition from student to practitioner

## Preparedness

Question 82 asked our respondents to rate, overall, how well they felt their degree programme prepared them for their present job (Table 31); two-thirds of respondents (68.9%) felt very or fairly well-prepared for their present job, and only one in ten (11.7%) felt that they were not very well, or not at all well-prepared. By way of comparison, the English study found that 78% felt their degree programme made them very or fairly well-prepared for their present job; and 19% not very well-prepared (Sharpe et al., 2011, p.89). It is noteworthy that only 9% of the English sample stated they felt very well-prepared, compared with 18.5% of the Aotearoa New Zealand sample (the New Zealand sample was also adversely affected by a higher proportion of non-respondents to this question, 19.3% compared with only 3% in the English sample).

**Table 31. Overall, how well do you feel your degree programme prepared you for your present job? (Q82)**

Response	<i>n</i>	%
Very well-prepared	22	18.5
Fairly well-prepared	60	50.4
Not very well-prepared	13	10.9
Not at all well-prepared	1	0.8
Not stated	23	19.3
Total	119	99.9

The NQSW interviewees revealed a more nuanced impression of student preparedness to practise that highlighted the reality of a prolonged transition (as suggested in Figures 1 and 2 above) towards becoming a confident and capable practitioner. Comments also indicate the different starting points of individual students, the value of learning to learn and the critical importance of ongoing workplace support, learning and development:

I was pretty confident going into the workforce actually. I'd never had my own caseload on placement at all. I was always working under someone else, but yet I still felt ready coming into this work for my own caseload. Even if I was a bit anxious to start off with, time is almost a better teacher than anything and so many things which I didn't know when I started, I now know just because of the passing of time where I've had to learn all of these things due to necessity in the work. So even if I wasn't fully prepared, I guess what social work education did teach me was the ability to learn. And I think what it taught me was, I think the ability to take away from experiences, and to glean knowledge from those. (Dirk, NQSW)

I don't know how useful this is, but I feel like no matter how well university does prepare you, when you're in your first job and you're sitting with your first client, your first few weeks, you probably are going to feel unprepared. I don't know to what extent the "I'm not quite 100% sure if this is going to work or not", I don't know if that ever fully leaves you in practice. At the end of the day you're working with people and you never know what's going to arise, so I guess I would just have an encouragement to new graduate social workers that yeah, you might feel uncomfortable, and you're going to learn a lot and you're going to have to be ready to revise what you think you know and learn fast, but you've got to just get in and do it really. I think everyone was scared when we left university and we were like "I don't feel prepared" but yeah, you've just got to dive into it. (Bex, NQSW)

I feel like I have a lot more to learn and that a lot of it I can see gaps, so some things I can see I will get through the organisation, but I know that I have a responsibility as well, so whether that be me reading books, or looking online for different things, or trying to expand my understanding or knowledge, or talk to different people. That I try and take ownership of that. I understand the organisation can support me as much as they can, but I also have my own responsibility for my professional development as well. (Josie, NQSW)

These findings echo those reported in student interviews during phase one of the Enhance R2P study (Beddoe, Hay, Maidment, Ballantyne, & Walker, 2018).

From the perspective of managers or professional supervisors of NQSWs, two-thirds (70.2%) stated they were either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the quality of the newly qualified social workers they had worked with in the last two years, none were very dissatisfied and only one in ten (10.1%) was fairly dissatisfied.

**Table 32. Managers' satisfaction with newly qualified social workers (Q14)**

Response	n	%
Very satisfied	40	25.3
Fairly satisfied	71	44.9
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	27	17.1
Fairly dissatisfied	16	10.1
Not stated	4	2.5
Total	158	99.9

This overall sense of satisfaction was reflected in interviews with managers/professional supervisors:

I feel like the social workers that I've had from studies in New Zealand come pretty ready. They've done their what I would call a transformational journey from an everyday person to a social worker (laughing). And that to me means they've done their work around Te Ao Māori and their own journeys; who they are, where they sit, and how important that history is. They come ready with that, and they often come with a really good lens around that whole idea of oppression and a macro level view of the world. (Jill, Manager/Supervisor)

The readiness to learn and grow I've experienced is very much evident, so in that respect, absolutely. And I mentioned the readiness and [being] prepared for the unknown, and being real about not knowing and being able to tick the boxes and have all the answers is something I've really been able to identify. I think the readiness in regards to supervision too and the importance of that. I think that's been really evidenced and the understanding of the importance of it has been really highlighted with the experiences I've have with new grads. And probably the readiness of what that may look like, the work-life balance as well. (Jax, Manager/Supervisor)

However, some managers/professional supervisors had criticisms of NQSWs, and several expressed a view that the capability of NQSWs varied between different TEIs:

I think a general comment is I'm noticing different capabilities depending on where the student is training. I've been a bit concerned about some of the students that I've supervised in recent years, wondering about how they got this far in their training. To be still so lacking in what I would call really basic assessment skills. I've been surprised that people have come to their final year of placement, really not knowing how to do an assessment. That disappoints me, because I thought that would be really important to cover, in the three years of study.

That might be an unrealistic expectation, but I would expect any final year placement student that I was supervising, to already have the rudimentary skills of assessment, and I haven't found that recently. (Jax, Manager/Supervisor)

This perspective was also evident in some managers'/professional supervisors' responses to an open-ended question (Q19) inviting additional comments:

The standard and quality of new social workers varies widely and wildly dependent upon the quality of teaching and standards their school of social work has set and follows up on; i.e. all degrees in social work are certainly NOT equal. (Manager/Supervisor survey respondent 11)

There would appear to be a great deal of variability among the various social work programmes, with some producing competent beginning social workers and others not quite so much. However, I also believe that it is important for employers to offer new grads a comprehensive orientation and an environment that allows the student social worker to transition to becoming a social worker proper. However, this takes time and energy which for NGOs can be very challenging. (Manager/Supervisor survey respondent 32).

## Attitudes towards the degree

The survey also asked whether students enjoyed the experience of the degree. Two-thirds (73.1%) enjoyed it very much or quite enjoyed it and less than one in ten did not enjoy it much (8.4%).

**Table 33. Taking everything into consideration, how much did you enjoy your degree programme? (Q83)**

Response	n	%
I enjoyed it very much	49	41.2
I quite enjoyed it	38	31.9
I did not enjoy it much	10	8.4
Not stated	22	18.5
Total	119	100.0

This overall positivity towards the degree programme was also indicated in Table 34 below where two-thirds (70.6%) of NQSWs agreed strongly or slightly that *doing the degree programme strengthened my motivation to go into social work as a career*, and half (49.6%) agreed strongly or slightly that *the four-year degree will mean higher standards of social work practice*.

It is also noteworthy that almost half (42%) of NQSWs disagreed slightly or strongly with the statements that *my present job prevents me from properly applying the theory I learned during my degree programme*, and *not much of the theory I learned during my degree programme is useful in my present job*. It is important to recall that, in relation to supervision, *help in applying theory to practice* was an aspect of supervision that most NQSWs (62.2%) stated they would like to see more of in their supervision sessions (see Table 16 above). Similar findings were evident in the English study leading the researchers to conclude that:

Taken together, these results provide evidence of insufficient attention given to theory-into-practice in normal working life, if social work graduates are struggling to understand the perceived practical usefulness of theoretical approaches to service users' situations, and to deciding on and implementing helpful interventions. (Sharpe et al., 2011, p. 91-92)

**Table 34. Level of agreement with statements made by NQSWs (Q84)**

Response	Agree strongly		Agree slightly		Neutral		Disagree slightly		Disagree strongly		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Doing the degree programme strengthened my motivation to go into social work as a career	56	47.1	28	23.5	9	7.6	3	2.5	1	0.8	22	18.5
I feel a strong sense of identity with social work as a profession	46	38.7	36	30.3	11	9.2	2	1.7	1	0.8	23	19.3
Life experience is essential for successful social workers	39	32.8	37	31.1	10	8.4	11	9.2	0	0.0	22	18.5
My employer takes my professional development seriously	39	32.8	26	21.8	18	15.1	11	9.2	2	1.7	23	19.3
I am making a real difference to the wellbeing of service users	38	31.9	47	39.5	10	8.4	2	1.7	0	0.0	22	18.5
I feel confident of taking proper account of cultural differences when working with service users	35	29.4	42	35.3	12	10.1	7	5.9	0	0.0	23	19.3
The right personal qualities and values are more important for successful social workers than academic ability	34	28.6	42	35.3	13	10.9	7	5.9	0	0.0	23	19.3
Permanent jobs for newly qualified social workers are hard to get nowadays	26	21.8	33	27.7	16	13.4	15	12.6	6	5.0	23	19.3
The four-year degree will mean higher standards of social work practice	22	18.5	37	31.1	20	16.8	10	8.4	8	6.7	22	18.5
The academic work on the degree programme was more difficult than I expected	20	16.8	21	17.6	30	25.2	17	14.3	9	7.6	22	18.5
I am able to achieve a good work/life balance in my present job	19	13.1	34	23.4	15	10.3	20	13.8	8	5.5	23	19.3
I find it difficult coping with the stress of my present job	13	10.9	25	21.0	28	23.5	20	16.8	11	9.2	22	18.5
My present job prevents me from properly applying the theory I learned during my degree programme	8	6.7	19	16.0	19	16.0	32	26.9	18	15.1	23	19.3
Not much of the theory I learned during my degree programme is useful in my present job	4	3.4	23	19.3	19	16.0	26	21.8	24	20.2	23	19.3

## Specialisation

In the English study, NQSWs were asked a question about whether they had the opportunity to specialise in adult social work or children and families social work during their degree programme, and their attitudes towards specialisation. Since such specialisation is not a feature of social work programmes in Aotearoa New Zealand this question was omitted. However, like the English study, we did include a question in the manager/professional supervisor survey asking their attitudes towards specialist or generic social work education. As can be seen in Table 35 two-thirds (69%) of managers/professional supervisors were either strongly or moderately *in favour* of generic social work education, and only one-third strongly or moderately *in favour of separate programmes for adults and children*. This finding resonates with the finding from our focus groups, conducted during phase one of the study, when educators expressed a strong preference for generic pre-qualifying education.

**Table 35. Managers/professional supervisor's views on specialisation in qualifying education (Q17)**

Response	n	%
Strongly in favour of generic social work education	78	49.4
Moderately in favour of generic social work education	31	19.6
Moderately prefer separate programmes for adults and children	23	14.6
Strongly prefer separate programmes for adults and children	23	14.6
Not stated	3	1.9
Total	158	100.1

## Learning benefits from degree

Our NQSW respondents were asked to rate the importance of key skills in their present job, and then asked the extent to which their degree programme helped them develop those skills as students (or whether they were already good at the skill). Table 36 below presents the results organised in rank order in terms of perceived level of importance and displays the extent to which the degree programme was considered to be helpful or not. The top three areas where degree programmes were found to be a lot or a little helpful were *being a reflective practitioner* (79%), *being culturally responsive* (73.2%) and *being analytical, able to analyse a case critically* (70.6%). In the English study, being a reflective practitioner and analytical ability were also in the top three, but the third skill was *being empowering, which* was fourth in the Aotearoa New Zealand study (66.4%); it was squeezed out of third position by *being culturally responsive*, which was not a skill included in the English study.

