

# Advancing the sustainability and quality of social work field education in Aotearoa

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# Overview

- Multi-stage project – 360 perspective on stakeholder views of field education
- This stage: 13 agency manager interviews



# Why managers?

- Gatekeepers
- Potential employers
- Supporters
- Mentors
- Assessors



# Focus of the research

- Benefits of practicum
- Challenges with practicum
- Criteria for selecting students
- Recommendations for improvements

# Benefits

*A newly energetic and excited student within a team can kind of energise the team, and invite people to look at things a bit differently. There's nothing like a student who's observing somebody practising, and asking why you doing that, and why you doing it that way? (Sam)*

*I don't see how you can lose from a good placement... it should be a part of professional development for organisations and staff because I believe it will always add value...I think it's something that is really inspirational to people working within the field when they have new people come in and see how things are done. I think practice should always be challenged ... (Imogen)*



# Challenges

*Periodically we have unexpected personality clashes between the field work educators and the student, and that takes some effort and some honesty to deal with so that can be a real challenge (Rose)*

*We in the field tend to underestimate often how much time an effective placement does take, not only in terms of planned, structured and diaried kind of supervision, and so on, but the informal conversations, the preparation for supervision, and the support of students in their class work as well can eat up the hours (Sam)*



# Selecting students for placement

*[The main]criteria for us is really about willingness from them to get in boots 'n all with us because everybody brings strengths and their current learning with them. I don't expect them to come ready made, I just want them to come in and be part of what we do.... (Imogen)*

*...the other thing is their fit here, they have to be able to come here and be comfortable and we are looking ... for people who are authentic, who bring themselves to the work ... So that's the same as the students, so we want to grow them and be who they are (Neil)*



# A question for us

We understand matching is important but...  
how do we select, teach and assess (and then match) personal and interpersonal capabilities between the student and the agency?



# A final comment

*It keeps me on my toes. I have to keep up my practice because these buggers will challenge you, they will want to know and if they're any good they're going to ask you the hard questions and they're going to keep pushing you. So it keeps me alive you know? And it keeps me engaged in my social work practice, keeps me current (Sam)*





# Field Education

The **critical bridge** between social work  
education & practice.

