Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme

Evaluation Report on the First Year
(September 2008 to September 2009)

Prof. John Carpenter, Dr Hugh McLaughlin, Dr. Demi Patsios, James Blewett, Dr Dendy Platt, Helen Scholar, Prof Jane Tunstill, Marsha Wood and Prof. Steven Shardlow

This research was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DfE).

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Children's Workforce Development Council.

August 2010

Foreword

This is an important document. It provides an account of the first stages of an attempt to offer better professional support to Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) in children's services and hence to improve the quality of practice. Following evidence from employers and NQSWs, it was implicitly an acknowledgement by government that some constructive intervention was needed to ensure that vulnerable children were better served by social workers; this in the context of many cases, some widely publicised, in which standards of care and protection appeared to have been deficient. This intervention took a number of forms, with specific objectives set out in the introduction (See also the Afterword to the report).

It should be recognised that the evaluative research on which the report is based is a very considerable achievement. It required a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods and statistical analysis to assess the impact of the various elements of the programme. What made it particularly difficult were the range and diversity of the organisations involved and the constantly changing circumstances of the parties under scrutiny. An evaluation of this nature is always a challenge because things are on the move as one researches, but this particular assignment was, frankly, a bit of a nightmare and the many technical problems were carefully tackled. The account does, however, remind us how much preliminary work may need to be done before research is commissioned. For example, the lack of clarity about the requirements for "portfolios" to be assessed made for difficulties. These glitches may be a consequence of haste at the planning stage especially when there are political imperatives. Nonetheless, there is much detailed information obtained from the study which has already provided useful evidence in policy and planning, especially as the very difficulties discovered are in themselves significant for improving practice.

An important tool in the quantitative research is the use of a validated "self-efficacy" scale, in which social workers were asked to evaluate their own work on a range of dimensions. These were job satisfaction, role clarity and role conflict and stress. This was done three times, at the beginning of the project, after three months and at the final point. The areas covered were direct work with children, young people and their families, working with others and professional development. It is obvious that this method has dangers in that there is no clear way of establishing the gap between self perception and that of others and much depends on the understanding of the workers of what constitutes good practice under the various headings. The findings to an extent confirm this problem because the responses at the first stage were more confident than at the later stage, suggesting a degree of complacency at the beginning when the full demands of the work had not yet been fully realised. Even so, there does seem to be a gap between widespread common perceptions about current social work practice and the ways that the workers themselves view their practice. This does not invalidate the method. But it does suggest the need for some in depth qualitative research to probe this further, not least because of the finding, (section 3.3.4), that high self-efficacy scores included having high scores for "role conflict ", as well as, and in contrast with, "role clarity".

There is one striking finding which is of the utmost importance in a report which is packed full of matters to ponder over. That concerns the significance of enhanced supervision, a key element of the project. This was "strongly associated with" NQSWs' overall satisfaction with the programme. The implications of this are quite profound for the future of social work. I hope so much that this will be pursued despite all the changes and difficulties which confront the profession at the present time. Much work needs to be done on this matter which in some ways represents the very heart of social work.

Olive Stevenson
Professor Emeritus, University of Nottingham

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction to the Programme

The Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme was established in 2008 as a three year project involving CWDC working with employers to deliver a comprehensive programme of support to newly qualified social workers (NQSWs). The programme has been designed to ensure that NQSWs receive consistent, high quality support and that those supervising them are confident in their skills to provide support. It aims to contribute to increasing the number of people who continue their long-term career within social work with children and families (CWDC, 2008).

It has the specific objectives of:

- helping NQSWs improve their skills, competence and confidence as children's social workers in a systematic manner during their first year of practice

- enabling employers to provide focused supervision, support and guidance

- contributing towards NQSWs' post-registration training and learning

- improving job satisfaction and promoting retention within the children's social worker workforce.

The Evaluation

This report on the first year of the programme (2008-9) has been compiled by an independent evaluation team from Salford and Bristol universities and King's College London. The evaluation is monitoring three annual intakes to the programme. It employs longitudinal online surveys of NQSWs, their supervisors and programme coordinators in the participating employer organisations. In addition, the implementation of the programme is being investigated using interviews and focus groups in ten organisations, in the first year, and through detailed organisational case studies in a further four local authorities.

Participation in the programme

In the first year (2008-9), 89 organisations consisting of 87 local authorities and two voluntary and community sector organisations signed up to participate in the programme.

Over 1,100 NQSWs were registered on the programme. During the course of the year, 253 NQSWs (22 per cent of those initially registered) were withdrawn from the programme. In over a third of cases where information was available, this was because the NQSW had left their post. Nearly one in five social workers who were withdrawn had been registered for the programme on appointment to the organisation but had not taken up their post. Fifteen per cent declined to participate for personal or professional reasons. Four local authorities withdrew from the programme in the first year; three of them had previously registered NQSWs who were, subsequently, withdrawn from the programme. All four reported capacity issues which affected their ability to implement the programme at that time. There was considerable variation in programme retention rates between local authorities; these differences were not associated with the region or type of local authority.

NQSWs' experiences of the programme

At the end of the year, 58 per cent of NQSWs responding to the online survey said that they were generally satisfied with the overall package of work, support and training which they had been receiving from their employer; with the remainder being dissatisfied. A higher proportion of men were satisfied than women; black and minority ethnic (BME) NQSWs were

more likely to be satisfied than white colleagues. Women and white NQSWs were only marginally more likely to be satisfied than dissatisfied. Those NQSWs qualifying at undergraduate level were more likely to be satisfied than postgraduates, some of whom complained about the (low) standard which seemed to be expected. There were variations in satisfaction between the regions in which the NQSWs were working, but not between types of authority; these differences are likely to be related to how the programme was implemented locally.

Implementation of the programme

Each participating employer / organisation was required to appoint a programme coordinator. These individuals received training from CWDC designed to enable them to oversee the implementation of the programme in their organisation. Their responsibilities included developing an overarching training and development programme for their organisation, monitoring the NQSWs' individual training and development plans and checking that they were receiving supervision and a reduced caseload. Programme coordinators liaised with the support advisors commissioned by CWDC to assist employers in the delivery of the programme and with CWDC itself to register NQSWs and arrange training for supervisors. They also monitored NQSWs' progress towards the outcome statements as evidenced in portfolios and the production of records of achievement.

Programme coordinators were asked to rate a number of potential barriers to the implementation of the programme at the beginning and the end of the year. The largest barriers were associated with the programme coordinator's own time, considered to be a "modest" or "large" barrier by over half the programme coordinators, and managers' perceived lack of interest in and support for the programme. The latter was considered a large or insurmountable barrier by 22 per cent of programme coordinators and a modest barrier by a further 17 per cent. Half the programme coordinators thought that the NQSWs' lack of commitment and the poor quality of supervision available to them were modest, large or insurmountable barriers. At the end of the year, there was evidence that, on average, the perceived barriers were reducing, particularly relating to the NQSWs' commitment and the managers' support and interest.

Over a third of programme coordinators considered that the NQSWs' high caseloads were a significant barrier to the implementation of the programme. It had been difficult to protect their caseloads in the context of a substantial increase in referrals to children's services in the last year. This was particularly an issue for authorities with high proportions of NQSWs in the teams and where there were high vacancy rates and difficulties in recruitment. Overall, a majority of NQSWs did not consider that they had received the ten per cent reduction in caseload expected by the programme. However, this was difficult to measure because there was little evidence of organisational workload management schemes and, where they did exist, NQSWs were not confident that they were effective or equitable.

A key component of the NQSW programme is that participants are to be provided with regular, reflective supervision. For the first three months, this should be fortnightly for 90 minutes, reducing to monthly meetings thereafter. In nine of the fourteen case study sites, team managers provided both case management supervision and reflective supervision. In two others, reflective supervision was provided by the programme coordinator and in three others, by an independent external supervisor. At this point there is no evidence that any one arrangement is more successful than the others.

Nearly all the supervisors who had attended the CWDC commissioned training programme considered it useful in improving their own practice as well as in supporting the NQSWs. Most supervisors rated themselves as having "medium" or "high" confidence on the ten aspects of supervision assessed by a 'self-efficacy in the supervision' rating scale.

Overall, the majority of NQSW supervisors who commented believed that the programme was positive and would result in long term benefits to teams and departments. However, as noted above, implementation was considered problematic due to high workloads in their authorities.

All NQSWs were expected to have a training and development plan. The NQSWs in the case study sites confirmed they had a plan which included an initial training needs analysis and that this had been reviewed at approximately three months. Programme coordinators remarked that the programme had often formalised existing good practice.

Many supervisors and NQSWs commented that there was no link between the requirements of the NQSW programme, expressed in terms of a set of 'outcome statements' and the social work degree, which was based on the National Occupational Standards.

The largest source of dissatisfaction expressed in the follow up survey of NQSWs was with the requirement to complete a portfolio. There were four main reasons. First, was a perceived lack of clarity with the exercise and its requirements, a view shared by supervisors and programme coordinators. Second, complaints about the additional work required, third, a feeling that it was repetitive and devalued their social work degree and fourth, complaints about the lack of integration with the post-qualifying (PQ) framework which meant that the portfolio was not formally recognised and accredited. The practice component of the degree, the NQSW programme and the PQ 'consolidation' module all require the completion of portfolios of evidence. The majority of NQSWs considered this frustrating.

The review of a sample of portfolios for the evaluation team by an expert panel of users, carers and practitioners found large differences in the size and scope of the portfolios submitted from the case study sites. The majority of NQSWs did not report any difficulties in identifying evidence to support their achievement of the NQSW outcome statements. A few in specialist posts, such as education social work and referral teams had experienced difficulties because they had not had the full range of learning opportunities required. The expert panel found that material included in the sample portfolios generally provided good evidence that the NQSWs had achieved the outcome statements.

Where portfolios were linked to progression and pay within the employing organisation or with the first consolidation module of the Post Qualifying Award in Specialist Social Work in Children, Young People, their Families and Carers, there was a greater impetus for workers to treat their portfolios seriously. Some programme coordinators considered it inappropriate to complete the first consolidation module of the PQ because the NQSWs had not yet undertaken sufficient practice to benefit fully. They suggested instead that the PQ be linked to the Early Professional Development (EPD) Programme. Nevertheless, there was clear feedback that if the portfolio could be linked to other awards it would be seen as much more relevant and would be completed more diligently.

Programme coordinators believed that having support for the programme from managers and, in particular, senior management had been the key to ensuring its success. There were mixed responses to questions about the support provided by CWDC. Most programme coordinators wrote that they had had little to do with CWDC itself, but that when they did, staff had been quite easily accessible and helpful. Others had apparently had the opposite experience and a minority were highly critical. Around a quarter of programme coordinators commented on short time scales for the implementation of the programme. They complained about the late notification of training for supervisors, receiving delayed information, or information not being updated in line with changes being made to the programme. However, by the end of the year, ratings of CWDC support had improved.

The use made of external 'support advisors' commissioned by CWDC was very variable. Some support advisors were highly valued but a substantial minority of programme coordinators wrote that that the 'support' they received felt more like an unwelcome inspection.

Outcomes

Findings from the baseline surveys (December/January 2008 and April/May 2009)

The programme was designed to increase the confidence of NQSWs in the skills and responsibilities of children's social work; these were expressed in a set of 11 NQSW outcome statements developed by CWDC to indicate the level expected to be achieved at the end of the first year of employment. The NQSWs were surveyed in two groups depending on when they had registered for the programme and the data combined for analysis. At baseline the NQSWs reported a mean rating of self-confidence of 6.6 out of 10. This indicated a reasonable level of self-confidence *at that stage* and, by implication, that they saw room for improvement. Statistical analysis showed that high self-efficacy scores at baseline were associated with being older and being a part time rather than a full time worker. Being very clear about your role and tasks was the strongest predictor of high self-efficacy. It was also, surprisingly, associated with role conflict, a measure of difficulties staff experience in carrying out their job. Self-efficacy ratings were not associated with level of qualification or gender once other factors have been taken into account.

Over three-quarters of NQSWs were satisfied with their jobs but around a third were above the threshold for stress as measured by a standardised self-report questionnaire (the General Health Questionnaire or GHQ).

At the end of the programme (September/October 2009 and January/February 2010)

At the end of the programme there was strong evidence of a substantial increase in self-efficacy; three-quarters of NQSWs were "very confident" about their self-efficacy in relation to the NQSW outcome statements. Supervisors concurred with these opinions overall. Gains in self-efficacy were significantly greater than for NQSWs in a small contrast[1] group (N=47) in local authorities which did not participate in the NQSW programme. This group was very similar in terms of demographic characteristics, previous experience and levels of qualification to the NQSW sample as a whole. This group received the usual induction and supervision provided by their employers to new recruits. Personal role clarity in relation to the NQSW being certain about how much authority they had, had also improved significantly. This is important because role clarity was a strong statistical predictor of both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction and (lower) stress. Job satisfaction had remained high, but the proportion above the threshold for stress had increased to 43 per cent which is twice that found in the general population but around the levels previously reported in research on children's social workers.

There were no statistically significant differences between the participants in the NQSW programme and members of the contrast group at the end of the year in terms of the levels of role clarity, role conflict, job satisfaction and stress. This suggests that participation in the programme did not contribute to increased stress or have an overall effect on job satisfaction. The increase in personal role clarity over the year may have been associated with general professional development than with the effects of the programme.

---

[1] Please see the methodological note on the contrast group in appendix two.

Conclusion

Launching the NQSW programme in 2008 with 89 employers, over one thousand NQSWs and hundreds of supervisors was a huge undertaking. As might have been anticipated, there were a number of problems in the implementation of the programme. At a local level, these were associated mainly with the lack of interest and support from managers and supervisors in some of the authorities. There were also significant difficulties in many organisations in ensuring that NQSWs had sufficient workload relief and time to undertake the programme. In addition some NQSWs were reluctant to engage with at least some aspects of the programme, such as the portfolio. Nevertheless, there was evidence that the barriers had reduced over the course of the year.

The majority of NQSWs (58 per cent) indicated that they were generally satisfied, but many (42 per cent) were dissatisfied. Overall, satisfaction with the support they were receiving was closely related to the extent to which they were receiving their entitlement to reflective supervision to develop their practice in accordance with the NQSW outcome statements. NQSWs whose expectations were not being met were understandably dissatisfied. They were also more likely to complain about the poor organisation and delivery of the programme locally.

Despite the many challenges, there was evidence that the programme objectives were being achieved. Thus:

Helping NQSWs improve their skills, competence and confidence as children's social workers in a systematic manner during their first year of practice.

- Overall, NQSWs' self-efficacy had improved significantly in the key areas of children's social work practice identified in the outcome statements; at the end of the year, their ratings were higher than those for social workers in the contrast group of local authorities which did not participate in the programme. Supervisors gave very similar ratings of the NQSWs' efficacy.

- Role clarity had also improved, significantly, although this may be attributed to general professional development through experience and support in the job because the contrast group showed similar high ratings at the end of the year.

Enabling employers to provide focused supervision, support and guidance.

- Employers were being supported to provide reflective supervision through the programme and the training for supervisors, and over half the NQSWs had been receiving supervision in excess of the requirements of the programme during the first year. Regular, structured reflective supervision was the feature of the programme most highly appreciated by the NQSWs.

Contributing towards NQSWs' post-registration training and learning.

- CWDC funds were being used to pay for training courses and learning with support from programme coordinators and, in some cases, independent reflective supervisors.

Improving job satisfaction and promoting retention within the children's social worker workforce.

- For over three-quarters of NQSWs, job satisfaction had started high and had remained so over the course of the year. There was no evidence that participation in

the programme had increased job satisfaction. Overall levels of satisfaction with pay and working conditions had decreased over the course of the year. These aspects are not within the remit of the programme.

- The follow-up survey supported findings from previous research that a high proportion of children's social workers (42 per cent) experience clinical levels of stress. This is twice the figure reported in general population surveys. This proportion represents an increase from 32 per cent at the start of the year. There is no evidence that the programme itself causes stress. High levels of stress are associated with low job satisfaction and 'intention to leave' their job.

- It is too early to draw any conclusions about the impact of the programme on the retention of NQSWs. At the end of the year, one in six NQSWs thought it very likely that they would leave their current post within the next twelve months, and a further 30 per cent thought it "fairly likely". However, three-quarters of these expected their next job to be in children's social work.

- An initial recruitment and retention survey of 52 employers / organisations showed that the first year turnover rate of NQSWs in the first year was 15.9 per cent. This is similar to social workers in general.

1. Introduction

1.1. The NQSW pilot programme

As recent high profile cases testify, social work with children and families is undoubtedly challenging. Lord Laming, in his 2009 report on the *State of Child Protection in England*, recommended that "…social workers must have guaranteed support and supervision during their first year of practice to enable them to develop their skills and their confidence as a professional in a relatively safe learning environment" (sec. 5.1.2). As Lord Laming noted, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) had already introduced a structured professional development programme. This began in September 2008.

The Newly Qualified Social Work (NQSW) Programme involves CWDC working with employers to deliver a comprehensive programme of support for NQSWs. The programme has been designed to ensure that NQSWs receive consistent, high quality support and that those supervising NQSWs are confident in their skills to provide support. It aims to contribute to increasing the number of people who continue their long-term career within social work with children and families (CWDC, 2008). It has the specific objectives of:

- helping NQSWs improve their skills, competence and confidence as children's social workers in a systematic manner during their first year of practice

- enabling employers to provide focused supervision, support and guidance

- contributing towards NQSWs' post-registration training and learning

- improving job satisfaction and promoting retention within the children's social worker workforce.