What is perhaps surprising about the table below is that only half of respondents (49.6%) considered that *being a literate writer of fluent English* was a very important skill for their present job, and further that only half (50.4%) considered that the degree programme had helped a little or a lot in developing this skill. However, the latter rating may have been influenced by the fact that over a quarter (27.7%) considered that they were already good at this.

**Table 36. To what extent do you feel your degree programme helped you to develop each of these characteristics? (Q80 and Q81)**

Response	Helped a lot	Helped a little	Did not help at all, though I needed help	Did not help at all because I was already very good at this	Not stated	Very Important
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Being a good listener	29.4	31.1	0.8	19.3	19.3	79.8
Being able to engage effectively with users and carers	22.7	42.0	4.2	12.6	18.5	79.0
Being empowering, a creator of opportunities for service users to gain more control over their lives	29.4	37.0	9.2	5.0	19.3	71.4
Being a reflective practitioner	51.3	27.7	0.8	1.7	18.5	66.4
Being culturally responsive	42.9	30.3	4.2	3.4	19.3	66.4
Being adaptable, responsive to changing work demands	18.5	35.3	11.8	13.4	21.0	66.4
Being analytical, able to analyse a case critically	33.6	37.0	5.9	4.2	19.3	63.0
Being good at working with other professionals from different disciplines/agencies	11.8	40.3	10.9	16.8	20.2	63.0
Being a literate writer of fluent English	31.1	19.3	2.5	27.7	19.3	49.6

## Employers' expectations and perceptions

The manager/professional supervisor survey asked a number of questions with regard to the perceived qualities, skills and knowledge expected of, and held by, new social work graduates. If we consider, first of all, question 13, asking managers to select the three most important qualities of NQSWs from a list of 31 statements, the highest rated in terms of importance was *effective engagement with service users* with over half (54%) of managers/professional supervisors selecting that option. In second place was *analytical abilities* where about a third of managers/professional supervisors (29.1%) selected that option. Finally, in joint third place, was *teamworking* (15.8%) and *coping with stress and pressure* (15.8%), followed by *commitment to best interests of service users and carers* (15.1%). Other responses were distributed very widely across the remaining qualities.

**Table 37. Importance to managers/professional supervisors of newly qualified social workers' qualities (Q13)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Effective engagement with service users and carers	86	54.4
Analytic abilities	46	29.1
Teamworking	25	15.8
Coping with stress and pressure	25	15.8
Commitment to the best interests of service users and carers	24	15.1
Facilitating independence for service users, giving them control over their lives	22	13.9
Knowledge of underpinning theories about social problems and disadvantage	21	13.3
Working with diverse communities	19	12.0
Planning for specific outcomes for service users as a result of social work intervention(s)	19	12.0
Working with Māori	18	11.4
Ability to prioritise their workload	18	11.4
Initiative and resourcefulness in helping service users and carers resolve their problems	18	11.4
High standards of literacy in report writing	15	9.5
Enthusiasm for their work as a social worker	15	9.5
Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions	12	7.6
Interest in continuous learning	12	7.6
Knowledge of the SWRB Code of Practice	11	7.0
Cultural sensitivity	11	7.0
Adaptability, flexibility	11	7.0
Knowledge of evidence-based practice	10	6.3
Taking responsibility for (taking ownership of) their own decisions	10	6.3
Inter-professional working (with colleagues in health, education, etc)	7	4.4
Recognising the importance of internal procedures and policies	7	4.4
Information technology	6	3.8
Self-confidence	6	3.8
Knowledge of the ANZASW Code of Ethics	5	3.2
Knowledge of specific local services, resources, etc., available to service users and carers	4	2.5
Knowledge of social work organisations – functions, responsibilities and structures	4	2.5
Group-working with service users, carers, community members	2	1.3
Knowledge of social workers' legal powers	2	1.3
Working with Pasifika	1	0.6
Total	492	

Managers/professional supervisors were also asked to rate their perceptions of NQSWs' knowledge, qualities, skill and abilities (see Tables 38, 39 and 40 below). In relation to the most important quality of *effective engagement with service users* almost all respondents (92.4%) considered NQSWs to be excellent or adequate. The *teamworking* ability of NQSWs was also positively rated at 93.7%, and 93% considered NQSWs to be excellent or adequate in relation to their *commitment to best interests of service users and carers*.

In terms of *analytical abilities*, three-quarters of managers/professional supervisors (75.3%) perceived NQSWs to be excellent or adequate, although this ability also attracted a rating of disappointing from almost a quarter (23.4%) of managers/professional supervisors. Whilst most respondents (74%) were considered to be excellent or adequate in relation to *coping with stress and pressure*, this quality also attracted a disappointment rating of almost a quarter (22.8%).

Curiously, as noted in Table 37 above, only one in ten (9.5%) managers/professional supervisors selected *high standards of literacy in report writing* as one of the top three qualities and, when rating the skills and abilities of NQSWs, the majority of managers/professional supervisors (86.1%) considered that NQSWs were either excellent or adequate in terms of *standards of literacy in report writing*; in fact almost a third of these respondents considered NQSWs' *standards of literacy in report writing* to be excellent (see Table 38). Managers/professional supervisors' perceptions of NQSWs' abilities in relation to *information technology* was particularly strong with 59.5% rating them as excellent; a perception that may be related to managers/professional supervisors' own confidence with technology and the widely held assumption that younger people are "digital natives".

**Table 38. Managers'/professional supervisors' ratings of newly qualified social workers' skills and abilities (Q10)**

Response	Excellent		Adequate		Disappointing		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Information technology	94	59.5	52	32.9	6	3.8	6	3.8
Teamworking	76	48.1	72	45.6	6	3.8	4	2.5
Effective engagement with service users and carers	61	38.6	85	53.8	10	6.3	2	1.3
Inter-professional working (with colleagues in health, education, etc)	47	29.7	91	57.6	16	10.1	4	2.5
Working with diverse communities	47	29.7	92	58.2	15	9.5	4	2.5
Standards of literacy in report writing	46	29.1	90	57.0	18	11.4	4	2.5
Planning for specific outcomes for service users as a result of social work intervention(s)	42	26.6	84	53.2	28	17.7	4	2.5
Facilitating independence for service users, giving them control over their lives	40	25.3	89	56.3	24	15.2	5	3.2
Working with Māori	39	24.5	93	58.9	20	12.7	6	3.8
Analytic abilities	36	22.8	83	52.5	37	23.4	2	1.3
Group-working with service users, carers, community members	36	22.8	95	60.1	19	12.0	8	5.1
Ability to prioritise their workload	29	18.4	103	65.2	23	14.6	3	1.9
Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions	29	18.4	79	50.0	45	28.5	5	3.2
Working with Pasifika	23	14.6	100	63.3	27	17.1	8	5.1

In terms of the perceived knowledge base of NQSWs, all of the ratings for the seven knowledge types included in Q11 were relatively positive, with knowledge of *underpinning theories about social problems and disadvantage* rated highest (79.7% excellent or adequate) and knowledge of *their legal powers as social workers* rated lowest (this item attracted the most negative ratings with just over a quarter of respondents expressing disappointment); we should note, however, that as shown in Table 37 above, only 1.3% of managers/professional supervisors considered legal knowledge to be one of the top three most important qualities for NQSWs to possess.

**Table 39. Managers/professional supervisors' ratings of newly qualified social workers' knowledge (Q11)**

Response	Excellent		Adequate		Disappointing		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Underpinning theories about social problems and disadvantage	37	23.4	89	56.3	27	17.1	5	3.2
Availability of specific local services, resources, etc., for service users and carers	32	20.3	92	58.2	31	19.6	3	1.9
Evidence-based practice	28	17.7	89	56.3	38	24.1	3	1.9
Social work organisations – functions, responsibilities and structures	27	17.1	108	68.4	20	12.7	3	1.9
The ANZASW Code of Ethics	27	17.1	90	57.0	33	20.9	8	5.1
The SWRB Code of Practice	26	16.5	97	61.4	29	18.4	6	3.8
Their legal powers as social workers	21	13.3	87	55.1	44	27.8	6	3.8

Managers/professional supervisors also gave strongly positive ratings for NQSWs' *enthusiasm for their work as a social worker* (96.3% excellent or adequate) and their *commitment to the best interests of service users and carers* (93% excellent or adequate). Less positively rated was NQSWs' *ability to cope with stress and pressure*, where almost a quarter (22.8%) expressed disappointment.

**Table 40. Managers/professional supervisors' ratings of newly qualified social workers' values and personal qualities (Q12)**

Response	Excellent		Adequate		Disappointing		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Enthusiasm for their work as a social worker	114	72.2	38	24.1	3	1.9	3	1.9
Commitment to the best interests of service users and carers	103	65.2	44	27.8	8	5.1	3	1.9
Interest in continuous learning	78	49.4	57	36.1	18	11.4	5	3.2
Cultural sensitivity	68	43.0	73	46.2	12	7.6	5	3.2
Adaptability, flexibility	56	35.4	80	50.6	16	10.1	6	3.8
Initiative and resourcefulness in helping service users and carers resolve their problems	54	34.2	76	48.1	24	15.2	4	2.5
Recognising the importance of internal procedures and policies	51	32.3	83	52.5	18	11.4	6	3.8
Taking responsibility for (taking ownership of) their own decisions	46	29.1	83	52.5	25	15.8	4	2.5
Self-confidence	31	19.6	99	62.7	21	13.3	7	4.4
Coping with stress and pressure	19	12.0	98	62.0	36	22.8	5	3.2

Question 15 of the survey was a portmanteau of different statements with which managers/professional supervisors were invited to agree or otherwise. The three statements attracting strongest levels of agreement were that *there is a serious shortage of qualified social workers* (67.1% agreed slightly or strongly), *life experience is essential for successful social workers* (71.5% agreed slightly or strongly) and *there is not enough emphasis in social work practice these days on therapeutic methods of*

intervention (70.2% agreed slightly or strongly). This question included a number of negative questions and the item attracting the most disagreement was that *the level of stress associated with jobs in social work seems to be decreasing* (80.3% disagreed slightly or strongly).

**Table 41. Managers/professional supervisors' level of agreement with statements made by social work employers (Q15)**

Response	Agree strongly		Agree slightly		Neutral		Disagree slightly		Disagree strongly		Not stated	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
There is a serious shortage of qualified social workers	60	38.0	46	29.1	27	17.1	17	10.8	4	2.5	4	2.5
Life experience is essential for successful social workers	55	34.8	58	36.7	19	12.0	17	10.8	6	3.8	3	1.9
There is not enough emphasis in social work practice these days on therapeutic methods of intervention	50	31.6	61	38.6	26	16.5	15	9.5	3	1.9	3	1.9
The four-year social work degree will mean higher standards of social work practice	44	27.8	56	35.4	21	13.3	29	18.4	5	3.2	3	1.9
The four-year social work degree will increase the status of the profession	43	23.9	56	31.1	20	11.1	29	16.1	5	2.8	27	15.0
Respectfulness to service users and carers is improving among social workers	32	20.3	60	38.0	48	30.4	10	6.3	4	2.5	4	2.5
Too many social workers are over-cautious in their assessment of the risk of harm to service users or others	16	10.1	51	32.3	44	27.8	36	22.8	8	5.1	3	1.9
The level of stress associated with jobs in social work seems to be decreasing	6	3.8	7	4.4	15	9.5	41	25.9	86	54.4	3	1.9
These days, better quality candidates apply for our unqualified staff vacancies, than for our qualified social worker vacancies	4	2.5	30	19.0	63	39.9	25	15.8	29	18.4	7	4.4

## Knowledge gaps

The final part of the survey is highly relevant to NQSWs' preparedness to practise. It inquired, firstly, into the types of specialist knowledge respondents considered to be relevant to their present job (Table 42), and secondly, whether when they started working they knew as much about that area of specialist knowledge as was expected of them (Table 44). With regard to the former, given the predominance of child-related work identified in Table 3 above, it is not surprising to see *child protection* as the lead area of specialist knowledge (selected by 79.0% of respondents). Nor, given the over-representation of Māori as users of social work services, is it surprising to see knowledge of *working with Māori* being cited frequently (selected by 78.2% of respondents).

We might expect the relevance of specialist knowledge to vary depending on a respondent's agency and field of practice; however, the top five areas of specialist knowledge identified by the NQSW sample as a whole were: *child protection/safeguarding children* (79%), *working with Māori* (78.2%), *mental health conditions and their likely progress* (72.3%), *the rights of the child* (71.4%), and *family violence* (70.6%). The relevance of these top five topics is not entirely surprising and is, to an extent, mirrored in the English study (Sharpe et al., 2011, p. 116). As previously noted, to reflect our context, the Aotearoa New Zealand study added three additional knowledge areas not included in the English study: *working with Māori*, *family violence* and *working with Pacific peoples* (the first two of these additions ended up featuring in the top five most relevant topics).

**Table 42. Which of these areas of specialist knowledge would you say are relevant to your present job? (Q35)**

Response	Responses	
	n	% of cases
Child protection/safeguarding children	94	79.0
Working with Māori	93	78.2
Mental health conditions and their likely progress	86	72.3
The rights of the child	85	71.4
Family violence	84	70.6
Communicating with children and young people	83	69.7
Transitions in the lives of service users	79	66.4
Working with Pacific peoples	78	65.5
Drugs or alcohol dependency/misuse	76	63.9
Child development milestones	76	63.9
Preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal	52	43.7
Learning disabilities	51	42.9
Adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults	50	42.0
Physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress	35	29.4
Ageing and the impact of life changes	27	22.7
Refugees and asylum seekers	18	15.1
Total	1067	

Table 43 below compares the findings of the Aotearoa New Zealand and English studies by excluding the additional factors added to the Aotearoa New Zealand study and comparing the rank ordering and percentage of NQSWs selecting specialist knowledge areas in both studies. The rank ordering is remarkably similar. It is also noteworthy that the five specialist knowledge areas ranked as *least relevant* to NQSWs' current jobs are identical in both studies and all relate to adult and health-related social work practice: *learning disabilities, adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults, physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress, ageing and the impact of life changes, and refugees and asylum seekers*.

**Table 43. Rank order and percentage of NQSWs selecting specialist knowledge as relevant to present job in the NZ and English studies**

Response	Rank order and % selected	
	NZ 2018	England 2009
Child protection/safeguarding children	1 (79%)	1 (65%)
Mental health conditions and their likely progress	2 (72%)	4 (59%)
The rights of the child	3 (71%)	3 (61%)
Communicating with children and young people	4 (70%)	2 (63%)
Transitions in the lives of service users	5 (66%)	5 (58%)
Drugs or alcohol dependency/misuse	6 (64%)	7 (50%)
Child development milestones	6 (64%)	5 (58%)
Preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal	7 (44%)	6 (55%)
Learning disabilities	8 (43%)	8 (39%)
Adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults	9 (42%)	9 (47%)
Physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress	10 (29%)	10 (36%)
Ageing and the impact of life changes	11 (23%)	11 (31%)
Refugees and asylum seekers	12 (15%)	12 (22%)

Following the question on identifying areas of specialist knowledge, Question 36 asked NQSWs about employer expectations of the specialist knowledge areas relevant to their present job. Table 44 shows the percentage of NQSWs selecting the specialist knowledge area as relevant to their present job, and the percentage who were expected to know more when they started working (ranked according to the size of the perceived knowledge gap); this knowledge gap ranges from a high of 70% of NQSWs who were expected to know more about *preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal* to a low of 18.9% who were expected to know more about *working with Māori*.

**Table 44. When you started working in this job, did you know as much about the specialist knowledge areas as was expected of you? (Q36)**

Response	Relevant to present job	Expected to know more
	%	%
Preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal	43.7	70.0
Physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress	29.4	57.6
Learning disabilities	42.9	54.2
Refugees and asylum seekers	15.1	44.4
Mental health conditions and their likely progress	72.3	44.0
Drugs or alcohol dependency/misuse	63.9	38.7
Ageing and the impact of life changes	22.7	38.5
Family violence	70.6	34.9
Child protection/safeguarding children	79.0	33.3
Child development milestones	63.9	31.0
Transitions in the lives of service users	66.4	30.7
Adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults	42.0	29.2
Working with Pacific peoples	65.5	29.0
The rights of the child	71.4	27.1
Communicating with children and young people	69.7	24.4
Working with Māori	78.2	18.9

It is worth noting that the specialist knowledge areas where NQSWs found they were expected to know more are not necessarily the same as the specialist knowledge areas that were most relevant to their current job. That is, in some cases, respondents were citing quite high levels of knowledge acceptability for relevant knowledge; for example, in relation to *working with Māori*, 78% of respondents cited this area as relevant, and 81% considered their level of knowledge to be acceptable on starting work. On the other hand, whilst only 44% of respondents considered *preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal* to be relevant to their present position, 70% of respondents selecting this knowledge area considered that, when they started work, their level of knowledge was not acceptable. The knowledge area *mental health conditions and their likely progress* was relevant to the majority of respondents (72%) and many were expected to know more when starting out in their present position (44%). Table 45 shows, for the top five most relevant knowledge areas, the proportion of respondents who felt their level of knowledge was unacceptable when commencing work.

**Table 45. Employer expectations of top five most relevant specialist knowledge areas**

Knowledge relevance and perceived knowledge gaps	Responses	
	% Relevance	% Expected to know more
Mental health conditions and their likely progress	72%	44%
Family violence	71%	35%
Child protection/safeguarding children	79%	33%
The rights of the child	71%	27%
Working with Māori	78%	19%

If Table 42 highlights the specialist service user knowledge areas that were relevant to the work of NQSWs, and Table 44 the extent to which their knowledge of service user groups met employer expectations, then the next two tables turn to the particular practice topics NQSWs wish they knew a lot more about (Table 46).

**Table 46. Topics that NQSWs wish to know a lot more about (Q75)**

Response	n	%
Working with trauma	73	61.3
Dealing with hostility, aggression or conflict	64	53.8
Legal basis for social work interventions	57	47.9
Assessing risk	55	46.2
Services and resources available locally 'in your patch' that might benefit the service users or carers on your case	42	35.3
Good record-keeping	39	32.8
Family violence	39	32.8
Acquiring advanced and specialist skills and knowledge qualifications	36	30.3
The evidence-base for your area of social work practice – 'what works'	36	30.3
Attachment theory	32	26.9
Working with Pacific peoples	31	26.1
Engaging effectively with people with special communication needs (e.g., children and young people, stroke survivors, people with learning disabilities)	31	26.1
Family and whānau dynamics	30	25.2
Inter-professional working, inter-disciplinary collaboration	30	25.2
Cross-cultural practice	29	24.4
Encouraging or empowering service users to take control of their lives and make choices	28	23.5
Working with Māori	26	21.8
Human development	26	21.8
Leadership and management	23	19.3
Managing budgets	19	16.0
Other	16	13.4
Using your 'self' as a resource in achieving outcomes with service users	15	12.6
Anti-discriminatory practice	12	10.1
Supporting carers	12	10.1
Group work	9	7.6
No response	19	16.0

The five topics frequently selected by most NQSWs were: *working with trauma* (61.3%); *dealing with hostility, aggression or conflict* (53.8%); *the legal basis for social work interventions* (47.9%); *assessing risk* (46.2%); and *services and resources available locally 'in your patch' that might benefit the service users or carers on your case* (35.3%). As noted earlier, the topic *working with trauma* was not included in the study by Sharpe et al. (2011) but added by the Enhance R2P research team because of our awareness of the recent policy discourse on this topic in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is therefore difficult to interpret whether NQSWs' desire to know more about trauma is a recognition of a gap in their knowledge for practice, or a reaction to a dominant policy discourse that is openly critical of social workers' knowledge of trauma (see Beddoe, Ballantyne, Maidment, Hay, & Walker, 2019 for a fuller discussion). Current policy discourse in Aotearoa New Zealand is less permeated with discussion of

social workers ability to manage conflict, understand the legal basis for interventions or their awareness of local services and resources; therefore, these topics are likely to reflect genuine knowledge gaps.

One interesting observation to note, is that three of the top five topics that NQSWs wish they knew more about in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2016 are identical to those identified by the English NQSWs surveyed in 2009 (Table 5).

**Table 47: Findings from Sharpe et al. (2011) - The top five of 24 topics that social workers wish to know more about**

Response	Responses	
	England %	New Zealand %
Dealing with hostility, aggression or conflict	62	53.8
Assessing risk	60	46.2
Legal basis for social work interventions	51	47.9
Evidence-base for your area of social work practice – ‘what works’	43	30.5
Services and resources available locally ‘in your patch’ that might benefit the service users or carers on your case	35	35.3

One interpretation of the commonality in perceived knowledge gaps of NQSWs in different jurisdictions is that the topics highlighted may be inherent in the transition from student to practitioner status (Moriarty, Manthorpe, Stevens, & Hussein, 2011; Tham & Lynch, 2019). Some of the NQSWs’ comments below describe the impact of the transition:

I think it’s that mental thing, thinking about yourself as a professional. So, you’re moving out of that space of being at uni, and doing assignments and all that kind of stuff, to actually being on the frontline and interacting with people face-to-face. I think that’s probably a massive part. (Josie, NQSW)

Something I saw when I was in Australia, their equivalent of Oranga Tamariki, when they hire graduate social workers, they actually give them a mentor for two years. So, on top of supervision they know they have someone they can continually go to and ask those practice questions and things like that. And I just thought ‘flip that would be so good to have a model like that in New Zealand’, where graduate social workers are paired up with someone with practice wisdom. (Bex, NQSW)

Being a practitioner in that kind of aspect, I kind of like to think of the nursing model in terms of a new grad year and being able to actually observe and be a part of an experienced social workers’ practice before working as a sole practitioner. (Karen, NQSW)

You almost need an internship type programme, or some sort of bridging thing between your degree and when you go out to work. Like a graduate programme. There’s something missing in-between and you get a job and get thrown out into the deep end and it’s a bit of a wake-up call. (Josie, NQSW)

Not as well-prepared as I thought I was. So I first started at CYF and I was there for a year and a half, and I did a placement with CYF, but when I started as a full-time social worker, I was like ‘whoa this is far different’ – I think probably the weight of the responsibility I had was quite surprising and looking back I think ‘my gosh, I should’ve figured that one out’, but yeah, I don’t know that I was prepared for that, and I wasn’t prepared for how little support, even though there are I guess at a higher level there’s support for you. (Ailsa, NQSW)

I wouldn't say I was really prepared. I think my field is a bit different. I think if I'd gone into child care and protection or mental health, I might have been a bit more prepared, but in terms of physical health, because I work for the DHB, this is my second job. I didn't get a lot of training about health social work, physical health social work. We ...did nothing really about what the field of physical health social work might look like in the degree that I did. (Sally, NQSW)

I feel like I have a lot more to learn and that a lot of it I can see gaps, so some things I can see I will get through the organisation, but I know that I have a responsibility as well, so whether that be me reading books, or looking online for different things, or trying to expand my understanding or knowledge, or talk to different people. That I try and take ownership of that. I understand the organisation can support me as much as they can, but I also have my own responsibility for my professional development as well. (Josie, NQSW)

This issue of the transition from social work student to practitioner status, and the gradual process of skill acquisition, was also strongly evident in the English study (Sharpe et al., 2011) leading the researchers to conclude that their findings supported “the development of an overarching professional standards framework” (p. 147) and the inclusion of an Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) as part of a professional capabilities framework.