The NQSW programme aims to provide high quality supervision; access to training and a protected workload; a comprehensive induction schedule through their first year of employment; easy-to-use guidance materials; and a professional development plan designed to increase confidence and maximise capability.

The NQSW Programme

Participants in the NQSW Programme are entitled to:

- ten per cent of your time being ring fenced for undertaking training and development activities and collating your evidence in a portfolio;
- access through your employer to additional funds to support your development;
- two-weekly supervision meetings as a minimum (reducing to monthly meetings after three months as appropriate), which will include time when you can focus explicitly on demonstrating your achievement against the NQSW outcome statements; and
- involvement in the Early Professional Development (EPD) pilot to support you in your second and third years post qualification.

In addition, your caseload will be carefully managed. You should be assigned work at a level of complexity and risk that fits your experience to date and with which you feel comfortable. You should be looking to take on 90 per cent of the work that a confident second or third year social worker would undertake in your organisation. This reduction in caseload is in addition to the ten per cent protected time for training and development needs allocated as part of the pilot programme.

Source: NQSW handbook available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/nqsw.

The NQSW programme is essentially a process through which NQSWs develop their skills, knowledge and understanding over the course of a year in order to meet a set of 11 'outcome statements' (Appendix 1). The *NQSW Outcome Statements and Guidance* (CWDC, 2008) set out the core tasks of children's social workers, together with the required knowledge and associated legislation and policy documents, a set of detailed evidence requirements. NQSWs are expected to compile a portfolio showing progress towards these outcome statements. This portfolio should include a training and development plan, revised following a review at the end of the first three months and at the end of the programme; a record of activities, achievements and reflections; supervision records and evidence to show how they have met the outcome statements, summarised in a 'Record of Achievement. The NQSWs are supported by their supervisor, who may also be their line manager, and a local programme coordinator. The key elements in the programme are illustrated below. This diagram is taken from the NQSW handbook 2008-9.

NQSW Programme: key features
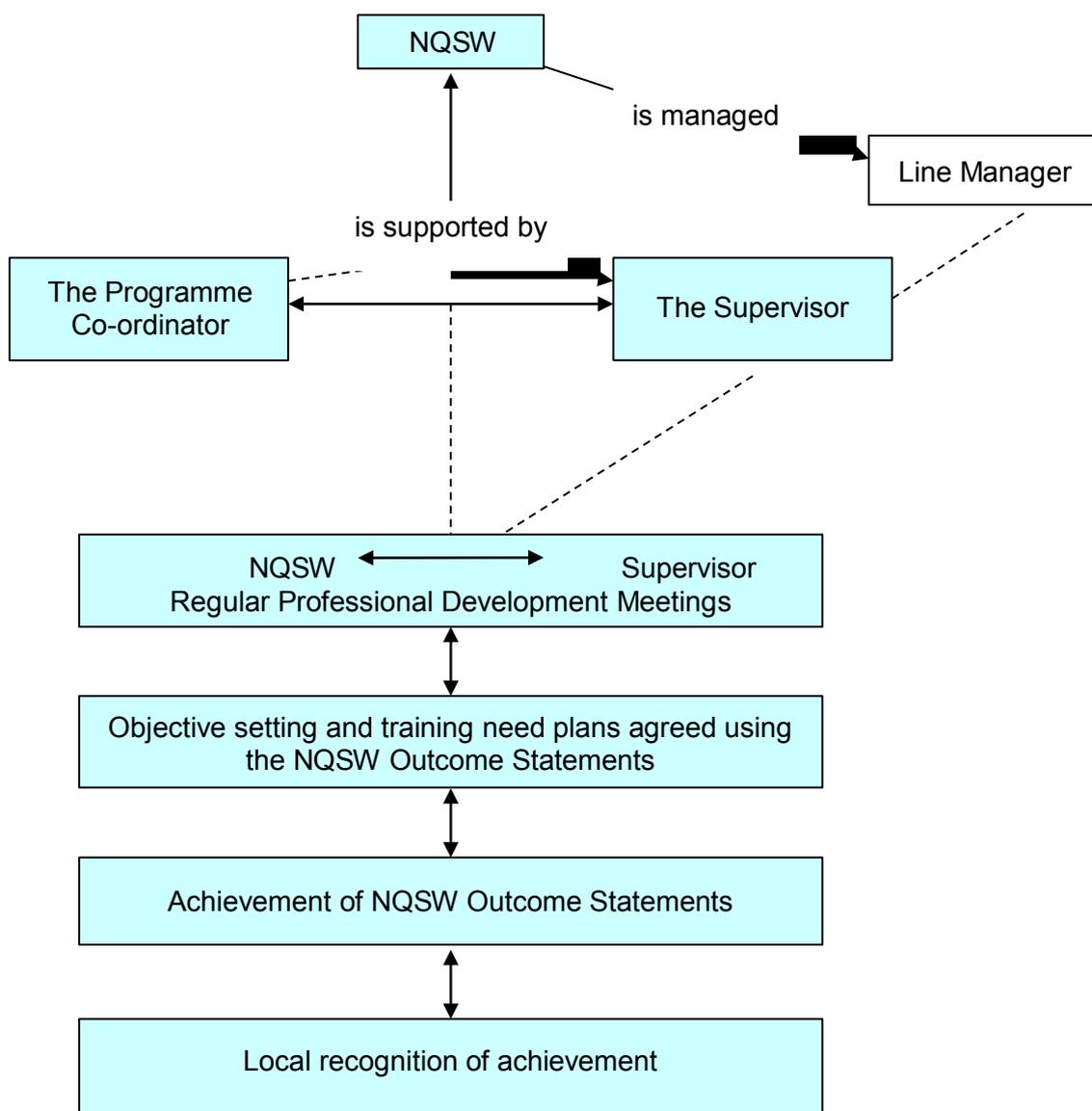
Source: *NQSW handbook 2008-2009* www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/ngsw

1.2. Roles and responsibilities in implementing the NQSW Programme

As described above, the NQSW programme was designed by CWDC to help employers give NQSWs structured and systematic support. CWDC's intention is that it allows employers to use existing processes and arrangements to deliver this support and to select an approach that best meets their NQSWs' needs. To enable employers to meet their commitments to the programme, CWDC provides:

- funding to employers[2]
- training, support and advice for individuals nominated by employers to co-ordinate the programme in their organisation (programme co-ordinators)
- a set of written guidance materials for all NQSWs and their supervisors
- training for those supervising NQSWs, to help them in this role.

CWDC reported that in 2008-09 every employer received at least two visits from CWDC's support contractor. The support advisers' responsibilities are to work with employers to identify ways to address any implementation challenges they are facing. Regional workshops were provided in summer 2009 to assist with this. In addition, CWDC records showed that around 400 people attended training in supervision skills provided by CWDC during the first year of the NQSW programme.

Programme co-ordinators oversee the implementation of the programme in their own organisation. Their role is to ensure that each NQSW taking part in the programme receives the support they need to enable them to achieve the outcome statements.

1.3. Programme evaluation

The programme is being independently evaluated by a consortium of three universities, Salford, Bristol and King's College London, over three years. The purpose is to assess the impact of the programme on the social workers and their supervisors and to advise CWDC and the Department for Education on the extent to which the programme is sustainable and 'fit for purpose'. Children and young people, and family carers have contributed to the evaluation (see section 1.4.2). The evaluation is formative that is findings are being fed back to CWDC so that the programme can be developed and refined.

The evaluation is being supported by a research advisory group comprising social workers and managers from the field, independent academics and representatives of CWDC research and social work sections, the Department for Education and the General Social Care Council. The advisory group also reviews the research reports.

This is the second report on the evaluation of the programme. An initial baseline report of the findings from surveys of programme coordinators and NQSWs was presented in 2009. This report concerns the first year of the programme (2008-9) and presents findings from online surveys and case studies as described below. It is intended for a general audience and includes a summary of findings from the baseline report.

---

[2] Funding consists of: £4,000 for each newly qualified social worker; an average of £15,000 per employer to contribute to the support and development of supervisors; £10,000 capacity funding for employers who support 10 or more newly qualified social workers per annum.

1.4. Methodology

The evaluation methodology has combined quantitative and qualitative social research methods to address the following topics:

- The implementation of the programme.
- The outcomes of the programme for NQSWs and supervisors.
- Retention and recruitment of children's social workers.

The methodology is summarised in the box below and described in detail in the relevant sections which follow. It was reviewed and approved by the University of Salford Research Ethics Committee and by the then Department for Children, Schools and Families which also reviewed the quantitative and qualitative research instruments.

Summary of Evaluation Methods

> - ***Online surveys*** of social workers participating in the programmes, their supervisors, and the local programme coordinators. The surveys explore the social workers' job satisfaction, role clarity, confidence, stress, and their views of the implementation of the pilot programme. Supervisors are being asked about their self-confidence in providing high quality supervision and their experience of the specialist training provided as part of the programme. They are also asked to assess the effectiveness of the social workers they supervise. Programme coordinators were asked to identify barriers and facilitators to the implementation of the programme. The surveys asked for demographic information and use a combination of standardised measures and open questions about their experience of the programme.
>
> - ***Focus groups and interviews*** with social workers, supervisors and managers in a sample of 10 participating local authorities and voluntary organisations.
>
> - ***Detailed organisational case studies*** of the implementation and impact of the programmes over three years in selected local authorities in different parts of the country.
>
> - ***Collation and analysis of recruitment and retention data*** concerning social workers in all participating authorities.

1.4.1. Quantitative study and samples

NQSWs were expected to participate in the evaluation of the programme. This was stated in their handbook. *Online surveys* were sent to all NQSWs on three occasions: at the start of the programme (T1), at the time of the three month review (T3MR) and at the end of the programme (T2), nine months later. All programme coordinators were surveyed at the beginning (T1) and end of the year (T2). Supervisors of NQSWs were also surveyed three months after the start of the programme (T3MR) and at the end (T2).

1.4.1.1. Sample: NQSWs

The survey was sent to NQSWs, on three occasions, to two groups of participants, 'early starters' (who had registered by 01 December 2008) and 'late starters' (who had registered between 01 December 2008 and 31 March 2009). There were no important statistically significant differences in the profiles of these two groups and results have been combined in this report.

A total of 1,126 NQSWs were initially registered with CWDC for participation in the programme in 2008-09. Some of these were not eligible for the programme and the evaluation because they were working as agency social workers. Employers had not understood the eligibility criteria and these social workers were subsequently withdrawn. Others had withdrawn from the programme before the first survey was distributed; the reasons were not recorded. In accordance with data protection regulations, the first survey was sent out by CWDC to the remaining 1,035 NQSWs on the programme.

Discounting the NQSWs whose start was delayed (35 NQSWs), just over half the NQSWs who had started the programme responded to the baseline survey (Table 1.1). At T3MR NQSWs were invited to provide demographic information if they had not done so previously and also to complete the baseline measures of role clarity/conflict, job satisfaction and stress. In total, 863 NQSWs responded to the survey on at least one occasion and there is complete demographic data for 759 (76 per cent) of the eligible sample of 1,000 because some who did not respond at T1, responded at T3MR and provided demographic information.

TABLE 1.1: SURVEY COMPLETION RATES

	Potential sample	Withdrew	Delayed start	Eligible sample	Response rate[3]
Time 1 (T1)	1035		35	1000	505 (51%)
Time 3 month review (T3MR)	1000	Not available		1000	420 (42%)
Time 2 (T2)	1000	162		838	274 (33%)

---

[3] (per cent of eligible sample)

The demographic profiles of the NQSWs at the different times are shown in Table 1.2. The percentages in the table relate to the total number of NQSWs for which demographic data are available (n=759).

		T1		T 3 Months		T2	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age	21-30	242	47.9	192	45.7	134	48.9
	31-40	144	28.5	130	31.0	73	26.6
	41-50	103	20.4	85	20.2	53	19.3
	51+	16	3.2	13	3.1	14	5.1
Gender	Male	66	13.1	59	14.0	36	13.1
	Female	439	86.9	361	86.0	238	86.9
Ethnic group	White	419	83.0	358	85.2	242	88.3
	Black/Minority Ethnic	86	17.0	62	14.8	30	10.9
Employer type[4]	Unitary authority	116	23.0	92	21.9	53	19.3
	County authority	227	45.0	194	46.2	130	47.4
	Metropolitan authority	79	15.6	70	16.7	40	14.6
	London Borough	65	12.9	49	11.7	42	15.3
	Voluntary	18	3.6	15	3.6	7	2.6
Region	London	62	12.3	44	10.5	40	14.6
	Yorkshire	62	12.3	40	9.5	23	8.4
	East Midlands	43	8.5	33	7.9	21	7.7
	South east	75	14.9	64	15.2	36	13.1
	North west	50	9.9	40	9.5	22	8.0
	South west	84	16.6	81	19.3	60	21.9
	West Midlands	63	12.5	49	11.7	31	11.3
	North east	32	6.3	33	7.9	17	6.2
	East	34	6.7	36	8.6	22	8.0
	Total	**505**	100.0	**420**	100.0	**274**	100.0

There were no statistically significant differences between the proportions of NQSWs responding at the different time points in terms of age group, gender, and employing organisation, with one exception. The response rate for Black and minority ethnic (BME) NQSWs at T1 was almost identical with that for white NQSWs. However at T2, they were significantly less likely to respond compared with white NQSWs (23.1 per cent versus 38.6 per cent, p< 0.5). In other words, with the exception of this group, the NQSWs at T2 were broadly representative of those at baseline in terms of their demographic characteristics.

---

[4] The voluntary / community organisation staff are not included.

1.4.1.2. Programme Coordinators

Each participating employer was required to appoint a programme coordinator. These received training from CWDC designed to enable them to oversee the implementation of the programme in their organisation. The responsibilities included developing an overarching training and development programme for their organisation, monitoring the NQSWs' individual training and development plans and checking that they are receiving supervision and a reduced caseload. Programme coordinators liaised with the support advisors commissioned by CWDC to assist employers in the delivery of the programme and with CWDC itself to register NQSWs and arrange training for supervisors. They also monitored NQSWs' progress towards the outcome statements as evidenced in portfolios and the production of records of achievement.

The programme coordinators were surveyed at the beginning of the programme (T1) and one year later (T2). The online survey link was sent by CWDC to programme coordinators in all participating organisations. They were asked to rate possible barriers to the implementation of the programme using a standardise measure, the five-point barriers to Implementation scale. They were invited, in a series of open questions, to identify and comment on further barriers and facilitators to the implementation of the programme.

1.4.1.3. Programme coordinators: Sample

Programme coordinators were surveyed in December 08/January 09 (T1) and the survey was repeated in October/November 2009. The baseline survey was completed by 79 of the 89 programme coordinators in the local authorities (91 per cent); the results were presented in the baseline report. At Time 2, one year later, 87 programme coordinators replied; the findings from this survey are presented below. Forty-eight of these, (55 per cent) had completed the first survey and their responses were matched enabling a T1 versus T2 comparison. Thirty-one completed the survey at baseline only; some of these worked for authorities which did not fully engage with, or subsequently left the programme, and others are known to have left their positions. At Time 2, 24 reported that they had not completed the first survey because they were new in post.

1.4.1.4. Supervisors

Those staff who were understood by CWDC to be the supervisors of NQSWs were invited to complete an online questionnaire. In addition to demographic information, the supervisors were asked to rate their own confidence in providing supervision using a set of statements derived from the CWDC/Skills for Care guide to supervision[5]. They were asked whether they had participated in the CWDC training programme for supervisors and, if not, whether they planned to do so in future. They were invited to give their views on the supervision training and on the programme as a whole. They were also asked to rate the NQSWs they were supervising. The survey link was emailed to supervisors at the time of the three month review (T3MR), by which time they were expected to have got to know the NQSWs, and again at the end of the programme (T2).

---

[5] CWDC and Skills for Care (2007) *Providing effective supervision workforce development guide.* [online]. Available at:
www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/2832/Providing_Effective_Supervision_unit.pdf

1.4.1.5. Supervisors: sample

Some of the supervisors approached replied to the evaluation team and others to CWDC, saying that they were not in fact supervising NQSWs. In some authorities, NQSWs were being supervised by both line managers and by training and development staff; in some cases neither assumed responsibility for responding. Consequently, it is not possible to estimate the number of potential respondents and calculate a response rate.

A total of 288 supervisors accessed the online survey as requested at baseline (T3MR), of which 264 (92 per cent) completed all the demographic questions. At T2, 128 supervisors completed the survey, of whom 76 had previously completed it at baseline.

At baseline, more than eight out of ten supervisors were white and nearly the same proportion were over 40 years old. The highest proportion of male supervisors was found in the metropolitan authorities. A little under half the London Borough supervisors were BME, which matches the proportion of BME NQSWs.

1.4.2. Qualitative study

Case studies were undertaken in nine local authorities and one voluntary organisation. The case study sites were selected to represent the different types of local authority (county, unitary, metropolitan and London borough) and the different regions of England. (These are referred to as regional and cross-sector studies).

In each case study site, a member of the evaluation team interviewed the programme coordinator and the senior manager responsible for the programme, usually the assistant director of children's services, using semi-structured interview schedules (Appendices 2-4). Team members then conducted two focus groups to which all the NQSWs and supervisors, respectively, were invited.