As in the English study, the Enhance R2P survey asked respondents to identify how they would expect to learn about the topics they wanted to know more about. The survey asked them to identify (from a menu of five options, or don't know) how they would expect to learn about their most important, second most important and third most important topic, and then all of the results were combined into Table 48 below. The English study included the option of *Post Qualifying consolidation module* but there is no comparable option in Aotearoa New Zealand, so this was excluded (although only 13% selected this option in the English study). The English survey also permitted respondents to select more than one option and therefore the two sets of findings are not strictly comparable.

Like the English study, the majority of our respondents (45.1%) stated they would have expected to learn more about their important topics during their qualifying degree programme, although the English study had an even higher proportion selecting this option (72%). It is important to take care in the interpretation of these findings, as Sharpe et al. (2011, p. 121) highlight:

...whether this emphasis on the degree as the main source of learning reflects what new graduates have heard in the workplace about what they are expected to know having completed qualifying training, or whether graduates felt disappointed themselves about their level of skill or knowledge having qualified, is a matter for speculation.

**Table 48. For your most important topics, how would you have expected to learn (more) about this aspect of your practice? (Q77)**

Response	n	%
During your qualifying degree programme	161	45.1
At work – specific training	48	13.4
At work – induction	29	8.1
At work – learning from colleagues 'on the job'	25	7.0
Reading up or research on your own	15	4.2
Don't know	3	0.8
Not stated	76	21.3
Total	357	99.9

Similarly, the low levels of respondents selecting *reading up or research on your own* (4.2%) may reflect NQSWs' expectation of qualifying programmes, but may also reflect the lack of time to undertake independent study in the workplace.

The Enhance R2P survey also asked two open-ended questions about qualifying social work degree programmes: Q73: *From what you learned during your degree programme, what would you say has helped you most, in your present job?* and Q74: *What would you say is the most important omission, or gap, between what you learned during your degree programme, and what you are expected to know now, for your present job?*

## What aspects of the degree helped most?

There were 97 responses to this open-ended question with most being short responses that listed one or two aspects respondents found valuable. Although the topics were very diverse, there were four key themes: theoretical knowledge and its application to practice, practical experience gained in field work placements, the development of micro-skills and bicultural practice. These themes were also evident in the interviews with NQSWs and some of their comments are included below.

Firstly, knowledge of theory and its application to practice was mentioned many times:

Understanding of theories and how they are used in practice. (NQSW survey respondent 2)

Theoretically understanding a person's situation by looking at the wider picture of what has/is influencing their lives. (NQSW survey respondent 22)

The in-depth theoretical knowledge that underpins my practice. (NQSW survey respondent 17)

The NQSW interviewees also commented on theoretical knowledge:

Definitely the focus on theory to practice and how that works in real life, so having an understanding of theory, but also very clearly being able to apply it to what happens in the one-hour you spend with a person. So that was a really amazing part of the programme, just the way they could turn that abstract concept into something that we could use every day. (Rae, NQSW)

I think also the really basic stuff, the stuff that everyone talks about, the strengths perspective, anti-oppressive practice and ecological model. All of that kind of stuff I think is still really important and I think there's a reason why everyone always talks about those when they are asked about the theories they use. (Dirk, NQSW)

But a lot of the theory stuff was fantastic, as much as I used to think 'oh gosh,' and hated doing the integrated practice stuff, it was actually really useful. Now it kind of just flows and I'll say to my supervisor 'oh gosh I don't think I've thought about theory for ages' and she will be like 'you need to think about this' and I'll be like 'oh I do use it all the time, I just don't realise I do'. (Ginny, NQSW)

Secondly, the value of practical experience during field work placement was also mentioned frequently:

Placements. Placements were the most helpful thing of all. Also, practical skills learnt in class, such as skills to talk to clients. (NQSW survey respondent 52)

Practical learnings through placements. (NQSW survey respondent 55)

My placement at a government organisation. (NQSW survey respondent 60)

Absolutely the placements, I think they were so useful. I kind of wish we'd done more, and a lot of us have said we wish we had done more placement because they were so useful. You can actually see the processes happening. I guess it depends on your learning, but I just learn by doing rather than listening, so I think that was valuable. (Ginny, NQSW)

... think the placements were really good, but I know everyone had three experiences on placement. I had a good final placement, but that fell apart at the start, but then turned out for the better, so that's one of those things. So, I think the placement experience can make it be very different. I was lucky that I had a good placement and learnt a lot through a very qualified supervisor. (Helen, NQSW)

The significant value of field work placements for learning, expressed by NQSW survey and interview respondents (and by students during phase one focus groups), has to be considered in the context of this study's other findings about the serendipitous nature of field work placement experiences, and the variability in placement quality and levels of supervision (see Hay, Maidment, Ballantyne, Beddoe, & Walker, 2018).

As NQSW survey respondent 52 indicates above, the micro skills work that help students prepare for placement is also highly prized:

Learning the importance and skill of building relationships and rapport with clients. (NQSW survey respondent 6)

Learning about skills on how to engage effectively with children and people. (NQSW survey respondent 37)

The cultural learning is the most helpful, followed by the micro skills and role plays, as well as research skills. (NQSW survey respondent 50)

I thought the parts about communication were especially helpful. I think a lot back to all of the micro skills we were taught about, communicating with clients, and I think as annoying as they were at the time, I think all of the role-plays that we did were really beneficial, practising that sort of interaction with people. (Dirk, NQSW)

So, I guess in terms of what was helpful, we did a practice paper in my third year, I don't know if it was a full-year or half-year course. Some skills and we did lots of role-playing and things and that was helpful just in terms of learning how to use skills and things with patients that I work with... So that would be third-year, we did some skills work with role-plays, and then the placement papers. That kind of practical application of what we had been learning. ((Sally, NQSW)

The skills-based stuff, so all the papers we did on the counselling techniques, reflection. I found reflection really important so really appreciate the emphasis my university put on that. (Bex, NQSW)

Finally, learning about bicultural practice was also a key theme:

Knowledge of te ao Māori, colonisation, oppression, marginalisation and knowledge of self, what guides me and my world view and knowing that this is unique to me just as it is to another person. (NQSW survey respondent 24)

The bicultural aspect to the whole degree. (NQSW survey respondent 59)

Cultural awareness, ability to hear the voice of my clients, knowledge around social justice. (NQSW survey respondent 62)

The Māori paper and all the information around that. A lot of my focus was on offending, and FGCs and traditional Māori style of restorative justice. Now most of my referrals are from Oranga Tamariki, so looking at the FGCs has really helped me as well, because I understand where that's all come from. It hasn't just all of a sudden gone, 'Oh well this is how an FGC goes'. I can look at it and say, 'Ah I understand why that's done' and look at it with a more bicultural approach. (Virginia, NQSW)

The emphasis on Māori culture, that was very useful and the fact my institution really got us to think through our biases and internal racism and stuff like that, because most of my clients are Māori. So, going through that process was valuable, but that could have been a lot better. (Bex, NQSW).

## Important omissions or gaps in knowledge

There were 91 responses to this question and, once again, great diversity in the gaps highlighted. There were, however, several clear themes. The most frequently cited gap or omission concerned knowledge of mental health (in several responses this was linked to the need to know more about trauma-informed practice, but the more generic category of mental health knowledge was predominant).

Mental Health - I wish that we had more education on mental health, how to identify it, and how to work alongside someone with a mental illness as it does not really matter what job role you are in, mental health is predominant throughout all of society. (NQSW survey respondent 8)

Mental health, drug and alcohol issues and not enough time in practicum. (NQSW survey respondent 88)

Specific learning around topics such as mental health, trauma-informed care practices, and addictions. (NQSW survey respondent 2)

Definitely we really focused on child protection and for me that's not somewhere I ever wanted to work, so coming out of that qualification, or getting to the end of it and starting to look at what jobs are out there, realising that there's a whole range of jobs that you can do as a social worker and we'd only really focused on child protection. We'd never looked at mental health or addictions, or corrections and the prison system. So that was a huge gap, so that's why I went and did my post-graduate study in mental health and addictions, and that's been amazing. (Rae, NQSW)

Secondly, the law and legal procedures was a very clear gap for several students:

How social workers interact with the police (for things like supporting families to take out protection orders) and the law (such as applying for personal orders) – I've needed to learn all of this on-the-job in most respects. (NQSW survey respondent 3)

The need for broader knowledge of NZ Acts of Law. When studying we chose an Act and focused on that for an assignment. It would have been helpful to spend some time on others as well, such as Mental Health Act, Domestic Violence Act, Child, Young Person, and Families Act (now Children, Young Persons, and Their Families (Oranga Tamariki) Legislation Act 2017). Also, how to write a Court Report. (NQSW survey respondent 29)

The law is quite an important factor and even in an NGO it's helpful to really understand the legislation as it pertains to the day-to-day practice. (NQSW survey respondent 83)

Also, a lot around care and protection. I think the way that you work in [name of organisation], a lot of things aren't covered in terms of how you practise there. I think you've got the foundation from what you learn from the literature and what people talk about from their experience which are really important. But when you actually work in that organisation around the law, and the Children and Families Act, the Care of Children Act, and all that kind of stuff, the legal aspects, there's a massive thing missing from training. (Josie, NQSW)

Thirdly, as noted by Respondent 29, several respondents saw report writing as an omission, often linked to knowledge of legal processes:

Legal processes and writing court documents. (Respondent 13)

The articles and sections of law, writing affidavits, court reporting. (Respondent 62)

Court report writing and social work reports. (Respondent 70)

Writing case notes. I think that's something that we're expected to know going into the workforce and I guess something I've had to learn. It's also something I've found; there are different expectations around case notes depending on where you work. My second placement was in [organisation] and because it's a statutory organisation, the case notes are then much more detailed, much lengthier and very heavy on minor details. Whereas going into the role I'm currently in, when I first started working here, the case notes I wrote were just like the ones I wrote in [organisation], because those are the only case notes I'd ever had to write. But then I was told a few months into working, that those case notes weren't really appropriate, and that for my role the case notes were more about the tasks and the plans rather than about little details about facial expressions or the attitudes that people had and the moods they were in. (Dirk, NQSW)

# Conclusions and recommendations

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The findings from this study offer a more nuanced and detailed analysis of the readiness to practise of NQSWs in Aotearoa New Zealand than has been available to date. The fact that most of the questions are based on a replication of a prior English study (Sharpe et al., 2011) introduces a cross-country, comparative aspect enabling researchers to benchmark findings with those from another jurisdiction and note commonalities and differences.

In common with the English study, at a general level, the majority of Aotearoa New Zealand NQSWs held very positive attitudes towards their current job. They agreed that good day-to-day working relationships existed with professionals from other agencies, that staff were encouraged to take part in learning and development activities, that service users' views and perspectives were taken seriously and that their agency's values were clear to everyone. In addition, the majority of NQSWs were satisfied with the accessibility of their line manager, professional support from colleagues and the friendliness of other staff in the workplace. More negative responses, for some NQSWs, relate to organisational restructuring, the pressure of the working environment, and there being many unfilled staff vacancies.

Also, like the English study, the findings suggest that NQSWs have high levels of motivation and commitment to the welfare of services users, a finding supported by the perceptions of managers/professional supervisors. NQSWs are motivated primarily by altruistic factors related to the worthwhileness of social work as an occupation, although some of these motivators, such as tackling injustice and inequalities, are not always fulfilled. Factors related to pay levels and career advancement were less significant as motivators and more likely to appear as sources of dissatisfaction; conditions of employment (pay, superannuation, annual leave, etc.), coping with workload, and prospects for advancement and promotion were all significant sources of dissatisfaction for NQSWs.

Turning to the more detailed findings of the study, these have implications for policymakers, employers, social work educators and researchers. In the following sections we identify the implications and, in the final section, make a recommendation for action.

## Policy makers

The evidence from this study, as in the English study, suggests that the development of confidence and capability is a gradual, evolutionary process occurring over time and contingent upon continuing support, learning and development in the workplace. In some senses, the concept of readiness to practise suggests that graduates ought to arrive in the workplace ready to perform as fully rounded professionals. However, as Moriarty et al. (2011) make clear, the literature reports different perspectives on practice readiness; some commentators view it as the end product of a professional qualification, others as a developmental process that begins with graduation. The former group consider that newly qualified professionals – whether nurses, teachers or social workers – ought to be able to “hit the ground running”, a phrase conjuring up images of paratroopers descending into enemy territory. The developmental approach, on the other hand, shares assumptions with the classical theoretical approach to the development of expertise in any profession (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986), identifying stages in a transition from novice to expert with novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient and expert stages.

Both the survey and qualitative findings from this study recognise the impact on all beginning practitioners of the transition to professional practice with individual differences in adjusting to agency expectations and the recognition that workplace approaches to NQSW support, learning

and development are critical. These findings, like the findings from the English study, support the development of an overarching framework differentiating the expectations of what should be required of social workers at different stages in their transition to capable professional status and beyond (an issue that we focus on in phase three of the Enhance R2P study).

In addition, raising the confidence and capability of the social services workforce as a whole, requires policy makers – in partnership with key stakeholders – to plan across the entire continuum of learning and development, mapping out the respective contributions of pre-qualifying education, workplace learning – including induction, supervision and peer support – and post-qualifying training and education opportunities. Although our study did not have an explicit focus on an assisted and supported first year of practice, many respondents commented directly, or indirectly, on the value of such an opportunity. These changes cannot be achieved by identifying and auditing requirements and targets alone, they will involve significant investment in funding targeted learning opportunities and creating shared learning resources for priority topics.

## Employers

Employers routinely accept responsibility for the learning and development of their NQSW staff through the processes of induction, supervision, reduced caseloads, peer support and post-qualifying training and education.

### Induction

Whilst two-thirds of NQSWs stated they had access to some form of induction on commencing their present position, and most were positive about the experience, there is evidence from the quantitative and qualitative data that the experience was variable, that induction could be more widely accessible and that it could focus more on professional practice issues, and not just corporate and human resource issues. Many managers and professional supervisors considered that agencies could do better in relation to induction processes.

### Supervision

Around half of NQSWs were supervised at least once every two weeks, but another half were supervised monthly or less frequently. Whilst monthly supervision is the SWRB requirement for all social workers, this seems too infrequent for NQSWs. In the majority of cases, the primary focus of supervision was on advice and guidance on difficult cases, although personal support and case review were also frequently identified. Findings indicate clearly that the observation of practice was either very infrequent or entirely absent from the professional supervision of NQSWs.

In terms of improvements to the supervision process, many NQSWs wanted more attention paid to the educational and developmental aspects of professional supervision including help in applying theory to practice, more discussion on training needs and suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness. In addition, the finding that routine supervision is less helpful with cultural issues, taken together with strong NQSW support for cultural supervision (amongst both the minority who accessed it and the majority who have not), suggests that agencies should consider reviewing access to cultural supervision for NQSWs.

### Reduced caseload and staffing issues

Although there was evidence that the majority of NQSWs had protected caseloads, and were pleased about that, around two in ten stated they had no account taken of their level of experience and a quarter were not pleased with caseload allocation. A third of manager/professional supervisor survey respondents considered that their agencies could do better in relation to limiting caseload for NQSWs. Concern about high caseloads was evident in both the NQSW interviews and in interviews with managers/professional supervisors.

## Peer support

As noted above, most NQSWs were very positive about professional support from colleagues and the friendliness of other staff in the workplace. Managers/professional supervisors were also very positive about the teamworking abilities of NQSWs. Interviews with NQSWs suggested that learning from peers and more experienced colleagues was very highly valued. Around half of NQSWs stated they had access to peer supervision, and opportunities to co-work or to shadow more experienced colleagues. Given the value of these opportunities, there is clearly scope for employers to consider making them more widely available.

## Post-qualifying training and education

Agency commitment to further post-qualifying study for NQSWs was less developed in the Aotearoa New Zealand study than in the English study. Only a quarter of NQSWs in this study stated that their supervisors had discussed post-qualifying social work education, whereas the English study reported that half of NQSWs had had such discussions. This may reflect the lower supply of post-qualifying learning opportunities and the absence of an explicit policy commitment to post-qualifying social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The predominance of in-house training may be an attempt to bridge this gap, although this choice may also be impacted by budgetary limitations.

The idea of protected development time for independent study was uncommon with only a third of NQSWs stating that they had such time and over half of that number stating that the time was insufficient, or they were unable to use the time allowed.

## Educators

At a general level, NQSWs and managers/professional supervisors are satisfied with the extent to which qualifying programmes prepare students for practice. The current generalist, rather than specialist, approach to pre-qualifying education is also supported by managers/professional supervisors. At the same time, some of the qualitative comments from managers/professional supervisors suggest concerns with perceived differences between programmes and variability in the quality of graduates.

NQSWs highlighted a number of gaps between their knowledge of certain topics and the expectations of managers when they commenced employment (for example, knowledge of mental health conditions). They also identified a number of topics about which they would like to know more (for example dealing with hostility, aggression and conflict; and the legal basis for interventions). There are striking similarities in the gaps in knowledge identified in the English and Aotearoa New Zealand studies. So much so, that these issues may be related to the impact of the transition to practice, to the 'reality shock' of practice (Castledine, 2002). Most NQSWs, in both studies, considered that gaps in their knowledge ought to have been met within pre-qualifying programmes; however, as noted in the English study, this perception may be influenced by workplace assumptions about what NQSWs should know, and where they ought to have learned it.

It is wholly appropriate to consider the relevance of the qualifying social work curriculum to prepare NQSWs to enter the workplace, and to identify perceived gaps in knowledge and capability. However, if we accept a more nuanced, developmental perspective on professional expertise, before making recommendations on curriculum change, there are a number of detailed questions to consider.

Firstly, where is the best site to support and develop NQSWs knowledge and skills around a non-specialist topic such as managing hostility, aggression and conflict, for example? Should this be handled in the classroom, during field work placement or in the workplace? If, as we would suggest, all three are implicated, then what should each contribute and how do we ensure that learning from one site builds on learning in the other?

Secondly, and related to the first point, if the best site to learn a practical skill is within a field work placement setting (a highly valued learning site for the majority of NQSWs), then how do tertiary education providers and employers work together to ensure that current very variable quality in field work placement experience is improved (see Hay et al., 2018)?

Thirdly, when NQSWs identify gaps in their knowledge of specialist topics like mental health; to what extent should these be met by changes in the pre-qualifying curriculum and to what extent is this best advanced in the context of a post-qualifying programme of education? In the absence of post-qualifying educational opportunities for specialist education, is there a risk of pushing too many specialist requirements down into already crowded, generic, pre-qualifying programmes.

Finally, considering a topic such as report writing; what should we expect NQSWs to know in terms of their declarative knowledge (knowing in general what makes for clear and concise writing) versus their procedural knowledge (knowing how to write a particular report), especially when the latter may be subject to local agency protocols and policies.

As should be evident from the questions above, answers can only be developed in the context of evidence-informed dialogues between educators and other stakeholders.

## Researchers

We concur with colleagues involved in the English study that there are limits on what we can learn from a snapshot of the perceptions of readiness to practise of NQSWs. Future research would benefit from a more longitudinal approach, especially if it includes the actual performance of NQSWs and the views of colleagues and service users.

We also consider that some of the findings on knowledge gaps in relation to mental health, the law, and hostility, aggression and conflict would benefit from further work attempting to articulate the nature of the knowledge and skill gaps, and the contexts in which such knowledge and skills would be useful.

## Recommendation: Improving the learning and development continuum

It would have been possible to make recommendations for each of the stakeholders identified above; however, as we have highlighted, each of these stakeholders has a particular role in the development of an integrated continuum of learning and development for NQSWs. Therefore, we recommend that the findings of this report, and the conclusions above, be considered for action by a social work learning consortium of policy makers, education providers, professional associations, employers, trade unions and the professional regulator. Following discussion and reflection, the consortium would seek to improve the experience of NQSWs by taking actions across the whole continuum of professional learning and development, from pre-qualifying education, through workplace learning and development, to post-qualifying education.

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# Appendix 1: The NQSW survey questions

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## Welcome to the survey

We are a team of researchers interested in finding out more about the experiences of newly qualified social workers in their first two years of practice. Our team is made up of Neil Ballantyne from Open Polytechnic, Liz Beddoe from Auckland University, Kathryn Hay from Massey University, Jane Maidment from Canterbury University, Shayne Walker from Otago University and Zoe Mayhew, Research Assistant, Massey University.