Four additional local authorities agreed to be the focus of *organisational case studies*. In these organisational studies, additional data are being collected from individual NQSWs and their supervisors, with a particular focus on the transition from the NQSW to the Early Professional Development (EPD) programmes. These were a London borough, a north west metropolitan authority, a Midlands county council and a south west unitary authority.

Two user and carer groups were commissioned to provide a perspective on the kinds of evidence of practice which the NQSWs were expected to provide at the end of the year. Sunderland Young Peoples' Participation Project involved a group of eight young people with experience of the case system and two facilitators. The group has three years of working with social care organisations and universities. ATD Fourth World is a group of parents who have been involved with social care services and care leavers in London. The group has similar experience. These groups worked with the evaluation team to develop criteria for the assessment of portfolios and records of achievement produced by NQSWs to evidence progress towards and the achievement of the outcome statements[6]. Sample portfolios were gathered from the 14 case and organisational study sites. They were evaluated by a panel comprising an experienced social worker, an experienced representative of a related profession (health visitor), a young person who had used services and a parent, who had also used services.

---

[6] Guidance on the portfolio is provided in CWDC (2009) *NQSW Handbook* 2009-10 (p.11). [online] Available at:
http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/7349/NQSW_hanbook_for_employers__PDF_-_933_Kb_.pdf
The records of achievement are presented in CWDC (2009) *Meeting the Outcome statements: record of achievement.* [online]. Available at: http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/7833/2009_-_10_NQSW_Record_of_Achievement_-_Electronic_Workbook.pdf

1.4.2.1.   Samples

Participants in the qualitative study are shown in Table 1.3.

In all, 138 staff in the 14 organisations participated in focus groups and interviews; nearly half of these were NQSWs. Around one in three were from metropolitan authorities and a similar proportion from county councils. The proportions from unitary authorities and London Boroughs were substantially lower; this is partly because they are generally smaller and employ fewer staff. The respondents from the different staff groups and different employers are broadly reflective of the statutory children's social work sector. As noted above, there were two voluntary sector organisations participating in the first year.

TABLE 1.3: NUMBERS AND DESIGNATIONS OF STAFF PARTICIPATING IN THE CASE AND ORGANISATIONAL STUDIES BY ORGANISATIONAL TYPE

TYPE OF EMPLOYER	NQSW	TEAM LEADER	PROGRAMME COORDINATOR	SENIOR MANAGER	TOTAL
County Council	18	12	4	4	38 (28%)
London Borough	9	3	2	4	18 (13%)
Metropolitan	22	14	5	5	46 (33%)
Unitary	13	11	4	2	30 (22%)
Voluntary	2	3	1	0	6 (4%)
Total	65 (47%)	42 (30%)	16 (12%)	15 (11%)	138 (100%)

The methods used to investigate the research topics are explained below.

1.5. Implementation of the Programme

At the end of year, all NQSWs were surveyed about their experiences of the programme, including questions on the extent to which they considered they had received the core elements of the programme. These questions were included as part of a series of online surveys mentioned above. (Appendices 6-12 in PDF format)

Programme coordinators in the participating organisations were appointed as a requirement of funding by CWDC. All programme coordinators were invited to respond to online surveys at the beginning of the programme and, again, one year later. The survey used a standardised scale to assess 'barriers to implementation' and invited open comments on barriers and facilitators. In addition, programme coordinators in 14 organisations were interviewed as part of case studies.

The case studies focused on the implementation of the programme and experiences of the participants. The assistant director of children's services or equivalent was interviewed, as well as the programme coordinator. NQSWs and their supervisors and team managers participated in separate focus groups.

In the organisational case studies, as well as the focus groups and interviews mentioned above, individual interviews were undertaken with NQSWs, senior managers and

supervisors. Detailed information was collected about each authority's organisation and policies concerning children's social workers. These organisational studies will continue through the three years of the programme and will include a study of the implementation of the EPD programme.

Finally, all supervisors of the NQSWs were surveyed online concerning their views on the implementation of the programme, including the training commissioned for them by CWDC.

1.6. Outcomes for NQSWs

As noted in the introduction, the intended outcomes of the programme for NQSWs included increased skills, competence, confidence and job satisfaction. These outcomes are being assessed through online surveys of all participating NQSWs at three time points. The baseline survey (T1) used standardised self-report measures to assess the social workers' job satisfaction, role clarity and role conflict, and stress. A self-efficacy scale was developed and tested especially for the evaluation. This was inspired by the work of Holden (2002)[7], who has developed an approach to measuring self-efficacy based on Bandura's social cognition theory. Holden has explained that:

> *Self-efficacy is more than a self-perception of competency. It is an individual's assessment of his or her confidence in their ability (to) execute specific skills in a particular set of circumstances and thereby achieve a successful outcome* (Holden *et al.*, 2002, p. 116).

The measure developed for this study assesses, using a ten-point scale, the NQSWs' confidence in their ability to accomplish the tasks set out in 11 NQSW "outcome statements"[8] (Appendix 1). The outcome statements stipulate what children's social workers are expected to be able to know, understand and do by the end of their first year in practice[9]. They cover three key areas: direct work with children, young people, their families and carers; working with others to provide co-ordinated services; and professional development.

NQSWs were asked to complete this measure at baseline and again after three months (T3MR) when the NQSWs and their supervisors are expected to undertake a review of progress. At this point, they were also asked to include a retrospective rating of their baseline self-efficacy ("If you knew then what you know now…"). This rating was introduced because it was anticipated that some NQSWs may, with the benefit of experience, reflect that they may have overestimated their self-efficacy at baseline. Finally, at the end of the programme (T2), they repeated the ratings.

The T2 survey was also sent to NQSWs in a sample of authorities which had not taken part in the NQSW programme. The recruitment of this "contrast group"[10] has enabled a comparison, at T2, of the circumstances, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, role clarity and conflict of NQSWs who had participated in the programme and those who had not.

Supervisors were asked to assess, using a complementary scale, the efficacy of the NQSWs they supervised in relation to the outcome statements at T3MR and at T2.

---

[7] Holden, G., Meenaghan, T., Anastas, J. and Mtrey, G. (2002) Outcomes of social work education: The case for social work self-efficacy, *Journal of Social Work Education*, *38*, 115–33.
[8] Because outcome statement 11 covers two discrete areas, accountability and professional development, these were represented with separate scale items. The self-efficacy scale therefore contains 12 rating scales.
[9] CWDC (2008) *NQSW Outcome statements and guidance*. Leeds: CWDC.
[10] Please see the methodological note on the contrast group in appendix two.

1.7. Recruitment and retention

The effects of the programme on the recruitment and retention of NQSWs are being assessed through surveys of NQSWs and employers.

1.7.1. Surveys of NQSWs

As part of the online surveys at T1 and T2, NQSWs are asked about the likelihood of their leaving their present job in the next 12 months. Previous research has shown that expressed 'intention to leave' is a reliable indicator[11]. NQSWs were asked to indicate, if they were planning to leave, whether this would be for another job within children's social work, or not.

1.7.2. Surveys of employers

The 14 organisations participating in the case and organisational studies have also been asked to provide *retrospective* data on recruitment and retention going back three years (2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08) plus vacancy and turnover rates for NQSWs over the same period.

All have been asked to provide *current* (2008-09) and *prospective* recruitment and retention data for the three years of the programme.

1.8. Data Analysis

1.8.1. Qualitative Data Analysis

The interviews and focus groups followed structured formats (see Appendices 2-4) which were used by all members of the research team who took responsibility for data collection in the study sites. All focus groups and interviews were digitally recorded. The team then met for a day to code the data and review the main and subsidiary themes arising in the data from the different research sites. Given the structured nature of the data collection, the thematic content reflected the research topics and questions. Themes were identified and elaborated and a detailed framework for analysis developed. This framework was later transferred to an interactive Excel spreadsheet into which team members were able independently to add quotations, discussion points and observations based on their own review of the data which they had collected. Where necessary, the framework was developed through the introduction of new cells to encompass new subsidiary or contrasting themes.

Following completion of the spreadsheet for each of the research sites the research team then met together again to check that the team had captured the range of themes, and identified the diversity of responses both within subject groups (eg NQSWs) and between subject groups (eg NQSWs and senior managers). The analysis was further developed through discussion using the constant comparative method. That is, the focus was on similarities and differences between the data and how these could be understood in terms of the key dimensions of the study. One of these dimensions is 'time' and in further reports the evaluation team will provide an analysis of how organisational and individual experiences change as the programme develops from the piloting stage.

---

[11] Tham, P. (2007) Why are they leaving? Factors affecting intention to leave among social workers in child welfare. *British Journal of Social Work,* 37, 1225-1246.

1.8.2. Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis began with descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation of demographic variables and responses to standardised measures. The baseline report (summarised below) described in detail the profiles and experience of NQSWs and their baseline ratings on the outcome measures according to the region and type of authority in which they were employed.

The second stage of the analysis employed these variables in a comparative analysis of outcomes (measured as the difference in T2 versus T1 scores). Analysis of variance was used to explore differences in outcomes between groups (eg in different regions, different types of authority and different baseline characteristics of the participating NQSWs, such as educational background and previous experience). Multivariate regression analyses, controlling for baseline scores, were employed to examine whether all participants gained equally from the programme.

2. Findings

2.1. Implementation of the programme

2.1.1. Participation in the programme

As noted above, 1,126 social workers were initially registered by their employers on the first year of the programme. During the course of the year, 253 NQSWs (22 per cent of those initially registered) were withdrawn from the programme[12]. There was considerable variation between local authorities in the proportion of NQSWs who were withdrawn. Four local authorities withdrew from the programme in the first year; three had previously registered NQSWs who were, therefore, withdrawn. All four indicated that capacity issues affected their ability to implement the programme at that time. In contrast, 18 local authorities withdrew no NQSWs. These differences were not associated with the region or type of authority in which NQSWs were employed. Some examples are presented in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: WITHDRAWAL RATES BY SELECTED EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS

	Engaged	Withdrawn	Total	% Withdrawn
London Borough 1	0	4	4	100.0
London Borough 2	5	10	15	66.7
London Borough 3	10	0	10	0
County council 1	7	21	28	75.0
County council 2	37	3	40	7.5
City council 1	28	10	38	26.3
City council 2	32	5	37	13.5
Unitary authority 1	10	1	11	9.1
Unitary authority 2	10	3	13	23.1

Reasons for withdrawal were provided to CWDC for 202 (80 per cent) of the 253 social workers. There have been classified in terms of whether the employer or the NQSW initiated the withdrawal (Figure 2.1). In over a third of cases the withdrawal took place because the NQSW left their post. In 15 per cent of cases social workers declined to participate for personal or professional reasons. "Professional" reasons for withdrawing included a 'lack of time' and NQSWs refusing to engage in the programme and compile a portfolio. Nearly one in five had been registered for the programme but never actually started.

The 40 participants (20 per cent) categorised as "other" included 11 who had been appointed as social workers subject to attaining their social work degree but who failed to achieve their qualification.

---

[12] All information on withdrawals was provided to CWDC and was not collected as part of the evaluation.

FIGURE 2.1: REASONS FOR WITHDRAWING FROM PROGRAMME (N=202)
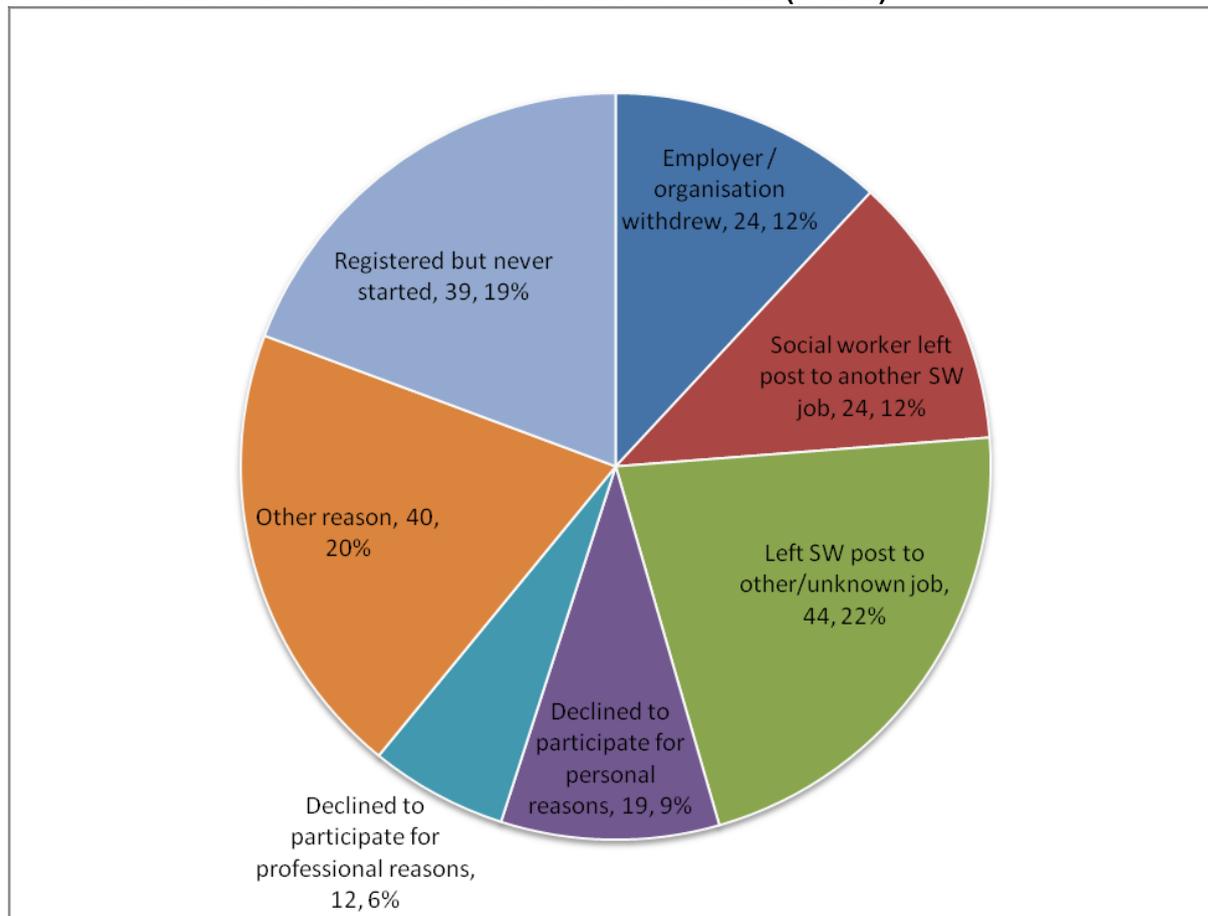
2.1.2. NQSWs' experiences overall

First, the opinions of the 274 NQSWs who responded to the online survey at the end of the programme are reported. Over half (58 per cent) said that they were generally satisfied with the overall package of work, support and training which they had been receiving from their employer; with the remainder being dissatisfied. One hundred and twenty five NQSWs provided written comments on their experience of the programme:

> *I feel that I have benefited greatly from the programme and have been supervised fully over the year. I am looking forward to carrying out and completing the EPD* [Early Professional Development Programme]*, which I begin in the next two weeks.*
>
> *Completing the NQSW programme has given me the confidence and skills to move forward to this next tier and I hope that I develop further skills to develop my practice further. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Inevitably, those who were dissatisfied were much more likely to write about their experiences than those who were satisfied

The responses were analysed in order to identify any differences between those who were 'satisfied' and those who were 'dissatisfied' in terms of their personal profile, the type of organisation for which they were working and the region in which they were employed, as well as the specific attributes of the programme.

In general, a higher proportion of men were satisfied than women; BME NQSWs were more likely to be satisfied than white colleagues. Women and white NQSWs were only marginally more likely to be satisfied than dissatisfied.

There were no apparent differences associated with the type of authority in which they were working. However, those working in Yorkshire and the north west were more likely to be dissatisfied than satisfied. Conversely, those in the north east and south west were much more likely to be satisfied than those in other regions. In order to preserve the respondents' anonymity and to satisfy the requirements of the ethics committee, NQSWs were not asked to identify the employer for which they worked. It would be unwise to make too much of regional differences. The variation is likely to be due to local circumstances. For example two NQSWs in different regions wrote:

> *My employers have a superb system of training and support. (NQSW T2 survey)*

> *Support from the programme leader was very good and the workshops were excellent with the written information packs being an ongoing source of reference. (NQSW T2 survey)*

In contrast, an NQSW elsewhere commented:

> *The NQSW programme was a complete shambles that deskilled social workers and added stress. It actually adds to the demands of the job rather than supporting the worker. I continually asked if I could drop out of the programme as did all my peers. It was a massive waste of time and terribly run! It served to make me feel angry, frustrated, undervalued and under respected. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Those NQSWs qualifying at undergraduate level were somewhat more likely to be satisfied than postgraduates (62 per cent versus 52 per cent). One Bachelor's degree holder remarked:

> *I felt I received a lot of support from my manager, supervisor and team. This support really helped me to settle into a new team and learn the job in a protected environment. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Those postgraduates who provided written comments tended to complain about having to repeat training undertaken on their degree or about the standard which seemed to be expected, such as the one quoted here:

> *Having completed a Master's [degree] the programme was pitched at a very basic level and made you feel like you were back at school again rather than recognising you as a qualified professional. Completely pointless waste of time. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Overall, there were no clear differences in responses to the survey which were associated with the extent of pre-course experience of children's social work. Those for whom this was their first substantive job since qualifying in social work were more likely to be satisfied:

> *I feel this has been helpful in relation to the extra support I have had from team members, as a new worker. It has given me the chance to develop new skills under the supervision of more experienced team members. (NQSW T2 survey)*

But this was clearly an issue for some, for example:

> *The quality of this programme is poor and not sufficiently advanced enough for practitioners who may only have just qualified, yet have been undertaking a similar role within their agency for many years. This was a pointless exercise for me as did not challenge me in any way, other than more pressure to complete the portfolio. There is insufficient scope for practitioners to approach this on an individualised basis as it generalised. There are not sufficient opportunities for practitioners to use their initiative or think critically about their work. I have not enjoyed the programme in any way and feel opportunities have been missed by CWDC. (NQSW T2 survey)*

2.1.3. Programme coordinators' perspectives on implementation

As noted above, the programme coordinators had the lead responsibility for local implementation. The evaluation team assumed that this would be a challenging task for some at least. The programme coordinators' survey included a standardised measure designed to assess 'barriers to implementation' for programme interventions. Ratings are made on a scale of 0 = "no barrier" to 5 = "insurmountable barrier". Ratings at T2 from all 87 respondents are shown in Table 2.2.

The largest barriers were associated with a programme coordinator's own time, considered to be a "modest" or "large" barrier by over half the respondents, and managers' perceived lack of interest in and support for the programme. The latter was considered a large or insurmountable barrier by 22 per cent of programme coordinators and a modest barrier by a further 17 per cent. Half the programme coordinators thought that the NQSWs' lack of commitment and the poor quality of supervision available to them were modest, large or insurmountable barriers. Few programme coordinators were concerned that their own knowledge and skills presented much of a barrier. Only a third thought that lack of clarity about their role was more than a slight barrier.

Responses from those programme coordinators who had completed the first survey were compared with the 22 who reported that they were completing it for the first time and had taken up post after January 2009. Not surprisingly, a higher proportion of those newer to the post (44 per cent) indicated that clarity about their role was a modest or large barrier compared to the less than 10 per cent of more experienced programme coordinators. Similarly, they were somewhat more likely to consider their own knowledge and skills to be a barrier. There was also some evidence that newer programme coordinators were more likely to think that NQSWs' commitment was a modest or large barrier than more experienced programme coordinators (56 per cent versus 45 per cent).

The ratings made by those who completed the survey at both time points were compared. In general, the biggest barriers were perceived to be the quality of supervision available to the NQSWs, managers' lack of interest and support, shortage of time and the support available from CWDC (Table 2.3). On the five-point scale, a rating of 3.0 is equivalent to a "modest" barrier. At Time 2, there was a statistically significant decrease in the mean ratings of barriers associated with NQSWs' lack of commitment to the programme and the managers' interest and support. There was also a statistically significant decrease in barriers related to the quality of support from CWDC, in other words, the quality of support was thought to have improved.

TABLE 2.2: PROGRAMME COORDINATORS' ASSESSMENTS OF BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME AT T2 (N= 87)

	NO BARRIER	SLIGHT	SMALL	MODEST	LARGE	INSURM OUNTAB LE
My time	13 (15%)	15 (17%)	13 (15%)	26 (30%)	19 (22%)	1
My knowledge & skills	30 (34%)	23 (26%)	24 (28%)	9 (1%)	1	0
Clarity about my role	38 (44%)	19 (22%)	14 (16%)	13 (15%)	2	1
NQSWs' commitment to the Programme	14 (16%)	13 (15%)	16 (18%)	31 (36%)	12 (14%)	1
Quality of Supervision for NQSWs	10 (11%)	16 (18%)	17 (20%)	35 (40%)	8 (9%)	1
Managers' interest and support	9 (10%)	16 (18%)	11 (13%)	32 (37%)	18 (21%)	1
Quality of support from CWDC	15 (17%)	17 (20%)	20 (22%)	19 (22%)	14 (16%)	2

TABLE 2.3: BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME: T1 AND T2 COMPARISONS (N = 48)

	Mean T1	Sd	Mean T2	Sd	Mean Diff[13]	T	P	Cohen's d	Effect size
My time	3.15	1.37	2.77	1.39	-0.38	-2.00	0.05	0.28	Medium
My knowledge and skills	2.00	0.97	1.90	1.04	-0.10	-0.65	0.52	0.11	Negligible
Clarity about my role	1.79	0.94	1.88	1.18	0.08	0.44	0.66	0.08	Negligible
NQSWs' commitment	3.06	1.36	2.48	1.18	-0.58	-2.99	0.004	0.46	Medium
Quality of supervision	3.19	1.21	2.92	1.22	-0.27	-1.44	0.16	0.23	Medium
Managers' interest and support	3.31	1.32	2.85	1.29	-0.46	-2.38	0.02	0.35	Medium
Quality of support from CWDC	3.06	1.29	2.73	1.41	-0.33	-1.86	0.07	0.25	Medium

---

[13] "-" indicates that barrier has been reduced.

2.1.4. NQSWs' caseloads

The programme promised that NQSWs' caseloads would be carefully managed. NQSWs should be assigned work at a level of complexity and risk in accord with their previous experience. It was suggested that they should be taking on 90 per cent of the work that a confident second or third year social worker would undertake in their organisation. This reduction in caseload was intended to be in addition to the ten per cent protected time for training and development.

The surveys of programme coordinators did not ask them to make any ratings concerning NQSWs' caseloads. However, over a third (14) of programme coordinators responding to the open questions in the survey considered that the NQSWs' high caseloads were a significant barrier to the implementation of the programme. They considered that it had been difficult to protect their caseloads in the context of a substantial increase in referrals to children's services in the previous year[14]. This was particularly an issue for authorities with high proportions of NQSWs in the teams and where there were high vacancy rates and difficulties in recruitment. These factors made it hard to find cover and to limit caseloads. There was often considerable pressure on managers to allocate cases, including to NQSWs. There was a perception that some teams were finding it difficult to support the programme. As one programme coordinator explained:

> *Teams are under considerably increased work pressures as a result of Baby P and [OFSTED] inspections which create low morale and inertia within the workforce. Thus introducing 'more work' or further demands as a result of the new programmes produces a lack of compliance amongst the NQSWs and their management (programme coordinator survey).*

As part of the *focus groups and individual interviews* NQSWs were asked to reflect on their expectations prior to starting their first qualified post and to discuss how it had worked in practice. There were two general group answers to this question. NQSWs who had previously been working for their employer as an unqualified worker and then been seconded to a qualifying degree programme are sometimes referred to as being part of a 'grow your own scheme'. These NQSWs felt they had had a good idea of what to expect as they had worked for the organisation for a number of years often in the teams in which they were now practising. This was also the case for NQSWs who had undertaken their final placement in the organisation in which they were now employed. The other group was those who had had no previous experience of the employing organisation but who had expected to be 'busy, stretched and stressed' (NQSW, focus group).

Generally, the majority of NQSWs had found the first year much busier than they had anticipated. One NQSW commented:

> *Sometimes I feel overwhelmed. Other weeks I'm calmer. It depends when you ask me. Sometimes I just feel I'm drowning with the amount of work. (NQSW, interview)*

---

[14]The Association of Directors of Children's Services (April 2010) *Safeguarding Pressures Project* reported in a survey of 86 authorities an increase of 21.3% in the numbers of Section 47 enquiries in the two years Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009 (p.10). Sixteen local authorities reported an increase of over 100% in this period, while 18 showed a decrease. The author commented that there appeared to be no pattern by location or type of authority.

This experience was recognised by supervisors, one of whom explained:

For many of them (NQSWs) I've had tears, stress, issues of time management, being overloaded. It is an inordinately stressful time – your first year of practice….one of the things that strikes me is the discrepancy between what they think social work is going to be, and what the reality of social work is in a large welfare bureaucracy. Some of them were very surprised about what social workers did, and how much of their time was actually spent writing reports, sitting in front of a computer…. (Team Manager, focus group)

NQSWs who had qualified as social workers through 'grow your own' or employment based routes generally had a better understanding of both the employing organisation's policies and procedures and the team's workload. Some thought they should be allowed to complete the programme in a shorter timescale. Others disagreed, remarking for example:

…that doing the same (Employing organisation) courses over again I noticed I was looking at them through the eyes of a social worker, not a family aide and I was able to see things I hadn't seen before. I think it is a good idea that it lasts a year for everyone. (NQSW, focus group)

The team managers who were interviewed also had mixed views on this matter. Many considered that as 'grow your own social workers' were a known quantity to the employing organisation this group of NQSWs did not need the same degree of induction and support and could be contributing more to the team sooner. However, another team manager, whilst initially sympathetic to this view, was concerned that this might be abused by some employers. As a result, they thought it would be difficult to decide when a 'grow your own' worker had completed the programme. They concluded that a year's programme for everyone was probably the best way forward.

Employers who signed up to the NQSW programme had agreed to provide their NQSWs with a 'ten per cent reduction in caseload' in comparison to a year two or year three qualified social worker. This was intended to enable them to have time for training and development activities. As part of the interviews and focus group both NQSWs and their managers were asked to confirm whether this had occurred or not. NQSWs were asked to comment on this issue if they wished in their T2, end of year survey. Responses have been combined.

Overall, the majority of NQSWs in both the case study sites as well as those surveyed did not consider that they had had a ten per cent reduction in caseload.

I don't think I'm doing ten per cent less. I think it's the managers who think we have our ten per cent. (NQSW, focus group)

Reduced caseloads doesn't happen here. (NQSW, interview)

The NQSWs did not blame their employers for this situation; rather they were inclined to show some understanding of the difficulties. For example, one survey respondent commented:

In my opinion it is unrealistic to expect already stretched teams to spare workers time to complete their [NQSW] *work (NQSW T2 survey)*

However, even when a caseload reduction could be achieved what was a well-intentioned prescription could backfire:

> *In the beginning period, as I had pre-training experience of almost 7 years, I felt that my caseload was far too small. I was sat with unqualified workers with more work and more interesting cases than I had. I felt very de-skilled. (NQSW T2 survey)*

A common complaint was that the NQSW programme itself generated additional demands, for example:

> *It would have been nice to have received a drop in case management to undertake this scheme as I have felt under severe pressure to take time off to complete it when I have a full [sic] case load and therefore cannot give my case load and the children on it my full time and effort. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Another NQSW who was generally positive wrote:

> *I feel the motive behind the pilot programme is a good idea; however as a new social worker I feel the programme has not been well thought out in relation to time consumption, responsibility of the NQSW to develop a portfolio and still learn the skills of the job in their first year as well as manage a caseload. This programme has been more demanding than actually managing a caseload within my first year. (NQSW T2 survey)*

2.1.5. Caseload measurement

The majority of NQSWs reported that they were dependent on their team managers for the allocation of work. The team managers asserted that they had tried to protect the NQSWs from the beginning with a smaller workload, but not all were able to say whether this was a ten percent reduction, or not.

In order to effect a measurable reduction in caseload, some form of workload measurement would be required. Most team managers interviewed said that they did not have a workload measurement system and where these were in place they were providing approximations at best. Most of the NQSWs asked in the focus groups were unaware of such schemes. But where these were in use, they were not always considered fair:

> *Two workers could go into supervision with the same work and come out with different workload points. (NQSW, focus group)*

> *Points are supposed to be allocated in supervision but it doesn't always happen. (NQSW, focus group)*

Caseload allocation was not only an issue of numbers but also of complexity. It was generally felt that where these systems were in use they were not always able to respond sufficiently flexibly. NQSWs thought that you could not predict the complexity of cases, as straightforward cases often became more complex or went 'belly up'.

> *I didn't really expect to have a CP (child protection) case at the beginning, but I did, it was the way the case turned out. (NQSW, focus group)*

One other worker asserted that workload measurement in their team resulted only in the team leader commiserating with them if they were over their stated number of cases and

giving them more cases if under. The point here is that for this NQSW, and for the others in this focus group, it did not really matter what their workload scores were as team leaders just ignored them.

In general, the NQSWs were very supportive of their team managers and considered that they did have smaller and less complex workloads at the beginning of their first year in practice. The team managers discussed the tension between protecting their NQSWs while other team members were under pressure, as well as having to cover the NQSW workload reduction. They, and programme coordinators, also noted that whilst CWDC provided 'back fill' funding for NQSW cover it was not easy to recruit replacements, or that when a replacement was recruited, it was likely to be another newly qualified social worker from a private agency. This situation was further exacerbated in those teams with only one NQSW when they were trying to replace a worker for half a day per week. Some employers had tried to pool the money from their different NQSWs and had found this to be more successful.

One programme coordinator claimed that the employing organisation's workload had 'doubled' and although all the teams had been given the facility to protect the NQSWs it was difficult to see how this could be managed within current resources. Workloads were seen to be not merely an NQSW problem but a social work problem. This wider context was acknowledged by a senior manager who, on the one hand, was under pressure from elected members to ensure that all cases were allocated, while on the other, needing to ensure that the NQSWs received the level of support as agreed with CWDC.

These competing interests were also reflected further down the employing organisation's hierarchy where team managers saw themselves as stuck between senior management, who wanted all cases to be allocated, and the NQSWs who were expected a ten per cent reduction in their caseload

In one local authority, the NQSWs were strongly of the opinion that they should not be placed in duty/assessment teams where it was impossible to control the level of demand, and all referrals needed to be allocated and assessed before they could be transferred to the appropriate team or closed. NQSWs did not blame their managers for the high workload levels whether they were in duty and assessment teams or other teams in their employing organisation; if anything, they felt sympathy for the manager. This also had implications for their workloads in that being a member of a pressurised team meant it was very difficult not to be seen as taking your fair share of the pressure. NQSWs wanted to be accepted as valued team members by their colleagues and this outweighed the need to have a protected caseload. As one NQSW put it:

> Given the difficulties in our team, sickness, Baby P, leave, increased referrals, I couldn't sit back and demand my ten per cent whilst my colleagues were going under. In these situations you just have to help your colleagues out. It's more important to be a member of the team than to be an NQSW. (NQSW, interview)

NQSWs did acknowledge that they were allocated more cases as they became more experienced. Other NQSWs also acknowledged that they wanted more cases in order to be seen as 'doing their share' or to be seen as a 'real social worker'. In one case an NQSW had continuously asked for more cases until it became apparent to their supervisor that they were not managing their workload and part of their caseload had to be reallocated.

There was an acceptance by NQSWs and team managers that cases should also become more complex as the NQSWs gained experience. This was seen as a deliberate strategy by

many team managers who genuinely wanted to develop their NQSWs at a pace they could manage. This could be viewed as both a positive and sensible strategy building on the individual strengths of the NQSW. However, one NQSW commented that whilst she could see how she had developed that year, she also felt she was never allowed to get comfortable in her role as the next challenge was always slightly more complex than the one before. This view was generally accepted by the rest of the focus group who could also recount examples when they wished the increasing complexity of their work had of been slowed down.

2.1.6. Managers' commitment

The survey of programme coordinators identified a lack of commitment by some managers and senior managers. Several of those who commented elaborated this point. For example, one programme coordinator wrote:

> *Supervisors and managers might well believe in the scheme, however time and workload pressures have made it very difficult for them to fully embrace it. (programme coordinator T2)*

In one instance, a programme coordinator recounted that a NQSW's attempts to protect their workload had backfired:

> *When they* [NQSWs] *have attempted to inform their managers that they are feeling overwhelmed, the managers are not able to accept their ability to advocate on their own behalf. When I intervened as the coordinator, the NQSW was viewed as the complainer or as the problem, unfortunately. This is due to the pressure from the service manager. (programme coordinator T2)*

Two programme coordinators considered that a turnover of NQSW supervisors and managers had affected the programme in their agencies, making it difficult to provide sufficient supervision time for NQSWs.

In the focus groups, some team managers expressed concern about the amount of time that was required to provide the requisite NQSW support. Nevertheless, they agreed that such support was required to ensure that NQSWs were given the opportunity to become skilled practitioners. A few team managers also expressed the view that giving so much time to NQSWs was detracting from the time that they were able to spend with the rest of their team.

2.1.7. Supervision: case management and reflective supervision

Good quality supervision is seen an essential element in helping NQSWs become competent and confident social workers. As part of the programme all NQSWs were to be provided with reflective supervision on a fortnightly basis for 90 minutes for the first three months of the programme and at least monthly after that. Supervision provided the NQSWs with case management support, advice on policies and procedures, plus opportunities for reflective learning. In this section when the report refers to case management supervision this is referring to those discussions between supervisor and supervisee which are focused on issues concerning the supervisee's management of their cases. This includes issues about the level of risk, the assessment and implementation of the worker's intervention plan and ensuring the case management is in line with the employing organisation's policies and procedures.

Reflective supervision is more concerned with the NQSWs learning from their experiences, being able to explain why they intervened in particular situations; what theories they used;

what the experience told them about themselves, as a person and as a social worker, and how this could be used to help them become a more effective practitioner. While both of these types of supervision are presented here as distinct, in practice, they overlap. In an ideal situation both aspects of supervision are necessary for the effective development of new social workers who must not only become the competent practitioners of today, but must also be able to learn from their experience to become the expert practitioners of tomorrow.