### The aim of our research is to find out:

- How well prepared are newly qualified social workers to enter professional social work practice?
- How is the learning for newly qualified social workers being supported and enhanced in the workplace?

To meet the entry criteria for this survey you must have:

- Completed an approved social work qualification from a New Zealand tertiary education institute within the last two years.
- Been employed in a social service agency for a minimum of 6 months (at least 10 hours per week) since completing your social work qualification.

Participants who complete the survey can, by posting to a separate email provided at the end of the survey, make contact with one of the researchers to go into a draw for a \$50 book voucher. It will not be possible to connect your email to the survey content and so your information will be kept anonymous.

This survey asks questions about your experiences in social work practice since qualifying. If you choose to take part in this study, your involvement in this project will be to complete this questionnaire. The data you provide to the research team will remain entirely anonymous as the electronic submission of responses does not record any internet provider or personal email details.

### The survey is expected to take you about 20 minutes to complete.

As a follow-up to this investigation, you will be invited at the end of this questionnaire to consider talking to your supervisor/manager about participating in an interview as a dyad, yourself and your supervisor/manager.

Participation in the follow-up is completely voluntary. These interviews with yourself and your supervisor/manager would occur separately with one of the research team. The questions asked during each interview will not be about each other, but about the process of either being a Newly Qualified Social Worker (NQSW) or a manager/supervisor of a Newly Qualified Social Worker.

Once again, the data from these interviews will be entirely confidential to the research team.

It is not anticipated that you will feel distressed by completing this survey. However, should completing this survey cause you concern about the issues covered in the questions, we strongly encourage you to discuss these with your manager/professional supervisor.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. You can choose not to respond to particular questions, and have the right to withdraw at any stage during the completion of the survey by simply not submitting your response. We are unable to return your raw data to you after submission as we cannot identify participants.

The results of the survey will be published, but your responses will be anonymous. The responses from the survey will be collated and stored onto a password protected computer on an encrypted file. No one, apart from the listed researchers, will have access to the survey responses. The data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after ten years from July 2017.

By clicking the next button below, completing survey responses and submitting the survey you will be considered to have given your consent to participate in the study.

If you have any questions about the research please email: [k.s.hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:k.s.hay@massey.ac.nz)

## 2. About you

**The survey is anonymous but these questions will give us some important demographic information about the people responding to the survey.**

1. Have you completed a recognised social work degree from a New Zealand tertiary education institute within the last two years?

- Yes  
 No

2. Are you currently in paid employment as a qualified social worker?

- Yes  
 No

3. Have you been employed in a social services agency for at least six months (at least 10 hours per week) since completing your qualification?

- Yes  
 No

4. What is your age?

- 18 to 24  
 25 to 34  
 35 to 44  
 45 to 54  
 55 to 64  
 65 to 74  
 75 or older

5. What is your gender?

- Female  
 Male  
 Prefer not to answer  
 Other (please specify)

6. What is your ethnicity? (Please select up to three)

- |                                                 |                                                |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NZ European / Pākehā   | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan                | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> British / Irish        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook Islands Māori    | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tongan                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lankan           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Niuean                | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Tokelauan             | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Slav             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fijian                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pasific Peoples | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino              | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cambodian             | <input type="checkbox"/> African              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other European         | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Ethnicity      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Māori                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Southeast Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |                                                |                                               |

7. Do you regard yourself as having any kind of special needs or disability?

- Yes  
 No

8. Day to day, do you look after, or give any caring help and support to family members, or friends, neighbours or others, because they are... (Please select all that apply)

- Pre-school children  
 School age children  
 Adults or children with long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability  
 Older people  
 No – no day-to-day caring responsibilities

9. What is the name of the tertiary institution where you gained your social work qualification?

10. Was your social work qualification an undergraduate or postgraduate programme?

11. Did you attend your social work qualification in a full-time or part-time capacity?

12. Did you receive any financial help from your employer while you were studying for your degree?

13. Did you have to sign an agreement to continue working for this employer for a period after you graduated?

14. Before you started your degree programme, what experience of Social Work did you have?

	Yes - for a long time (more than 2 years)	Yes - for a short time (up to two years)	No
Paid employment by social work employer (eg. Social Work Assistant or equivalent, or Administrative)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid employment in related field (e.g., childcare, nursing, teaching, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Voluntary work (unpaid) with vulnerable people (e.g. youth/community work, people with physical or learning disabilities, offenders, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal experience – self or close family (e.g. child/ren 'in care'/ 'looked after', physically disabled adult/child, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. What is your status with regard to the Social Workers Registration Board?

- I have full registration
- I have provisional registration
- I am not registered

16. How long ago did you complete your social work qualification?

- Less than 1 month
- Between 1 and 6 months
- More than 6 but less than 12 months
- Between 12 and 18 months
- More than 18 but less than 24 months
- More than 24 months.

17. Are you a member of a social work professional association? (please select all that apply).

- Yes, I am a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
- Yes, I am a member of the Tangata Whenua Social Workers' Association
- No, I am not a member of a social work professional association

Yes, I am a member of another social work professional association (please specify).

### 3. About your present position

18. What is your job title?

19. Is this a statutory job/position where you exercise legal powers as a social worker (e.g. removing a child)

- Yes  
 No

20. When did you start working in this job?

Date  DD /  MM /  YYYY

21. In which type of agency/organisation are you currently employed? (Select one only)

- District Health Board  
 Oranga Tamariki  
 Corrections  
 Local/Regional Council  
 Other (please specify)
- Private sector  
 Iwi/Māori agency  
 Non-Governmental agency

22. Which of the following best describes the field of practice in which you work? (Select one only)

- Health  
 Community  
 Justice  
 Policy  
 Child protection  
 Other (please specify)
- Iwi/Māori  
 Mental health  
 Education  
 Youth  
 Family Violence

23. Which of the following best describes the main service user group with which you work? (Select up to three)

- |                                                                             |                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children and families (including child protection) | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees and/or asylum seekers                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children and families (excluding child protection) | <input type="checkbox"/> Young people                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children who are in care                           | <input type="checkbox"/> People who have committed offences                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community/neighbourhood                            | <input type="checkbox"/> People experiencing family violence                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Māori people                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> People who use mental health services                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pacific peoples                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> People with physical disabilities or sensory impairments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with learning disabilities                  | <input type="checkbox"/> People who misuse drugs, alcohol or substances           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Older people                                       |                                                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)                             |                                                                                   |

24. Do you work mainly with children, or mainly with adults?

- Children  Both
- Adults

25. Is this post full-time or part-time?

- Full-time
- Part-time

26. Is this a permanent post?

- Yes, permanent post
- No, fixed-term contract
- No, temporary post

27. Is this your first job in social work since you graduated?

- Yes - Go to question 29
- No, my second.
- No, third or more.

28. If this is not your first job, why did you leave your previous job? (Select one only)

- Contract ended
- I moved away to a different part of the country
- Career break
- Workload too high
- Not enough contact time with service users
- I wanted to work in a different field of practice
- Difficulty coping with the stress of the job
- Job lost through organisational restructuring
- Other (please specify)

29. How did you find out about your current job? (Select one only)

- Through practice placement: I worked here on placement
- Through an employment agency
- Internal job advertisement
- External job advertisement: newspaper/internet
- Careers office at university/polytechnic
- Work and Income
- Informally through friends or other personal contacts
- Other (please specify)

30. Before you accepted this job, did you have any particular preference for the service user group you wanted to work with?

- Strong preference
- Mild preference
- No preference

31. How long is/was your probationary period in this present job?

- No formal probationary period
- Three months
- Six months
- Twelve months
- Other (please specify)

32. In your present job, do you/did you have a mentor assigned to you for informal support (someone more experienced or senior to you, who is not your line manager)?

- No, not at all
- Yes, during induction period only
- Yes, during probation period only
- Yes, longer than induction/probation period

33. Taking everything into consideration, how are you enjoying your present job so far?

- Enjoying it very much
- Quite enjoying it
- Not enjoying it much
- Not enjoying it at all

34. Which of the following would you say was true of your present job? (Please respond to every statement)

	True	Not true	Don't know
The values of the agency/service are clear to everyone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff are encouraged to take part in learning and development activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Service users' views and perspectives are taken seriously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are a lot of unfilled staff vacancies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is/has recently been a lot of organisational restructuring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The IT system generally works well	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good day-to-day working relationships exist with professionals from other agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working environment is very pressured	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Your line manager is a qualified social worker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. Which of these areas of specialist knowledge would you say are relevant to your present job? (Select all that apply).

- The rights of the child
- Child protection/safeguarding children
- Adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Drugs or alcohol dependency/misuse
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Communicating with children and young people
- Transitions in the lives of service users
- Learning disabilities
- Ageing and the impact of life changes
- Child development milestones
- Mental health conditions and their likely progress
- Physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress
- Preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal
- Working with Māori
- Working with Pacific peoples
- Family violence
- Other (please specify)

#### 4. Continued...

36. When you started working in this job, did you know as much about the specialist knowledge areas as was expected of you?

	Yes, my level of knowledge was acceptable.	No, I was expected to know more about this than I did.
The rights of the child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child protection/safeguarding children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult protection/safeguarding vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs or alcohol dependency/misuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refugees and asylum seekers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicating with children and young people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transitions in the lives of service users	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ageing and the impact of life changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child development milestones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health conditions and their likely progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physically disabling health conditions and their likely progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Preparing reports for legal proceedings in court/tribunal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with Māori	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with Pacific peoples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

37. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your current job? (Please respond to every statement)

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neutral	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Accessibility of your line manager when necessary	<input type="radio"/>				
Professional support and guidance from line manager	<input type="radio"/>				
Professional support and guidance from colleagues	<input type="radio"/>				
The amount of contact time with service users or carers	<input type="radio"/>				
Widening your knowledge of areas of Social Work practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Coping with your workload	<input type="radio"/>				
Teamworking	<input type="radio"/>				
Opportunity to put your own social work values into practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Ability to transmit your social work values to workers from other professions	<input type="radio"/>				
Friendliness of other staff in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>				
Your conditions of employment (pay, superannuation, annual leave, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
Your prospects for advancement and promotion	<input type="radio"/>				
Being able to fulfil your CPD commitments for the SWRB (if applicable)	<input type="radio"/>				
Working in partnership with service users to take their wishes into account	<input type="radio"/>				

38. Thinking about your caseload up to now in your current job, would you say that your level of experience in social work practice was taken into account in allocating cases to you?

- Yes: to a great extent
- Yes: to a limited extent
- No

39. Were you pleased about this, or not?

- Pleased
- Not pleased

## 5. About your supervision

This section asks questions about your experience of professional supervision.

40. How regularly do you have formal supervision meetings?

- Once a week
- Once every two weeks
- Once a month
- Less often

41. Has this frequency changed since you started this job? Do these formal supervision meetings take place less often nowadays, or more often, or about the same?