The supervisors' baseline survey revealed that overall, seven in ten supervisors were the NQSWs' line managers, but this proportion varied between 31 out of 34 in the West Midlands and 9 out of 23 in the East Midlands. The reasons for this difference are not clear; there were no statistically significant differences in these proportions when data were examined by type of authority, so it is a regional variation only. Overall, 23 per cent of the supervisors indicated that they were not line managers; a very small number were freelance. The remaining 14 respondents, self-classified as "other", included ten who anticipated supervising NQSWs, but were not doing so at the time; two NQSW programme coordinators; and two mentors for the supervisors.

The case and organisational studies determined the modes of supervision being used in the 14 organisations (Table 2.4). For the majority (nine) of employers, both aspects of supervision were undertaken by the team manager. In two other organisations the reflective supervision of the NQSW was undertaken by the programme coordinator, and in a further two employers, by an assistant team manager or senior practitioner. Three other employers commissioned external providers to undertake this role. The decision to use external providers was made partly as it was seen as the best way to deliver the programme, whilst in another employing organisation the programme coordinator chose this approach to protect their already busy team managers from the extra workload. One employer started with the team manager undertaking both tasks and then after a period of time commissioned independent consultants to undertake the reflective supervision.

TABLE 2.4: TYPES OF SUPERVISION DELIVERY BY TYPES OF EMPLOYING ORGANISATION (QUALITATIVE STUDY)

Type of Authority	TM both	TM case plus Programme Coordinator Reflective	TM case plus Senior Practitioner/ Asst. TM reflective	TM case plus External Reflective	Total
County Council	3	0	0	1	4
London Borough	0	1	0	1	2
Metropolitan	3	0	1	1	5
Voluntary	1	0	0	0	1
Unitary	2	1	1	0	4
Total	9	2	2	3	16

NB. two employers used more than one model

Notes:　**TM both** – Team manager both case management responsibilities and NQSW responsibilities including reflective supervision responsibilities.
TM case plus Programme Coordinator reflective - Team Manager retained case management responsibilities but NQSWs received main support from programme coordinators including reflective supervision.
TM case plus Senior Practitioner/Assistant TM reflective – Team Manager case management responsibilities with a Senior Practitioner or an Assistant Team Manager undertaking NQSW responsibilities and reflective supervision.
TM case plus External reflective – Team Manager retained case management responsibilities but NQSW responsibilities and reflective supervision undertaken by an external person bought in by the organisation to undertake these tasks.

There was no evidence, at this stage, that any particular arrangement for providing supervision was more successful than any other. All the different formats identified in Table 2.4 had both supporters and detractors in similar numbers. The research team met NQSWs who were happy that their team manager assumed both tasks. In these cases they felt their managers were able to respond sensitively and to identify appropriate cases to meet their developmental needs. There were also examples of team managers having no time to undertake the reflective aspects of the role and where all supervision was geared to caseload management, assessing risk and identifying the next tasks to be completed:

> *Your NQSW supervisor needs to be someone different, it doesn't work when your manager is your (NQSW) supervisor, they've got too much to do –it isn't their fault they just haven't got the time (NQSW)*

One local authority began with a mixed model, with some NQSWs being supervised by their team managers and the other NQSWs being supervised by independent workers who were well known to the employing organisation. The team manager and independent worker were seen by this employer to work best in ensuring the reflective supervision occurred and the employing organisation is planning to adopt this approach with following cohorts. As the senior manager commented:

> *Independent buying in is something that works better, both for managers and the NQSWs, in the sense that protected time is being put aside for it (reflective supervision). (Senior Manager, interview)*

It would appear that what works best for one employing organisation may not work in another. Issues which might affect this include the number of staff to be supervised or workload pressure. If the team manager has insufficient time to be able to undertake both aspects of the supervision process they may best be split up.

However, the use of external supervisors was not universally welcomed. One NQSW noted that although they appreciated 'being taken out of the office' and 'having time to really critique their practice', another from the same employing organisation considered her external supervisor was 'out of touch with practice'. Another, from a different employing organisation, complained of being 'patronised' and stated that 'it would have been better to have had her own supervisor' (NQSW). Even in cases where the external supervisor was more positively regarded, dangers of 'out sourcing reflection' were identified and there was a view expressed by a few NQSWs that the roles could become confused.

One difficulty for NQSWs who had their reflective supervision provided externally was the issue of workload allocation. Because the manager allocated the NQSW's work, an external reflective supervisor was unable to adjust caseloads if necessary. Those NQSWs who were critical of the separation of supervisory tasks were concerned that their managers would not understand the programme properly or be able to engage with it fully.

2.1.8. Receipt of Supervision

Overall, half the NQSWs responding to the T2 survey said that, on average, they received supervision for 90 minutes every two weeks; this is the requirement for the first three months of the programme, after which it may be reduced to monthly supervision. Four in ten reported receiving supervision for less than 90 minutes, and/or that their sessions were less frequent. The remaining ten per cent said that they had not been receiving it at all. The majority that commented on this issue stated that they did not receive regular supervision because of pressures on the team, for example:

> *My first year post qualifying was a very difficult year for the borough where I work and a very difficult year for the team with many changes within the management structure and this had a very detrimental impact on my experience. The first six months or so I had no supervision and had difficulty in ascertaining who was going to be my supervisor for the NQSW. With the support of my supervisor I did manage to complete the scheme. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Another complained:

> *No supervision contact was drafted when I joined the organisation. This meant supervision took place at non-structured intervals. Due to the team manager being on dependency leave [sic] supervision did not taken place for over 8 weeks. (NQSW T2 survey)*

From the focus groups and interviews it was clear that the case management aspects of the supervision generally happened regularly, but that this was not the case for the reflective supervision. This is not to suggest that line managers were not aware of the need for the reflective elements of supervision, but that for many, the daily operational demands sometimes took precedence over the future development of their NQSWs.

The receipt of reflective supervision was strongly associated with a NQSW's overall satisfaction with the programme, as reported in the T2 survey. Almost all the 'satisfied' NQSWs had been receiving regular and structured supervision of at least 90 minutes every two weeks. This was highly appreciated:

> *I have really valued the opportunities for quality supervision in order to reflect on my practice and development. (NQSW T2 survey)*

There was evidence of flexibility in the arrangements; this was considered acceptable when support was available. As one NQSW explained:

> *I started out having regular two week supervision however after a few months this felt like too much and with mutual consent we dropped down to monthly supervision. There were a few months where I didn't get any formal supervision however I can approach my manager at any time for informal supervision. I also sit next to our team's Senior Practitioner so I have never felt short of advice or support. (NQSW T2 survey)*

All the NQSWs who participated in the focus groups had begun their programmes having regular supervision. Both NQSWs and their team managers noted that they attempted to cover both case management and the NQSW requirements including reflective supervision. As can be seen from Table 2.4 (see page 22) there were a variety of structural approaches to the delivery of supervision adopted in the case study sites, with two employers adopting more than one style.

2.1.9. Supervisors' training and development

Nearly all the supervisors who had attended the CWDC commissioned training programme reported in the surveys that they had considered it useful in improving their own practice as well as in supporting the NQSW. In the focus groups many team managers acknowledged that they had not properly understood the nature of the programme at the beginning. Many of them had attended the supervision training believing that it would inform them about the programme but discovered that it was concerned with developing their supervision skills. The training programme was viewed by the vast majority of team managers as being of high quality and providing an ideal supervision model. However, once back in the workplace this ideal version was not felt always to be sustainable due to the day to day demands of managing a service. A number of team managers also thought that undertaking the supervision of NQSWs and other staff according to the model would require:

> *spending an hour and a half on every case and that was just not going to happen. (Team manager, focus group)*

Nevertheless, one of the case study authorities was determined to adopt the model service-wide and had arranged additional training to support its implementation. Team managers elsewhere commented that they used parts of the model with their other team members.

Several programme coordinators considered that team managers needed further training to gain a clearer sense of the NQSW programme and their responsibilities and clarification of the nature of the portfolio.

2.1.10. Supervisors' self-efficacy

At baseline, 256 supervisors (97 per cent of respondents) completed the self efficacy supervision rating scale. The scale had been developed from the competence statements (performance criteria) in Section 3 of the joint CWDC/Skills for Care workforce development tool *Providing Effective Supervision (*2007*)*. Using the same methodology as the NQSW self-efficacy scale, it asked supervisors to rate their confidence in relation to ten key aspects of supervision. Each of the ten items comprising the supervisors' self efficacy scale was recoded into three rating bands: low confidence (1-3), medium confidence (4-7), and high confidence (8-10). Taken together, most supervisors reported 'medium' or 'high' confidence for all items. They were less likely, however, to report 'high' confidence in "feedback on practice" and "supporting interventions".

Mean ratings at the T2 follow-up were marginally higher than the initial ratings (small effect size) but the difference was not statistically significant overall. Around a fifth of those who commented said that they found that the NQSW programme had helped them to develop their own supervision skills and had encouraged reflective practice.

> *"I found this (the programme) has helped me to refocus on my supervision skills, an important aspect to my work" (supervisor survey T2)*

Several supervisors mentioned in the survey that there was little consultation with, or support for supervisors, or workload relief to help them cope with the extra demands the programme placed on their own time:

> *Unfortunately, no one had consulted line managers about the time they would need to devote to this work, nor has there been any recognition within the organisation of this extra burden. (supervisor survey T2)*

This was especially an issue for those supervising a high number of NQSWs:

> *Having four NQSWs has been very challenging! (supervisor survey T2)*

2.1.11. The supervisors' views of the programme overall

Overall, the majority of NQSW supervisors who commented believed that the programme was positive and would result in long term benefits to teams and departments. However, as noted above, implementation was considered problematic due to high workloads in their authorities.

As also explained above, a few supervisors commented that they did not have the time to supervise NQSWs adequately because of heavy and demanding caseloads within their departments. A couple remarked that the NQSWs themselves had to cancel supervision sessions because of their own shortage of time.

Several supervisors considered that the programme was too oriented towards statutory social work and within this towards certain teams (those doing initial assessments /children in need/care work rather than Youth Offender Teams, voluntary organisations, residential units and children's centres). They considered that this orientation was reflected in the outcome statements and guidance. Nevertheless many thought that the NQSW programme was useful in helping to focus and structure supervision sessions through the use of the outcome statements which identified specific social work skills and tasks.

A few commented that the level of support required varied significantly between NQSWs, with some needing much higher levels of input than others – they considered that this was not really recognised through the design of the programme.

2.1.12. Peer group support and training

In all the case study sites bar one, the coordinator or an externally commissioned person provided group sessions for the NQSWs. These sessions were welcomed by most NQSWs who appreciated the opportunity to share the experience of being a NQSW with others in the same position. The majority of NQSWs appreciated the training provided, for example:

> As an NQSW I truly valued the experience of meeting up with my peers in the statutory sector for NQSW training events - this allowed me to feel far less isolated within the voluntary sector (NQSW T2 survey)

These groups were generally welcomed as 'an oasis' that legitimated the NQSWs being able to have space outside the working milieu and time to reflect on what it meant to be a social worker. The only negative responses came from a minority of workers who saw the groups as a 'talking shop' and one group of NQSWs who complained that their group spent too much time discussing the administrative tasks associated with the portfolio. For this group the credibility of the external facilitator was the key factor, with the majority feeling that this particular facilitator was "boring and patronising". In another group a respondent who was very positive about the groups complained that two of her fellow NQSWs were:

> … serial non attendees who believed they don't need the group, there's nothing the group could teach them, they knew it all already (NQSW).

2.1.13. Training and Development Plans

All NQSWs were expected to have a training and development plan. The NQSWs in the case study sites confirmed they had a plan which included an initial training needs analysis and that this had been reviewed at approximately three months. Most of the programme coordinators noted their organisation had already had an induction programme and a development planning mechanism eg a professional development plan process which involved all staff.

> Our induction was already good. All the NQSW programme has done is helped us to formalise our approach and provide us with some extra funding for NQSWs. (Programme Coordinator)

When asked about the content of the training needs analysis, the NQSWs identified a range of courses which included those which could be viewed as part of a normal employing organisation induction. These courses included training on the purpose of their employing organisation, corporate goals, or specific children's services courses such as child safeguarding and employing organisation's policies and procedures. Other areas where training was requested fell into two categories. One concerned skills and developmental learning areas: family assessment, the law, courtroom skills, the management of conflict and dealing with violent behaviour, domestic violence and intervention skills. The second concerned personal development such as time management and assertiveness. Some of these topics are likely to be part of the NQSWs' degree programme but they take on an added dimension when in full-time professional practice, eg

> I needed to learn everything again, the longer I've done this job the more I realise I need to know. (NQSW)

One team manager described the training plan of their NQSWs as a 'wish list' to help NQSWs own up to gaps in their training or skills development, and to treat this as an opportunity to address them. Training plans also covered opportunities for shadowing, joint working and for attending specialist types of decision making forums eg adoption panels, so that the workers could get a feel for the wider organisation and how the different parts worked together prior to having cases in these areas.

Team managers, programme coordinators and senior managers all appreciated the NQSWs' entitlement to training, which most seem to have been able to access. One senior manager noted that the commitment of NQSWs and team managers had been critical to the success of this aspect of the programme:

> Where it has worked particularly well has been where you've got buy-in from everybody. (Senior Manager)

This 'buy-in' also included NQSWs, some of whom from the senior manager's perspective needed to 'manage their diaries' better to be able to attend the training. In contrast, a programme coordinator separately commented that from her experience it was rare for NQSWs not to attend their courses.

The NQSWs generally felt that they had had a positive experience in relation to training where they felt their needs were prioritised. They were prioritised both in the types of different courses they could access and being ensured a place. This view was confirmed by managers and programme coordinators who recognized that the extra money supplied by CWDC had helped to deliver a mix of induction, generic and bespoke training for NQSWs. There was not a single identifiable optimum model with regards to the balance between types of training. What appeared to be appreciated was the opportunity to attend a range of learning events.

2.1.14. Integration with postqualifying awards and universities

Many supervisors commented that there was no link between the requirements of the NQSW programme and the social work degree; in particular, with no emphasis on reflective learning statements, anti-oppressive practice, or using research (which are all key components in the social work degree). Around a quarter commented that there were too many overlapping standards and criteria for the assessment of NQSWs and that these should be streamlined and linked to the Post-Qualifying (PQ) consolidation module; some thought that this would help NQSWs to understand the point of the programme.

Eight programme coordinators remarked on this explicitly in the survey, considered the lack of a link between the NQSW programme and the PQ award was a significant barrier. As one of these explained:

> It was difficult to get NQSWs to buy in to the scheme because they did not see what was in it for them. With no pass or fail, and no credits or link to the PQ framework attached to the NQSW programme, they felt they were jumping through a lot of hoops for little gain (programme coordinator T2 survey)

These eight programme coordinators proposed that there should be a greater links to universities with continuity from degree courses, especially between the National Occupation Standards and the NQSW outcome statements. This, it was thought would encourage longer term commitment to professional development.

2.1.15. Portfolio / Record of Achievement / Materials

The largest source of dissatisfaction expressed in the T2 survey of NQSWs was with the requirement to complete a portfolio. There were four main reasons. First was a perceived lack of clarity with the exercise, expressed by one NQSW as follows:

> *I feel the portfolio was completely disorganised and nobody appeared to really know what was expected of them. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Second, complaints about the additional work required, for example:

> *It has felt too much having completed university and then having to complete this straight after starting. (NQSW T2 survey)*

> *In my experience as a newly qualified social worker there is already enough pressure, without the additional stress of completing another piece of evidence to prove your worth. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Third, the feeling that it was repetitious and devalued their social work degree

> *I have felt that the level of bureaucracy and paperwork involved in the program is similar to the work required to complete the placement portfolio [on the degree]. This in turn has made me feel that there must be little confidence in the degree qualification itself if we are required to continue to evidence competence in a similar manner. (NQSW T2 survey)*

Finally, complaints about the lack of integration with the PQ framework which meant that the portfolio was not formally recognised and accredited. Further, the practice component of the degree, the NQSW programme and the PQ 'consolidation' module all require the completion of portfolios of evidence. This NQSW expressed the frustration of many, contending that the portfolio was:

> *…completely pointless waste of time. I was further angered when it appeared it had not been integrated into the PQ framework so we had to do that all on its own as well! Having to the same thing three times but with a different booklet does not aid a social worker! (NQSW T2 survey)*

This NQSW complained strongly about the apparent lack of planning for the programme:

> *Throwing a new programme out … does nothing to actually help, it causes more problems especially when you still have to do the PQ anyway! Why not work with what you already have rather than just trying to reinvent the wheel? I could go on forever about how unhelpful, pointless and frustrating this programme is! (NQSW T2 survey)*

These comments were typical, and came both from NQSWs who were otherwise satisfied, as well at those who were dissatisfied.

In the focus groups and interviews the completion of the portfolio also came in for significant and sustained criticism from the managers, programme coordinators as well as NQSWs. These criticisms covered the full experience of completing the portfolio. The issues identified included a lack of clarity about what a portfolio was and its purpose. Other key issues raised included the issue of pass and fail of portfolios and the use of portfolios for other awards or purposes.

The lack of clarity as to what constituted a portfolio was a common criticism at all research sites. NQSWs and managers complained that because of this they lost a great deal of time in the project. They were unsure about what was supposed to be included within a portfolio and how it would look when completed. This was described as *'the confused leading the confused'* (NQSW) or *'being left to make it up as we go'* (team manager) resulting in a *'huge frustration in the first six months'* (senior manager). An otherwise satisfied NQSW stated that completing the portfolio:

> *Has been the only downside (to the programme) …we spent months and months working it out. (NQSW)*

Another NQSW commented:

> *We didn't know what a portfolio was supposed to consist of when we started the programme. We kept getting told it would be clearer soon. I looked at all the guidance books but they didn't help. I was even more confused when I read them. (NQSW)*

In many of the local authorities, concern was expressed about the number of guidance books which were seen as both confusing and, at times, contradictory. NQSWs stated they would have preferred just one book or at the most two.

Some programme coordinators also complained that when they contacted CWDC about the portfolio they found that *'no one knows the answers'* (programme coordinator). One other factor worthy to note here is that in at least three of our research sites the programme coordinators had significant sick leave which resulted in the completion of the portfolios taking even longer, momentum being lost within the employing organisation, and in some cases NQSWs failing to complete their portfolio.

These factors resulted in the research team being presented with a wide variety of examples of portfolios. Some employers did not use a portfolio relying only on the NQSW Record of Achievement. Others submitted large lever arch files full of evidence also containing extras like direct observations and reflective summaries. Some programme coordinators described their NQSWs as 'guinea pigs' - although one employing organisation reframed this more positively as 'trail blazers'. It was noticeable that a number of programme coordinators reported that they had developed portfolio proformas for the second intake. A number of these programme coordinators, including one who had only used the Record of Achievement, provided the research team with a copy of their new portfolio guidance and portfolio proforma for the forthcoming cohort.

Some programme coordinators were concerned that this variation might make it difficult for NQSWs accepted by one employer being seen as equivalent by another. Some NQSWs complained that their employing organisation's portfolios were too 'tick box', others that theirs needed 'slimming down'. In one focus group the NQSWs considered that it would have been better to have included an academic essay with reflective summaries or case reviews in which NQSWs could demonstrate their understanding in detail of a particular case and link this to their understanding of theory and practice.

The uncertainty about portfolios during the first year led to many being compiled at a very late stage. Rather than it being seen as a 'living document' recording the NQSW's learning, skill development and increasing confidence, it was experienced by many as a chore. Only one NQSW in the focus groups said they were able to complete the portfolio within their NQSW allotted time; everyone else who mentioned the portfolio stated that they had had to complete their portfolio within their own time.

A number of NQSWs from different authorities also mentioned that they had had to learn about the National Occupational Standards for their qualifying degree but these were not even mentioned now. They found this rather baffling as they had been led to believe these were the cornerstones of professional practice but now they had had to move onto NQSW outcome statements and learn how to evidence these in practice.

Team managers generally reported that their programme coordinators had been very helpful in deciding what approach their employer was taking to portfolio construction. A team manager expressed the view that the completion of the portfolio actively distracted from the development of analytical and assessment skills and the process of completing the portfolio became the focus of supervision, eroding time for reflection or case analysis.

A question for both supervisors and programme coordinators was whether there was a minimum standard for the portfolios. At present there are no clear criteria for passing or failing. When asked about this, senior managers and programme coordinators said that if they felt a portfolio was too poor to accept they would ask NQSWs to redo the parts of the portfolio which required further work. However, when challenged as to what they would do if the portfolio was still inadequate they were unsure. Failure to complete a portfolio was not seen as an issue of worker competence. This lack of standing of the portfolio has contributed to a *laissez-faire* attitude amongst certain NQSWs and their managers.

The majority of NQSWs did not report any difficulties in identifying evidence to support their achievement of the NQSW outcome statements. A few in specialist posts, such as education social work and referral teams had experienced difficulties because they had not had the full range of learning opportunities required. In some employers this was resolved by the NQSW taking work from another team.

In some employing organisations, portfolios were linked to progression and pay or with the first consolidation module of the Post Qualifying Award in Specialist Social Work in Children, Young People, their Families and Carers. In these instances, programme coordinators and managers observed that there was a greater impetus for NQSWs to treat their portfolios seriously. Some programme coordinators raised a concern that it was inappropriate to complete the first module of the PQ concerning consolidation as the NQSWs had not yet undertaken sufficient practice to benefit fully from this module. Instead these programme coordinators suggested that the PQ be linked to the EPD programme. However, there was a clear message that if the portfolio could be linked to other awards it would be more likely to be completed in a diligent manner.

2.1.16. Making the programme work

Programme coordinators responding to the survey believed that having support from managers and, in particular, senior management for the programme had been the key to ensuring its success. At T2, there was evidence from the rating scales and written comments that managers' support had increased, for example:

> *Managers… are becoming more confident and realising it is not quite as much work as they initially thought. Most managers have found it a helpful framework so I feel more confident in selling it this [next] year! (programme coordinator T2 survey)*

Several programme coordinators mentioned that funding was essential to their facilitation of the scheme – in particular being able to fund a coordinator post.

Several programme coordinators reported that they had successfully incorporated the NQSW portfolio with their "progression" route and postqualifying consolidation module. This provided an incentive to the NQSWs to complete the programme and avoided duplication.

2.1.17. Support from CWDC

The majority of programme coordinators commented on the quality of support received by CWDC. Overall, slightly more commented negatively than positively.

Most programme coordinators wrote that they had had little to do with CWDC itself, but that when they did, staff had been quite easily accessible and helpful:

> *CWDC have been extremely helpful whenever we have called them with a query, and extremely easy to get hold of on the phone. [Project officer] especially has been incredibly helpful. (programme coordinator T1 survey)*

Others had apparently had the opposite experience. Fifteen (around a fifth) considered the response to queries and phone calls was weak, with some saying messages were not returned and responses were unclear. Several felt that CWDC was out of touch with practice and did not listen to feedback. Conversely, a few felt that CWDC itself was poor at giving feedback. It was suggested that CWDC staff should have been at special events to answer questions and give feedback.

A small minority (five programme coordinators) were highly critical of CWDC and complained of a general lack of understanding of children's services, for example:

> *CWDC lack knowledge about the service, the profession and the existing frameworks and operate as a commissioning agency only, failing to join things up (programme coordinator T2 survey)*

> *Because they commission everything separately and do not fundamentally understand how services work, they provide a complicated framework which then has to be simplified to make it achievable in the real world (programme coordinator T2 survey).*

The main complaints were about delays in providing the handbooks and training, although there was some understanding of the size of the task involved:

> *CWDC have a huge agenda with compressed demands currently - this can lead to communication being haphazard at times, timescales very short and material not updated in line with changes. Supervisors' training was far too late in the first year.(programme coordinator T2 survey)*

The handbooks provoked a mixed response. While some found them helpful, the majority view was that they were, in the words of one programme coordinator, "*too repetitive, too plentiful and too complicated".* Another offered the following advice:

> *The handbooks provided were repetitive and cumbersome. One handbook and the Record of Achievement is all that is required. I know some LAs are now producing their own materials to try and make the NQSW more digestible and easier to understand. NQSWs, like all social workers, are already incredibly pushed for time, so providing them with 5 handbooks for the scheme was a mistake from the beginning. (programme coordinator T2 survey)*

The main complaint, however, was with the late production and delivery of the materials and of the training for supervisors.

Around a quarter of programme coordinators commented on short time scales for the implementation of the programme. They complained about the late notification of training for

supervisors, receiving delayed information, or information not being updated in line with changes being made to the programme. A few suggested that this created a sense that CWDC were unable to deal with the scale of the programme and the speed at which it was to be rolled out.

2.1.18. Support advisors

The use made of external 'support advisors' commissioned by CWDC was variable, with some reporting 'minimal' support and contact from their advisor and others experiencing a much higher level of support. Some support advisors were clearly highly valued for example:

> (name of support contractor) *has been very supportive and helped us move forward with the programme at a very difficult time. She is very approachable and always available to offer advice or support. Her commitment to the programme is excellent and she has the prior experience as a social worker in understanding the NQSWs' frustrations and anxieties, she is a pleasure to work with. (programme coordinator T1 survey)*

However, 15 out of 87 programme coordinators specifically commented that that the 'support' they received from the commissioned support advisors felt more like monitoring or audit. It was described variously as inspecting, policing, auditing, quality assurance, and assessing. One programme coordinator described the visit of their support contractor as follows:

> *Our so-called "support" visits are distinctly uncomfortable experiences, and I would say that the inter-personal skills of our particular "supporter" need to be very closely scrutinised (programme coordinator T1 survey)*

In general, the programme coordinators considered that the support from CWDC and the support advisors had improved during the course of the year.

3. Outcomes of the Programme

The aims of the NQSW programme (see section 1.1) included:

- helping NQSWs improve their skills, competence and confidence as children's social workers during their first year of practice

- improving job satisfaction and promoting retention within the children's social worker workforce.

These outcomes are being assessed by online surveys using standardised measures of self-efficacy, role clarity, role conflict, stress and 'intention to leave'.

This section begins with a summary of the findings from baseline surveys in the first year of the programme 2008-9.

3.1. Summary of findings from the Baseline Survey (2008-9)

3.1.1. Profile of NQSWs

- Over half (53 per cent) were aged over 30 (including 24 per cent over 40). This indicates that 'career changers' are being attracted into children's social work.

- Only 14 per cent were men. This is in line with GSCC data[15] on admissions to the social work register (15 per cent).

- The proportion of BME NQSWS (18 per cent) was a little lower than the proportion admitted to the GSCC register overall (23 per cent).

- Three in ten had a postgraduate-level qualification in social work (This compares to 24 per cent on social work courses nationally).

- Only 30 NQSWs (four per cent) had qualified outside UK.

- Three-quarters identified 'safeguarding children from abuse and neglect' as one of the two most significant contexts for their practice.

3.1.2. Job Satisfaction

- A very high proportion (80 per cent) were satisfied or very satisfied with *intrinsic aspects* of their job: opportunities, challenges, tasks, own accomplishments.

- Three-quarters (75 per cent) were satisfied with *extrinsic aspects:* job security, the quality of management and supervision, hours of work and relationships with fellow workers.

- However, thirty-eight per cent were *dissatisfied* with their level of pay (men and NQSWs over 30 years were more dissatisfied).

- Two-thirds were *dissatisfied* with public respect for the work they do.

- High intrinsic job satisfaction was associated with high role clarity, low role conflict and low stress.

---

[15] GSCC (2010) *Raising Standards: social work education in England 2008-9.* [online]. Available at: http://www.gscc.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D1493BD9-3AF1-44D5-AB70-169D239E931D/0/GSCC_Raising_Standards_Report_0809.pdf

3.1.3. Self-efficacy

- The mean rating of self-confidence in relation to the 11 *NQSW outcome statements* was 6.6 (+/-1) out of 10. This indicated a reasonable level of self-confidence *at that stage* and, by implication, that they saw room for improvement.

- High self-efficacy scores at baseline were associated with being in the older age groups, being a part time rather than a full time worker, and having high scores for role clarity and, surprisingly, role conflict (all other factors have been taken into account). Being very clear about your role and tasks was the strongest predictor of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy ratings were not associated with level of qualification or gender once other factors have been taken into account.

3.1.4. Stress

- A little under one-third (32 per cent) were above the threshold for stress as measured by the General Health Questionnaire (compared to 20 per cent for the general population). However, this is lower than in previous surveys of children's social workers which have reported rates of around 40 per cent.

- NQSWs in the West Midlands, south east and London reported significantly higher proportions above the threshold, compared to other regions.

- High stress was associated with low role clarity and low intrinsic job satisfaction (ie organisational and personal factors) and with lower NQSW satisfaction with the public's respect for the social work role[16].

3.1.5. Retention

- Twenty-three per cent were "not at all likely" and 46 per cent were "not very likely" to be actively looking for another job in the coming year; in other words, two-thirds were likely to stay in their present post.

- Overall, 59 (9 per cent) thought it "very likely" and a further 142 (23 per cent) considered it "fairly likely" that they would be looking for another job.

- Of those likely to be looking for another job, 77 per cent expected this to be in social work

- Men, those with lower *extrinsic* job satisfaction (pay, working conditions), higher role conflict and more stress were more likely to express an intention to leave their current job. Also, those with less previous experience of children and families social work were more likely to be planning to leave, including those wanting to extend their range of experience.

---

[16] Of course, not all stress is from work.

3.2. Outcomes at three month review and the end of the first year

A comparison of differences in the ratings made by NQSWs at the three time points gives an indication of the outcomes of the programme.

Details of the response rates to the surveys are provided in Sec. 1.4.1.

3.2.1. Self-efficacy ratings

> We are able to compare the responses at baseline and three month review for 243 NQSWs on their self-confidence in relation to the 12 outcome statements.
>
> We can compare responses at baseline and end of the programme for 127 NQSWs.
>
> In terms of their demographic profile, these NQSWs are representative samples of participants in the programme overall.

A total of 243 NQSWs competed both T1 and T3MR self efficacy ratings. There was a statistically significant increase in mean total ratings at the three month review (Table 3.1). The statistical analysis showed that the effect size was 'medium', indicating that the changes was not just statistically significant but quite substantial.

At the three month review, NQSWs were also asked to give a retrospective rating (T3MRr) of their self-efficacy at baseline, ie "if you knew then what you know now, how would you rate your efficacy". Predictably, the NQSWs' retrospective ratings were significantly lower, by an average of over six points, compared to baseline. In other words, NQSWs had realised that they had not known as much and were not as skilled as they had thought at the beginning. Alternatively, they had realised that the outcomes envisaged in the outcome statements were more complicated or demanding than they had appreciated.

TABLE 3.1: SELF EFFICACY RATINGS: PAIRED SAMPLES *T*-TEST

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	sd	Mean 2	sd	Mean Difference	*T*	*P*	Cohen's *d*	Effect size
T1 v. T3MR	243	81.32	15.24	86.75	14.07	5.43	5.98	<.001	0.37	Medium
T1 v. T3MRr	200	81.83	15.25	75.38	17.91	-6.46	-5.90	<.001	0.39	Medium
T1 v. T2	127	80.72	15.73	92.92	14.26	12.20	9.29	<.001	0.82	Very large

The average increase of over 12 points between baseline and the end of the programme was statistically significant and the effect size was "very large". This is illustrated in the box plots in Fig. 3.1 which show the distribution of ratings[17]. At T2, three-quarters of the NQSWs gave total ratings of 85 or above, equivalent to a mean rating per outcome statement of 7/10. This is equivalent to "very confident". The median was equivalent to a rating of 8/10 on each outcome statement. Of course, if T2 ratings are compared with three month retrospective ratings, the increase in mean total ratings was even larger (over 18 points).

> At the end of the programme there was strong evidence of a substantial increase in self-efficacy; three-quarters of NQSWs were now "very confident" about the outcome statements.

FIGURE 3.1: BOXPLOTS OF MATCHED TIME 1 VERSUS TIME 2 MEAN SCORES

Time 1 Self-efficacy scale (12 items, max score=120) Time 2 Self-efficacy scale (12 items, max score=120)

---
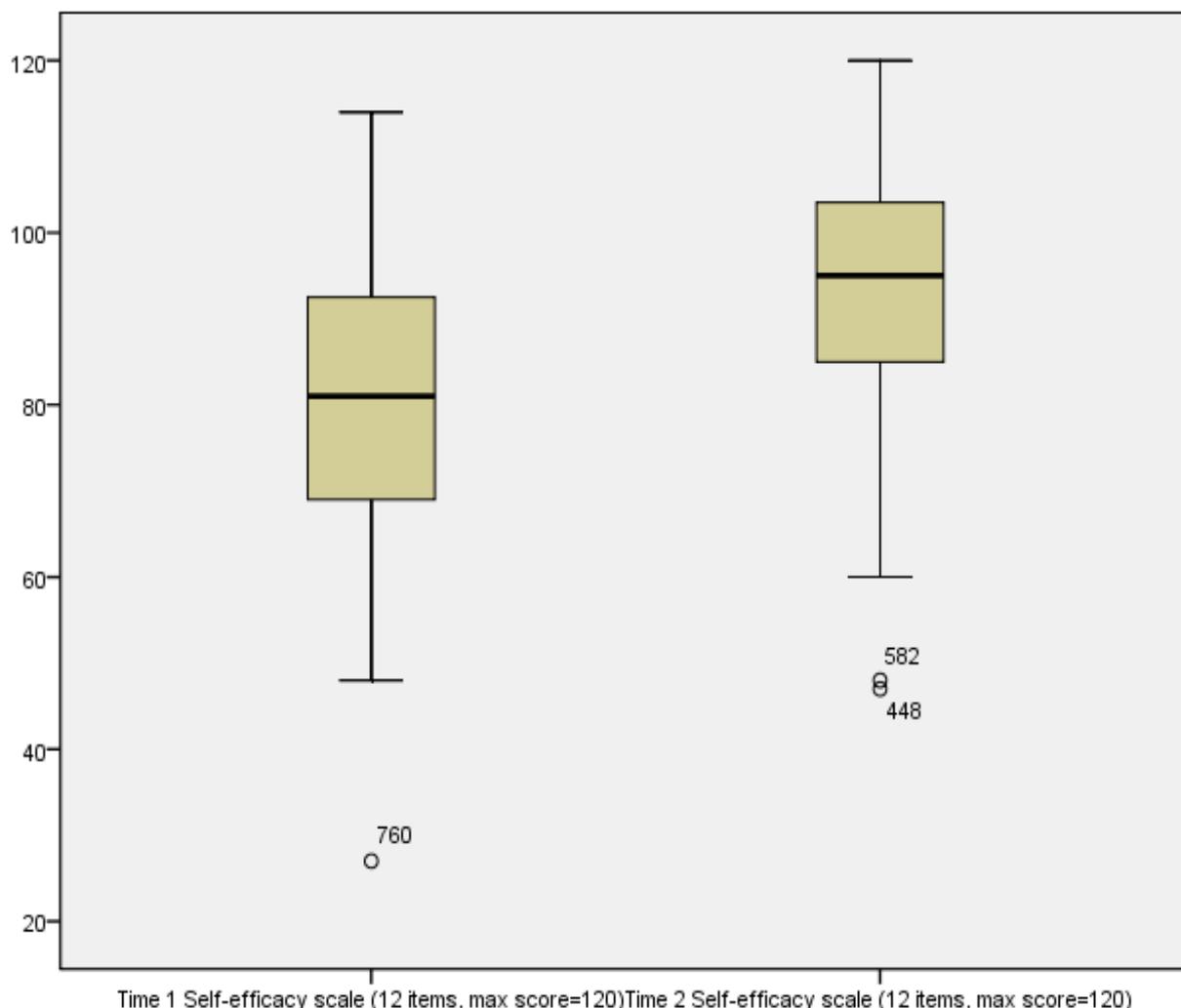
[17] The shaded area shows the 50 per cent of ratings around the median (black line). The "whiskers" indicate the top and bottom 25 per cent. The numbers are individual "outliers".