- More often now than when I started
- Less often now than when I started
- About the same as when I started
- Don't know yet – not been in the job long enough

42. What do formal supervision meetings usually cover? (Select all that apply)

- Review of each of my cases
- Advice and guidance on more difficult cases
- Closing cases
- Discussion of my training needs
- Personal support, encouragement and appreciation
- Suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness
- Help in applying theoretical approaches or explanations to my practice
- Agency policies
- My performance against targets

43. Which of these aspects of supervision would you like more of, or less?

	Much more	A little more	Just the same	Less
Review of each of my cases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advice and guidance on more difficult cases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Closing cases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussion of my training needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal support, encouragement and appreciation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Suggestions for developing reflection and self-awareness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Help in applying theoretical approaches or explanations to my practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agency policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My performance against targets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. To what extent do you feel your supervision helps you to...

	A great deal	A little	Not much	Not at all
Prioritise your workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cope with stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintain professional boundaries with service users	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve your professional practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work with the cultural issues in your practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. Have you ever received additional supervision - cultural supervision or kaupapa supervision - to support your work with Māori and/or other cultural groups?

- Yes
- No

46. If you **have received** additional supervision - cultural supervision or kaupapa supervision - to support your work with Māori and/or other cultural groups, how helpful was this?

- Very helpful
- Quite helpful
- Not very helpful
- Very unhelpful

47. If you have **not received** additional supervision - cultural supervision or kaupapa supervision - to support your work with Māori and/or other cultural groups, is this something you think would be helpful to you?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

48. How often does your supervisor actually observe your practice, for example sitting in on your meetings with service users, accompanying you on visits to service users, etc?

- About once a week
- About once every two weeks
- About once a month
- Less often
- Never

49. Have you had a formal appraisal yet?

- Yes
- No

50. How well do you think your supervisor rates your performance so far in this present job?

- Very highly
- Quite highly
- Not very highly

51. And do you consider this a fair assessment of your performance so far in this present job?

- Yes, a fair assessment
- No, my line manager under-rates me – my performance is better
- No, my line manager over-rates me – my performance is not so good

52. Has your supervisor (and/or line manager) discussed post-qualifying social work education with you at all?

- Yes
- No

## 6. About your induction

**This section asks questions about your experience of induction when you started your present job**

53. When you started your present job, were you given any kind of induction?

- Yes – and my induction period is still in progress
- Yes – and my induction period is now finished
- No - GO TO QUESTION 58

54. Which of the following were, or definitely will be, covered during your induction? (Select all that apply)

- The values of your organisation
- The goals and future plans of your organisation
- Confidentiality
- Implementing person-centred approaches
- Risk assessment procedures
- Record-keeping
- Other policies and procedures of your organisation
- Your own job role
- Relationships with other workers
- General health and safety
- General security
- Communication with service users
- Identifying abuse and neglect
- 'Whistle-blowing'
- Arrangements for your support and supervision
- Arrangements for your continuing professional development
- Other (please specify)

55. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your induction?

- Excellent, very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor

## 7. About your learning and development

This section asks questions about your experience of learning and development in your current job.

56. Apart from induction, have you received any other training provided by your employer?

- Yes – in-house training
- Yes – externally provided training
- No - **GO TO QUESTION 58**

57. Overall, how would you rate the quality and relevance of this training provided to you in your present job?

- Excellent, very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor

58. Do you have a Professional Development Plan (PDP)?

- Yes
- No - **GO TO QUESTION 62**

59. Did you draw up your PDP while still a student?

- Yes
- No

60. Has your supervisor and/or line manager discussed your PDP with you?

- Yes
- No

61. Has your supervisor and/or line manager helped you implement your PDP?

- Yes
- No

62. How long do you expect to remain with your current employer?

- I expect to remain with my current employer for the next five years
- I expect to remain with my current employer for the next two to four years
- I expect to start looking for another social work job within the next two years
- I am already looking for another social work job – in Aotearoa New Zealand
- I am already looking for another social work job – overseas
- I expect to leave social work within the next two years

63. Have you been allowed "protected development time" in this job, i.e. time off for study or learning?

- Yes, plenty of time off for study or learning
- Yes, but not enough time off for study or learning
- Yes, but not always able to spend the time allowed for development
- No

64. Have you had experience of any of the following, in your current job? (Select all that apply)

- Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from your own team
- Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from a different team
- Shadowing a colleague – from a different profession
- Co-working a case with more experienced social work colleague/s
- Peer supervision – when several social workers from your team share experiences with your professional supervisor
- Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – within your own team
- Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – involving NQSWs from other teams/agencies

## 8. Continued...

65. How would you rate these experiences (if any) in terms of the quality of the learning opportunity?

	Excellent, very good	Good	Neutral	Poor	Very poor
Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from your own team	<input type="radio"/>				
Shadowing of a more experienced social work colleague – from a different team	<input type="radio"/>				
Shadowing a colleague – from a different profession	<input type="radio"/>				
Co-working a case with more experienced social work colleague/s	<input type="radio"/>				
Peer supervision – when several social workers from your team share experiences with your professional supervisor	<input type="radio"/>				
Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – within your own team	<input type="radio"/>				
Group session/s for newly qualified social workers (including action learning sets or support groups) – involving NQSWs from other teams/agencies	<input type="radio"/>				

66. Since starting work in this present job, how much would you say each of the following has improved for you personally?

	Improved a great deal	Improved a little	Not improved very much	Not improved at all	Not applicable
The overall quality of your practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your choice of suitable interventions more likely to lead to better outcomes for the service users and carers on your caseload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your own professional abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your personal confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accuracy and analytical insights of your case assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback from service users and carers on your practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

67. How much appropriate help and support have you received in your current workplace for improving...

	A great deal of help and support	A little help and support	Not much help and support	No help and support at all
The overall quality of your practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your choice of suitable interventions more likely to lead to better outcomes for the service users and carers on your caseload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your own professional abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your personal confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accuracy and analytical insights of your case assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback from service users and carers on your practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

68. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is not at all capable as a social worker carrying out tasks required for your current job, and 10 is totally capable), where would you place yourself now?

1 Not at all capable 10 Totally capable

69. And where would you place yourself when you first started in this current job (on the same scale from 1 to 10)?

1 Not at all capable 10 Totally capable

70. What attracts or motivates you towards social work as a career? (Select all that apply)

- Good career prospects
- Well-paid job
- Opportunities for flexible working patterns (part-time, career breaks etc)
- Personal ability to get on with people
- Working in a team
- Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society
- Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives
- Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine
- High job satisfaction
- Variety of work day-to-day
- Interesting, stimulating work
- Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions
- Encouragement from family or friends

71. Which one is the **most important** factor?

72. Which of these have you actually found to be fulfilled in your social work career so far? (Select all that apply)

- Good career prospects
- Well-paid job
- Opportunities for flexible working patterns (part-time, career breaks etc)
- Personal ability to get on with people
- Working in a team
- Wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society
- Helping individuals to improve the quality of their own lives
- Especially suitable career for someone with life experiences like mine
- High job satisfaction
- Variety of work day-to-day
- Interesting, stimulating work
- Being able to exercise individual responsibility for making my own decisions
- Encouragement from family or friends

## 9. About your degree programme

This section asks questions about your experience of your degree programme

73. From what you learned during your degree programme, what would you say has helped you most in your present job?

74. And what would you say is the most important omission, or gap, between what you learned during your degree programme, and what you are expected to know now, for your present job?

75. Some new social work graduates have mentioned certain topics they say they wished they knew a lot more about. Could you say which of the following, if any, you personally wish you knew a lot more about?

- Family and whanau dynamics
- Attachment theory
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Working with Māori
- Working with Pacific peoples
- Cross-cultural practice
- Dealing with hostility, aggression or conflict
- Assessing risk
- Encouraging or empowering service users to take control of their lives and make choices
- Engaging effectively with people with special communication needs (e.g. children and young people, stroke survivors, people with learning disabilities)
- Inter-professional working, inter-disciplinary collaboration
- Good record-keeping
- Acquiring advanced and specialist skills and knowledge qualifications
- Leadership and management
- The evidence-base for your area of social work practice – ‘what works’
- Services and resources available locally ‘in your patch’ that might benefit the service users or carers on your cases
- Managing budgets
- Supporting carers
- Using your ‘self’ as a resource in achieving outcomes with service users
- Group work
- Legal basis for social work interventions
- Human development
- Working with trauma
- Family violence
- Other (please specify)

## 10. Continued...

76. Which three of the specialist areas of knowledge you selected are the most important topics for you to know more about?

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
Family and whanau dynamics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attachment theory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anti-discriminatory practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with Māori	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with Pacific peoples	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cross-cultural practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with hostility, aggression or conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing risk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encouraging or empowering service users to take control of their lives and make choices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Engaging effectively with people with special communication needs (e.g. children and young people, stroke survivors, people with learning disabilities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inter-professional working, inter-disciplinary collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good record-keeping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acquiring advanced and specialist skills and knowledge qualifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership and management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The evidence-base for your area of social work practice – 'what works'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services and resources available locally 'in your patch' that might benefit the service users or carers on your cases	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managing budgets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supporting carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using your 'self' as a resource in achieving outcomes with service users	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legal basis for social work interventions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Most important	Second most important	Third most important
Human development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	
Working with trauma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

77. For your **most important** topic how would you have expected to learn (more) about this aspect of your practice?

78. For your **second most important** topic how would you have expected to learn (more) about this aspect of your practice?

79. For your **third most important** topic how would you have expected to learn (more) about this aspect of your practice?

80. Which of the following personal skills or characteristics would you say are particularly important for you in your present job?

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important
Being a good listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a reflective practitioner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being analytical, able to analyse a case critically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to engage effectively with users and <input type="radio"/> carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Being empowering, a creator of opportunities for service users to gain more control over their lives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being adaptable, responsive to changing work demands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being good at working with other professionals from different disciplines/agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a literate writer of fluent English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being culturally responsive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

81. To what extent do you feel your degree programme helped you to develop each of these characteristics?

	Helped a lot	Helped a little	Did not help at all, though I needed help	Did not help at all because I was already very good at this
Being a good listener	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a reflective practitioner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being analytical, able to analyse a case critically	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to engage effectively with users and carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being empowering, a creator of opportunities for service users to gain more control over their lives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being adaptable, responsive to changing work demands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being good at working with other professionals from different disciplines /agencies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a literate writer of fluent English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being culturally responsive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

82. Overall, how well do you feel your degree programme prepared you for your present job?

- Very well-prepared
- Fairly well-prepared
- Not very well-prepared
- Not at all well-prepared

83. Taking everything into consideration, how much did you enjoy your degree programme?

- I enjoyed it very much
- I quite enjoyed it
- I did not enjoy it much
- I did not enjoy it at all

84. Here are some comments that newly qualified social workers have made, based on their experiences. For each one, could you indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement?