There were no statistically significant differences between NQSWs' mean self-efficacy ratings at T2 in relation to age, gender, level of degree, previous experience, and the type of authority in which they were employed (Table 3.2). The only statistically significant difference was that, while ratings for white and BME NQSWs were very similar at baseline, white NQSWS were marginally more confident than black and minority ethnic NQSWs at T2. However, it should be noted that there were only 12 BME social workers for whom T1 and T2 data could be matched. Consequently this finding needs replication.

TABLE 3.2: MEAN TOTAL SELF-EFFICACY RATINGS AT TIME 1 AND TIME 2, BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES (N= 140 NQSWs PROVIDING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND TIME 1 OR TIME 2 SCORE)

		N	Time 1 Mean	Time 2 Mean
Age group	21-30	68	79.8	89.7
	31-40	40	82.3	94.3
	41+	32	81.7	95.8
Gender	Male	20	81.4	86.5
	Female	120	80.9	93.5
Ethnic group	White	128	81.5	92.8*
	Black/Minority Ethnic	12	74.5	89.2
Level of social work degree	Undergraduate	96	82.5	94.0
	Postgraduate	44	77.6	89.1
Qualified outside UK	Yes	5	81.4	91.7
	No	135	80.9	92.5
Experience	< 6 months pre-degree practice experience	10	78.9	88.3
	Pre-degree practice experience 6+ months	25	81.8	89.2
	1 practice placement while on degree course	26	79.2	95.0
	2+ practice placements while on degree course	47	77.5	92.7
	Part-time paid work in children's SW while on degree course	21	91.0	98.9
	Post-degree temp/agency children's SW post	10	79.2	81.7
First substantive SW post since qualifying	Yes	133	80.8	92.2
	No	7	82.9	99.2
Employment status	Full time	128	80.7	92.5
	Part time	12	84.0	92.6

* One-way ANOVA, p<.001

3.2.2. Changes in self-efficacy for individual outcome statements

There were highly statistically significant increases (p<.001) between baseline and 12 months for all the NQSW outcome statements. This can be seen in Figure 3.2 which compares the proportions of "high" (7 to 10), "medium" (4 to 6) and "low" (1 to 3) ratings.

In particular, there were substantial increases in the proportions reporting high self confidence for dealing with referrals, assessment, communication skills with children and

young people, creating and maintaining relationships with children and families, multi-agency working and professional accountability. There were also large increases in the proportions having high self-confidence in planning and review, although around half reported only medium levels of self-confidence in relation to these outcome statements.

FIGURE 3.2: NQSW OUTCOME STATEMENT RATINGS AT TIME 1 AND TIME 2 (N= 140 NQSWS PROVIDING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND TIME 1 OR TIME 2 SCORE)
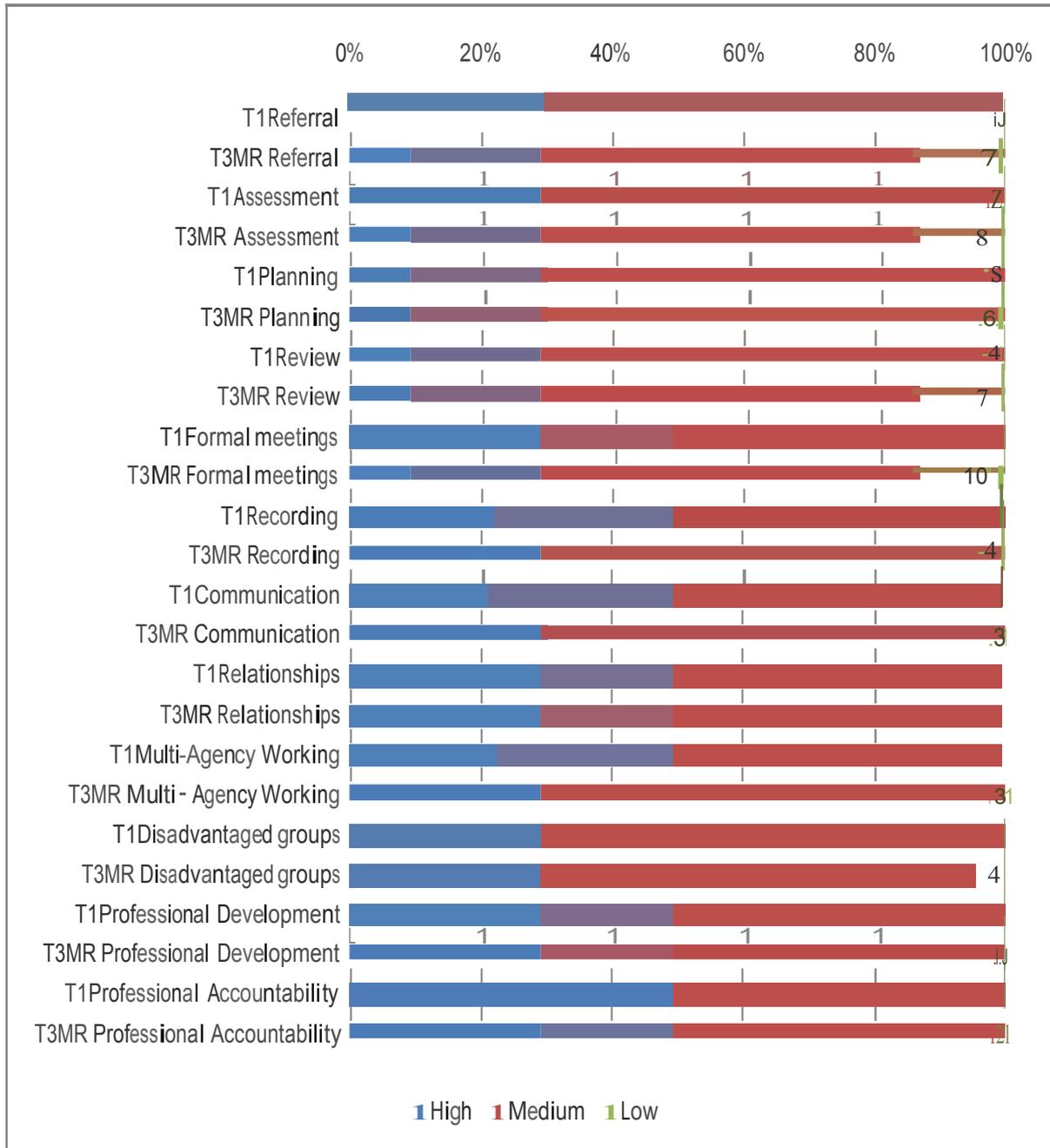
3.3. Changes in individual scores

The analysis presented above is based on change in the average ratings over the course of the programme. However, it disguises what happened to individual NQSWs. What proportions increased and decreased their self-efficacy and what proportion stayed the same? Findings in relation to the outcome statements are shown in Figure 3.3.

FIGURE 3.3: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 SELF-EFFICACY RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWS
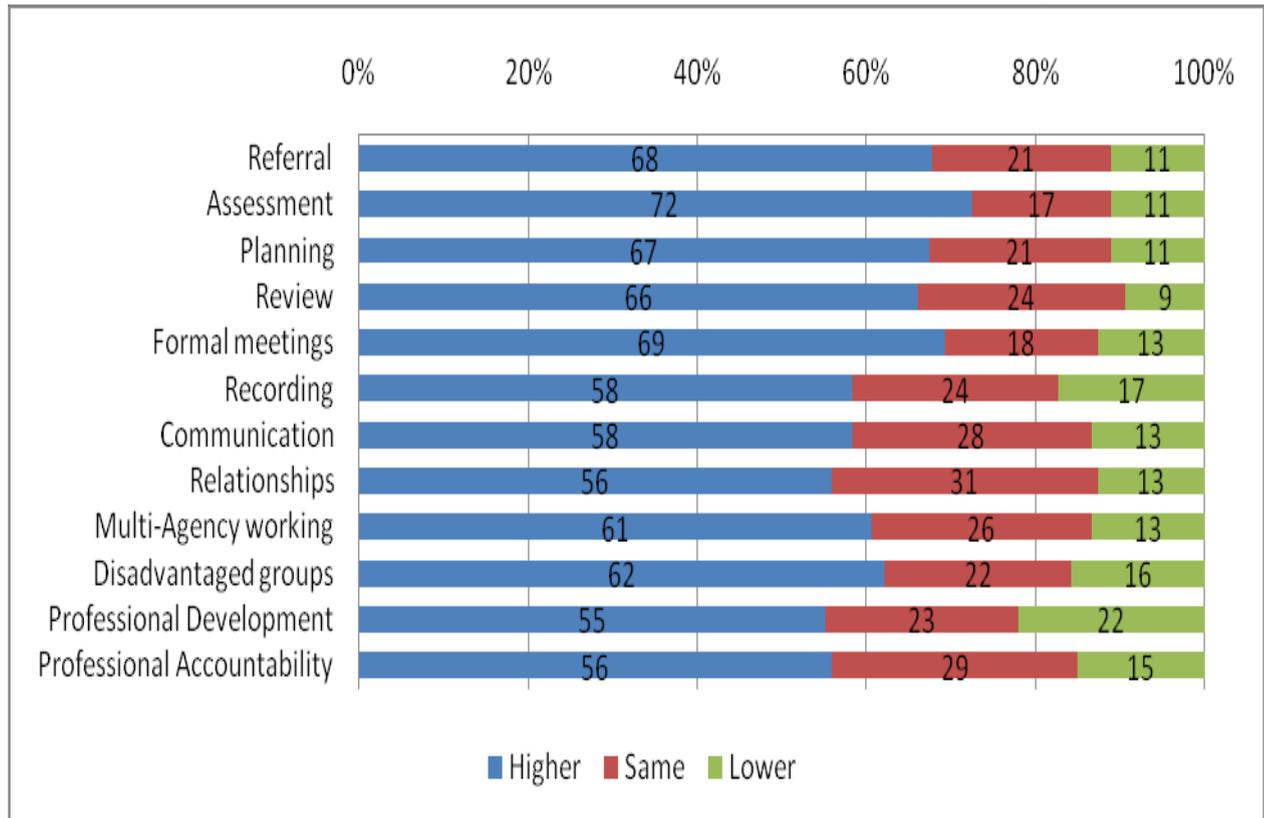
The chart shows that a high proportion of NQSWs (between 55 per cent and 72 per cent) increased their self-efficacy ratings for the various outcome statements. For some, the ratings remained the same, generally, because their baseline ratings had already been quite high. However, between nine and seventeen per cent indicated an apparent decrease in self-efficacy in relation to outcome statements relating directly to practice. Twenty-two per cent gave lower self-efficacy ratings for 'taking responsibility for professional development' at T2. This may reflect increased difficulties experienced or anticipated by these NQSWs in securing further training and development opportunities. However, only three NQSW (2.3 per cent) gave low ratings at T2 for this outcome statement (Figure 3.2).

3.3.1. Self-efficacy: what predicts outcomes at T2?

In order to understand whether self-efficacy at the end of the programme was associated with the age, gender, level of qualification, experience or type of employing organisation in which the NQSWS were employed, a multivariate regression analysis was carried out. This analysis takes into account the influence of all other variables and allows us to understand the effects of, for example, age on self-efficacy, controlling statistically for gender and the type of authority in which the NQSW is working.

Analysis of the baseline data had found that high self-efficacy ratings were statistically predicted by being in the older rather than younger age groups, working part time rather than full time, and having high role clarity and high role conflict. In other words, older NQSWs were more self-confident than younger NQSWs, taking into account differences in gender, level of qualification etc. Similarly, part-time workers were more self-confident than full-time workers, even taking into account that they might be older and have more previous experience in children's social care. The clearer NQSWs were about their roles, the higher their self-efficacy. The finding of an association between role conflict and self-efficacy is surprising. A possible explanation is that the more self-confident NQSWs were, the more likely they were to be aware of and critical of, the contradictions they experienced in their work between what they believed needed to be done and what could be done.

The T2 analysis was based on 227 NQSWs. This found that high role clarity and role conflict remained statistically significant predictors of self-efficacy. The strongest predictor, as at baseline, was role clarity. Older NQSWs continued to have higher rating. In addition, at T2, higher levels of satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of the job (nature of the tasks and your own accomplishments) were associated with high self efficacy. Finally, female NQSWs rated themselves significantly more confident than men, with all other variables being controlled. These results are presented in Table 3.3. The statistical model accounts for 47 per cent of the variance; in other words, nearly half the differences between NQSWs in the sample could be associated with a combinatory of the factors identified above. Numerous other factors played a much less significant part: for example, the type of local authority or region in which they were employed and the level of qualification did not make much difference to NQSWs' self-efficacy ratings. Similarly, satisfaction with pay and conditions (extrinsic job satisfaction) did not have a significant influence.

TABLE 3.3: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF SELF-EFFICACY AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION)

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
(Constant)	15.077	12.230		1.233	.219	-9.037	39.190
Age 31- 40	4.667	1.889	.138	2.471	.014	.942	8.392
Female	6.636	2.371	.147	2.799	.006	1.962	11.311
Role clarity	1.477	.164	.628	8.994	<.001	1.153	1.801
Role conflict	.223	.101	.139	2.216	.028	.025	.422
Intrinsic job satisfaction	.744	.319	.182	2.328	.021	.114	1.373

Adjusted R square 0.47

3.3.2. Comparison of Supervisors' versus NQSWs' ratings

Of course, these self-efficacy ratings are made by the NQSWs themselves. Although it has been argued that self-efficacy is a good predictor of actual performance, these are still subjective judgements. Consequently, the research design involved asking supervisors to make their own confidential ratings of the NQSWs they were supervising. Supervisors were reluctant to engage in this task[18] and, consequently, it was very difficult to match their efficacy ratings with the NQSWs' self-efficacy ratings. The data in Tables 3.4 and Table 3.5 are, therefore, mean ratings for all responses received. What is apparent is that the supervisors' ratings of efficacy at the time of the three month review and T2 are remarkably similar to the NQSWs' self-efficacy ratings at the same time points. If anything, this evidence suggests that NQSWs tend to *underestimate* their efficacy, particularly when the follow-up ratings at T2 are compared.

TABLE 3.4: SUPERVISOR'S EFFICACY RATINGS OF NQSWS VERSUS NQSW'S SELF-EFFICACY RATINGS AT T3MR (INDEPENDENT SAMPLES)

	Supervisors' ratings of NQSWs Time 3MR		NQSWs' self-efficacy rating Time 3MR	
	N= 98		N= 466	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Referral	7.1	1.77	7.0	1.40
Assessment	7.0	1.58	7.0	1.46
Planning	7.0	1.56	6.7	1.42
Review	6.9	1.53	6.8	1.41
Formal meetings	7.3	1.53	7.2	1.50
Recording	7.2	1.64	7.4	1.45
Communication	7.3	1.56	7.4	1.40
Relationships	7.5	1.48	7.5	1.34
Multi-Employer Working	7.3	1.47	7.3	1.47
Disadvantaged groups	7.2	1.49	7.0	1.37
Professional Development	7.2	1.48	7.3	1.54
Professional Accountability	7.7	1.56	7.8	1.47
TOTAL	**86.4**		**86.3**	

---

[18] The procedure approved by the Research Ethics Committee was designed to ensure anonymity while enabling the researchers to match responses from supervisors and NQSWs. This required the supervisors to ask the NQSWs for their personal identifier. Many said that this was inconvenient or cumbersome and others acknowledged that they found it 'embarrassing'.