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neutral	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly
Doing the degree programme strengthened my motivation to go into social work as a career	<input type="radio"/>				
The academic work on the degree programme was more difficult than I expected	<input type="radio"/>				
Life experience is essential for successful social workers	<input type="radio"/>				
The right personal qualities and values are more important for successful social workers than academic ability	<input type="radio"/>				
The four-year degree will mean higher standards of social work practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Permanent jobs for newly qualified social workers are hard to get nowadays	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel confident of taking proper account of cultural differences when working with service users	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel a strong sense of identity with social work as a profession	<input type="radio"/>				
I am able to achieve a good work/life balance in my present job	<input type="radio"/>				
My employer takes my professional development seriously	<input type="radio"/>				
I find it difficult coping with the stress of my present job	<input type="radio"/>				
Not much of the theory I learned during my degree programme is useful in my present job	<input type="radio"/>				
My present job prevents me from properly applying the theory I learned during my degree programme	<input type="radio"/>				
I am making a real difference to the wellbeing of service users	<input type="radio"/>				

# Appendix 2

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## Welcome to the survey

We are a team of researchers interested in finding out more about the experiences of newly qualified social workers in their first two years of practice. Our team is made up of Neil Ballantyne from Open Polytechnic, Liz Beddoe from Auckland University, Kathryn Hay from Massey University, Jane Maidment from Canterbury University, Shayne Walker from Otago University and Zoe Mayhew, Research Assistant, Massey University.

The aim of our research is to find out:

- How well prepared are newly qualified social workers to enter professional social work practice?
- How is the learning for newly qualified social workers being supported and enhanced in the workplace?

To meet the entry criteria for this survey you must be a:

**Manager or supervisor who has managed or supervised a newly qualified social worker (a social worker who has been qualified for two years or less) within the last two years.**

Participants who complete the survey can, by posting to a separate email provided at the end of the survey, make contact with one of the researchers to go into a draw for a \$50 book voucher. It will not be possible to connect your email to the survey content and so your information will be kept anonymous.

The data you provide to the research team will remain entirely anonymous as the electronic submission of responses does not record any internet provider or personal email details.

The survey is expected to take you about 10 minutes to complete.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. You can choose not to respond to particular questions, and have the right to withdraw at any stage during the completion of the survey by simply not submitting your response. We are unable to return your raw data to you after submission as we cannot identify participants.

The results of the survey will be published, but you may be assured of the complete anonymity of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public. The responses from the survey will be collated and also stored onto a password protected computer on an encrypted file. No one, apart from the listed researchers, will have access to the survey responses. The data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after ten years from July 2017.

By clicking the next button below, completing survey responses and submitting the survey you will be considered to have given your consent to participate in the study.

If you have any questions about the research you would like clarified before or after completing the questionnaire please email [k.s.hay@massey.ac.nz](mailto:k.s.hay@massey.ac.nz)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Deputy Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and potentially taking part in this survey.  
Enhancing Readiness to Practise Research Team

## About you

This page asks question about you.

1. Are you a manager or supervisor who has managed or supervised a newly qualified social worker (a social worker who has been qualified for two years or less) within the last two years?

- Yes  
 No

2. What is your age?

- 18 to 24  
 25 to 34  
 35 to 44  
 45 to 54  
 55 to 64  
 65 to 74  
 75 or older

3. What is your gender?

- Female  
 Male  
 Prefer not to answer  
 Other (please specify)

4. What is your ethnicity? (Please select up to three)

- |                                                 |                                                |                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NZ European / Pākehā   | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan                | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> British / Irish        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook Islands Māori    | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tongan                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lankan           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Niuean                | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Tokelauan             | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South Slav             | <input type="checkbox"/> Fijian                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pasific Peoples | <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino              | <input type="checkbox"/> Latin American       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australian             | <input type="checkbox"/> Cambodian             | <input type="checkbox"/> African              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other European         | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Ethnicity      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Māori                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Southeast Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |                                                |                                               |

5. Are you a member of a social work professional association? (please select all that apply).

- Yes, I am a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers
- Yes, I am a member of the Tangata Whenua Social Workers' Association
- No, I am not a member of a social work professional association

Yes, I am a member of another social work professional association (please specify).

6. In which type of agency are you currently employed?

- District Health Board
- Oranga Tamariki
- Corrections
- Local/Regional Council
- Other (please specify)
- Other Governmental agency
- Iwi/Māori agency
- Non-Governmental agency

7. Which of the following best describes the field of practice in which you work?

- Health
- Community
- Justice
- Policy
- Child protection
- Other (please specify)
- Iwi/Māori
- Mental health
- Education
- Youth
- Family Violence

8. What is your status with regard to the Social Workers Registration Board?

- I have full registration
- I have provisional registration
- I am not registered

9. What is your job title?

## About your NQSWs

This page asks questions about your experience of hiring and working with newly qualified social workers.

10. Thinking generally about the newly qualified social workers you have worked with in the last two years, how would you rate them in terms of the following **skills and abilities**?

	Excellent	Adequate	Disappointing
Effective engagement with service users and carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standards of literacy in report-writing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Analytical abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teamworking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ability to prioritise their workload	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inter-professional working (with colleagues in Health, Education, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Group working with service users, carers, community members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning for specific outcomes for service users as a result of social work intervention/s	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitating independence for service users, giving them control over their lives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with diverse communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with Māori	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with Pasifika	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Still thinking generally about the newly qualified social workers you have worked with in the last two years, how would you rate them in terms of their **knowledge** of the following?

	Excellent	Adequate	Disappointing
Their legal powers as Social Workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Underpinning theories about social problems <input type="radio"/> and disadvantage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Social work organisations – functions, responsibilities and structures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of specific local services, resources, etc. for service users and carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Evidence-based practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The SWRB Code of Practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ANZASW Code of Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. And how would you rate the newly qualified social workers you have worked with in the last two years in terms of their **values and personal qualities**?

	Excellent	Adequate	Disappointing
Enthusiasm for their work as a social worker	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commitment to the best interests of service users and carers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural sensitivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking responsibility for (taking ownership of) their own decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiative and resourcefulness in helping service users and carers resolve their problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coping with stress and pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Self-confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adaptability, flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interest in continuous learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognising the importance of internal procedures and policies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. From all these qualities, which **three** would you say are the most important for newly qualified social workers to bring into the workplace? (Please select three only)

- Effective engagement with service users and carers
- High standards of literacy in report-writing
- Analytical abilities
- Teamworking
- Ability to prioritise their workload
- Inter-professional working (with colleagues in Health, Education, etc)
- Information technology
- Group working with service users, carers, community members
- Planning for specific outcomes for service users as a result of social work intervention/s
- Facilitating independence for service users, giving them control over their lives
- Working with diverse communities
- Working with Māori
- Working with Pasifika
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of interventions
- Knowledge of social workers' legal powers
- Knowledge of underpinning theories about social problems and disadvantage
- Knowledge of social work organisations – functions, responsibilities and structures
- Knowledge of specific local services, resources, etc. available to service users and carers
- Knowledge of evidence-based practice
- Knowledge of the SWRB Code of Practice
- Knowledge of the ANZASW Code of Ethics
- Enthusiasm for their work as a Social Worker
- Commitment to the best interests of service users and carers
- Cultural sensitivity
- Taking responsibility for (taking ownership of) their own decisions
- Initiative and resourcefulness in helping service users and carers resolve their problems
- Coping with stress and pressure
- Self-confidence
- Adaptability, flexibility
- Interest in continuous learning
- Recognising the importance of internal procedures and policies

14. Overall, how satisfied have you been with the quality of the newly qualified social workers you have worked with in the last two years?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

15. Here are some statements made by social work employers. Please say how strongly you agree or disagree with each one.

	Agree strongly	Agree slightly	Neutral	Disagree slightly	Disagree strongly
These days, better quality candidates apply for our unqualified staff vacancies, than for our qualified social worker vacancies	<input type="radio"/>				
The four-year social work degree will increase the status of the profession	<input type="radio"/>				
The four-year degree will mean higher standards of social work practice	<input type="radio"/>				
Respectfulness to service users and carers is improving among social workers	<input type="radio"/>				
There is a serious shortage of qualified social workers	<input type="radio"/>				
Life experience is essential for successful social workers	<input type="radio"/>				
The level of stress associated with jobs in social work seems to be decreasing	<input type="radio"/>				
There is not enough emphasis in social work practice these days on therapeutic methods of intervention	<input type="radio"/>				
Too many social workers are over-cautious in their assessment of the risk of harm to service users or others	<input type="radio"/>				

16. Here is a list of various activities, etc, which different employers sometimes undertake. Please say which ones apply in your case.

	We don't want to do this at all	We do this well	We could do this more, or better
Induction programme for newly qualified social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Closer supervision for newly qualified social workers than for more experienced recruits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited initial caseload for newly qualified social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sponsor unqualified staff to qualify as social workers by paying their salaries while they are studying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Take social work students on placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide 'shadowing' for social work students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualified social workers on your staff giving (occasional) lectures/seminars to students at on social work programmes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in Careers' Fairs for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruit newly qualified social workers from among those having undertaken a student placement in your organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage staff to gain a qualification in <input type="radio"/> supervision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Provide further training opportunities to qualified social workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. For pre-qualifying social work education, are you in favour of the present generic approach covering both adults and children, or would you prefer to see separate programmes for adult social workers and children's social workers?

- Strongly in favour of generic social work education
- Moderately in favour of generic social work education
- Moderately prefer separate programmes for adults and children
- Strongly prefer separate programmes for adults and children

18. If an annual Open Day were to be held locally among different employers of qualified social workers, and social work students – for educational purposes, not just recruitment – would your organisation be interested in participating?

- Definitely interested
- Probably interested
- Probably not interested
- Definitely not interested

19. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make about the qualities of newly qualified social workers?

# Appendix 3: The NQSW interview schedule

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1. How well-prepared do you think you were to enter practice?
2. What aspects of your qualifying programme are particularly valuable for you as a NQSW?
3. What are some of the gaps between what you learned on your qualifying programme and what you are expected to know and do as a NQSW?
4. If there was one thing you could change about your qualifying programme what would it be?
5. Is there anything else you would like to talk about in terms of your preparation for becoming a NQSW?
6. How well supported are you in terms of your learning in the workplace? (Give examples)
7. What other activities or supports could be put in place to enhance your learning as a NQSW?
8. How often do you have supervision? Who provides the supervision? Can you discuss your satisfaction with your supervision?
9. Are there any constraints on your learning as a NQSW?
10. To what extent does your workplace value learning? Can you give some examples of how you know this to be the case?
11. Do you have any further comments on how your learning as a NQSW is being supported and enhanced?
12. Do you have any further comments on your readiness to practise as a NQSW?

# Appendix 4: The manager/professional supervisor interview schedule

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1. Generally, what have been your impressions around the readiness to practise of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) in your organisation?
2. Bearing in mind that a NQSW has only recently finished their qualifying programme, what would you say are the 3 most important capabilities that they should have?
3. From your knowledge of social work qualifying programmes, what do you think are the most valuable aspects of the programmes for preparing NQSWs?
4. Again, from your knowledge of social work qualifying programmes, what is one thing you would change?
5. How are NQSWs supported in their learning in your organisation? (Alt for externals: In your experience how well do social work employing organisations support NQSWs? Is there variation between employers? What about support for professional development in employing organisations?)
6. What might limit your organisation from providing the support you want to NQSWs?
7. Are there other activities/methods that you think could be helpful for supporting the learning of a NQSW in your workplace?
8. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the preparedness of NQSWs and how their learning is supported?