TABLE 3.5: SUPERVISOR'S T2 EFFICACY RATINGS OF NQSWS VERSUS NQSWS' T2 OWN EFFICACY RATINGS

	Supervisors' ratings of NQSWs Time 2		NQSWs' self rating Time 2	
	N =55		N = 300	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Referral	7.9	1.55	7.8	1.57
Assessment	7.8	1.41	7.7	1.50
Planning	7.8	1.42	7.3	1.55
Review	7.8	1.27	7.4	1.50
Formal meetings	8.0	1.27	7.7	1.54
Recording	7.8	1.45	7.8	1.54
Communication	8.0	1.15	7.8	1.42
Relationships	8.2	1.20	8.0	1.36
Multi-Employer Working	8.0	1.32	7.8	1.43
Disadvantaged groups	7.9	1.25	7.5	1.44
Professional Development	7.9	1.32	7.6	1.58
Professional Accountability	8.1	1.33	8.1	1.44
TOTAL	**95.2**		**92.2**	

3.3.3. Comparison with "Contrast Group" at Time 2

The evaluation methodology envisaged recruiting a 'contrast' group of NQSWs working for employers which were not participating in the programme and comparing their outcomes over the same time period. Unfortunately, persuading other authorities to cooperate in this part of the study proved to be difficult and by the time an adequate number had agreed it was too late to take a baseline measure. Instead, NQSWs were sent an invitation to participate by a contact in their employing authority. Depending on when they had started employment, they completed the NQSW T2 questionnaire at the same time as the early and late starters on the programme (Table 3.6).

TABLE 3.6: NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (EARLY AND LATE STARTERS) (TIME 2 ONLY)

	NQSW Programme	Contrast group	Total
Early starter	178	28	206
Late starter	96	19	115
Total	274	47	321

The contrast group[19] (n = 47) was much smaller than the NQSW programme group but then the two samples were compared in terms of gender, age group and previous experience; there were no statistically significant differences between them, in other words, comparing the two samples was valid. Ratings of self-efficacy, role clarity, role conflict and job satisfaction and stress were compared using statistical tests which took into account the difference in sample sizes.

---

[19] Please see the methodological note on the contrast group in appendix two.

At T2, programme participants in general gave statistically significantly higher self-efficacy ratings for the self-efficacy outcome statements than members of the contrast group (Table 3.7).

TABLE 3.7: MEAN TOTAL SELF-EFFICACY RATINGS FOR PROGRAMME AND CONTRAST GROUP (INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST)

GROUP	N	MEAN	SD	t	SIG.
NQSW Programme	241	92.0	15.61	2.594	.01
Contrast group	47	85.3	14.75		

The box plots (Figure 3.4) indicate that while three-quarters of NQSW sample rated themselves 85 or above (ie "very confident"), only just over half the contrast group did so. This suggests added value for the programme, but a word of caution should be introduced. Those involved in the programme would inevitably be more familiar with both the outcome statements and the rating scale and this may account for some of the difference observed.
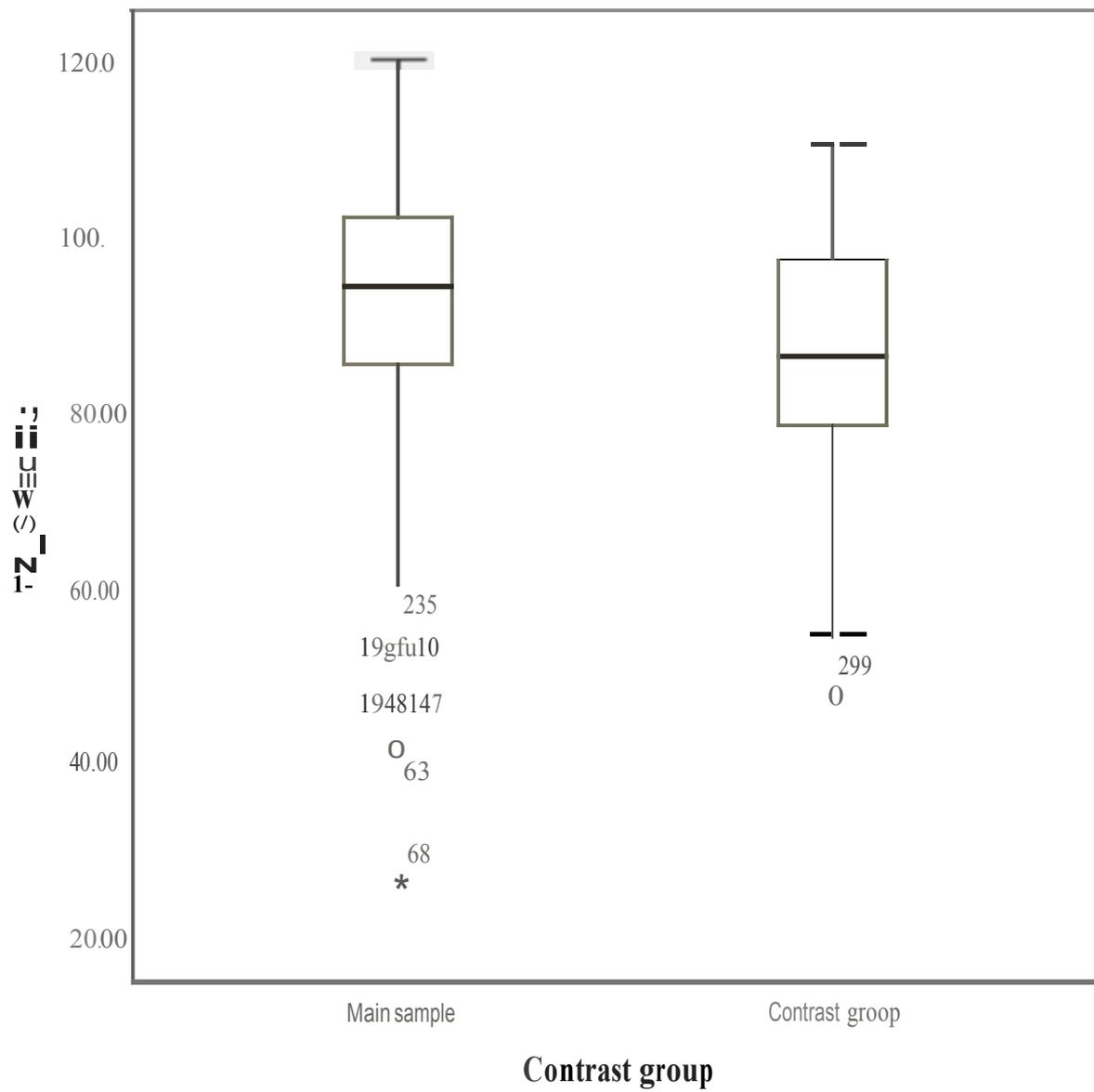
Contrast group

Table 3.8 shows that the main and contrast groups differed on their ratings of several items, particularly in terms of review, assessment, and referral confidence.

TABLE 3.8: COMPARISON OF T2 EFFICACY RATINGS OF MAIN SAMPLE VERSUS CONTRAST GROUP

|	NQSWPP sample		Contrast group	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
	N=274		N=47	
Referral	7.8	1.55	7.1	1.39
Assessment	7.6	1.49	6.9	1.64
Planning	7.2	1.56	6.7	1.51
Review	7.4	1.49	6.4	1.64
Formal meetings	7.7	1.56	7.3	1.43
Recording	7.8	1.54	7.3	1.75
Communication	7.8	1.41	7.3	1.46
Relationships	7.9	1.33	7.5	1.28
Multi-Employer Working	7.8	1.44	7.5	1.24
Disadvantaged groups	7.4	1.45	6.8	1.46
Professional Development	7.5	1.59	7.0	1.56
Professional Accountability	8.0	1.44	7.6	1.85
TOTAL	**92.0**	**15.61**	**85.3**	**14.74**

3.3.4. Role clarity

NQSWs who had not responded to the T1 survey were given the opportunity at the three month review to complete ratings of role clarity, role conflict, job satisfaction and stress. These two sets of ratings in the Baseline Report were combined and are referred to them henceforth as the baseline.

For personal role clarity, ratings were matched for 167 NQSWs at baseline and T2. There was a statistically significant increase in mean total score at T2 (Table 3.9). This equates to a 'medium effect' statistically and this conclusion is supported by the graphical evidence (Figure 3.5) which shows a modest difference in the distribution of the ratings.

TABLE 3.9: ROLE CLARITY BASELINE V. TIME 2 PAIRED SAMPLES *T*-TEST

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	Sd	Mean 2	Sd	Mean Diff.	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect size
Baseline v. T2	167	27.87	5.91	29.10	6.36	1.23	2.79	.006	0.20	Medium

FIGURE 3.5: PERSONAL ROLE CLARITY AT BASELINE VS TIME 2

TIME 1 & T3MR Role clarity scale (Items 1-6, max score=42)   TIME 2 Role clarity scale (Items 1-6, max score=42)
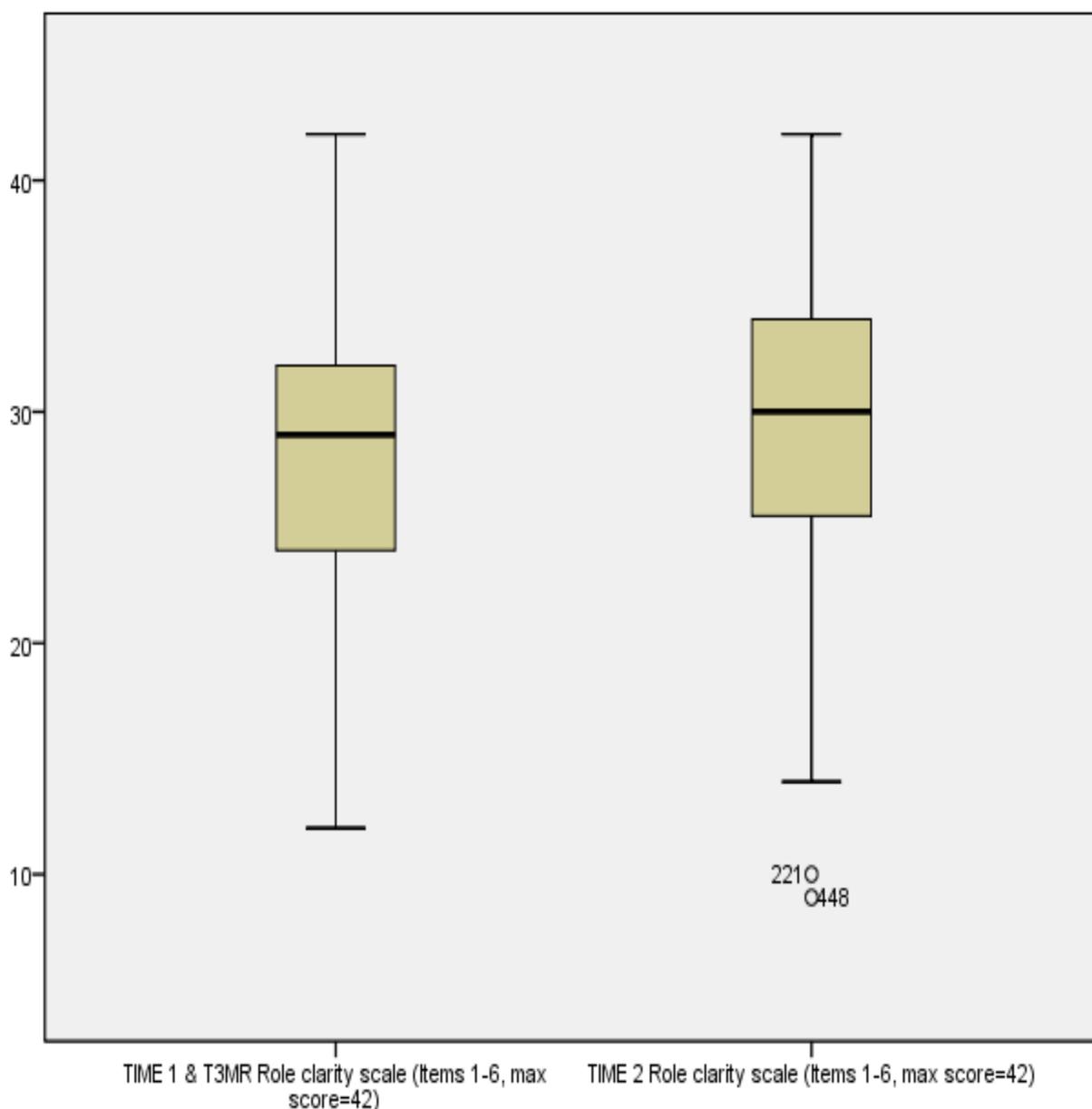
There were no statistically significant differences between groups over time. In other words, no differences between men or women, degree level, and type of authority with regard to changes in overall role clarity.

The ratings for role clarity made by members of the contrast group at T2 (Mean 30.4, SD 6.45) were not significantly different from the programme participants[20]. This indicates that although role clarity had improved for the NQSW programme participants over the course of the year, this could not be attributed to the programme alone.

When differences over time in the individual scale items were examined, it was apparent that the only statistically significant change was in agreement with the first statement "I am

---

[20] In a previous study, 62 experienced social workers in family support services reported a mean role clarity score of 30.3 (SD 5.4) (Carpenter et al., 2003 – see footnote 21).

certain about how much authority I have". At the end of the programme around seven out of ten NQSWs were clear about how much authority they had, their roles and responsibilities and exactly what was expected of them as well as considering that clear planned goals and objectives existed for their jobs. On the other hand, only just over half considered that they had divided their time properly. This is shown in Figure 3.6 below.

FIGURE 3.6: COMPARISON OF GROUPED ROLE CLARITY RATINGS AT BASELINE AND TIME 2
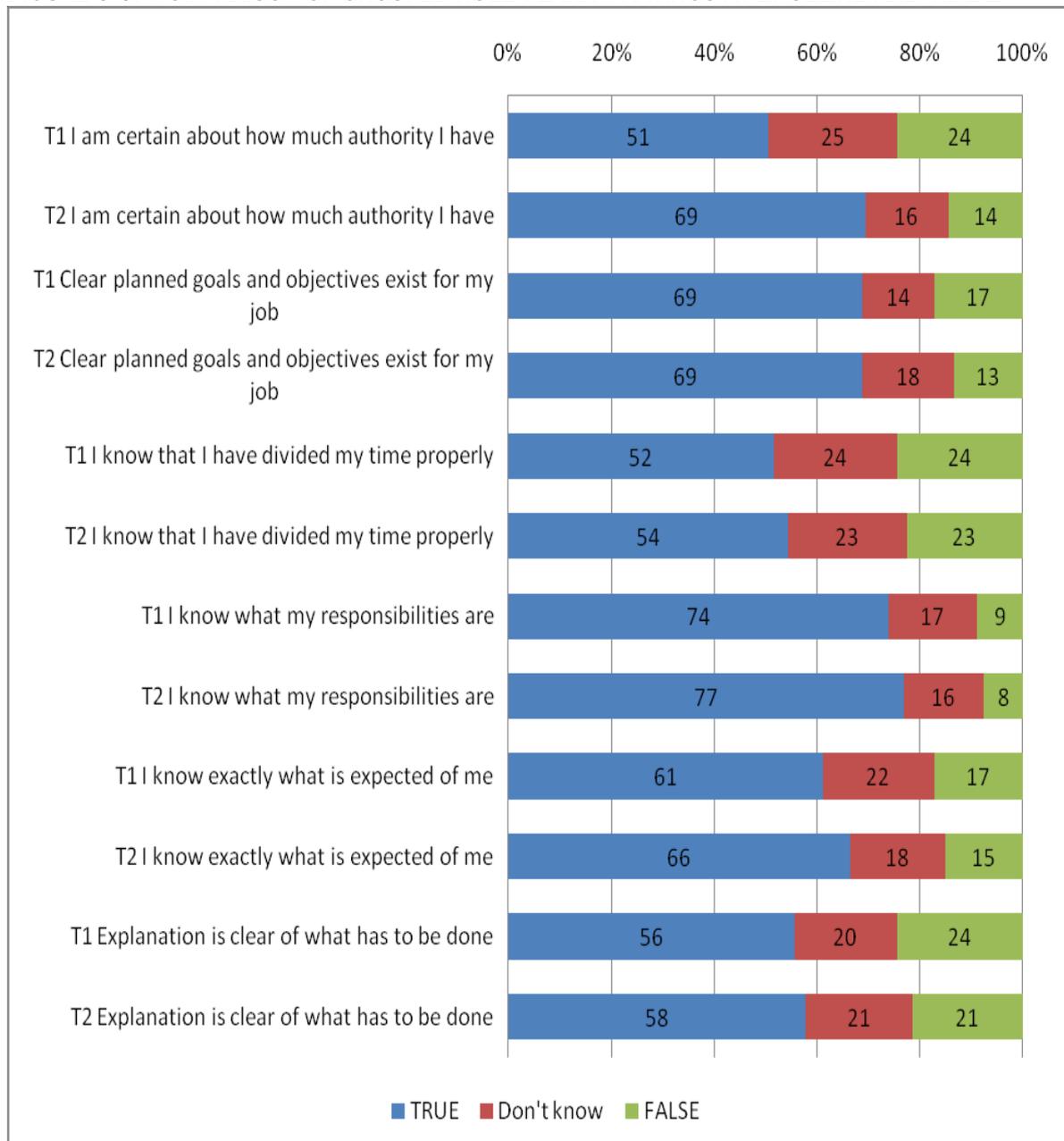
However, when the changes are examined at an individual level, it is apparent that while at least a third of NQSWs reported an increase in the dimensions of role clarity, between twenty and twenty-nine per cent indicated a decrease (Figure 3.7). This means that they were somewhat *less* clear about aspects of their job, not necessarily that they were *unclear*. The reasons for this might be that the nature of their job had changed in some way or that as they took on more complex cases they were less clear about what needed to be done.

FIGURE 3.7: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 ROLE CLARITY RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWS
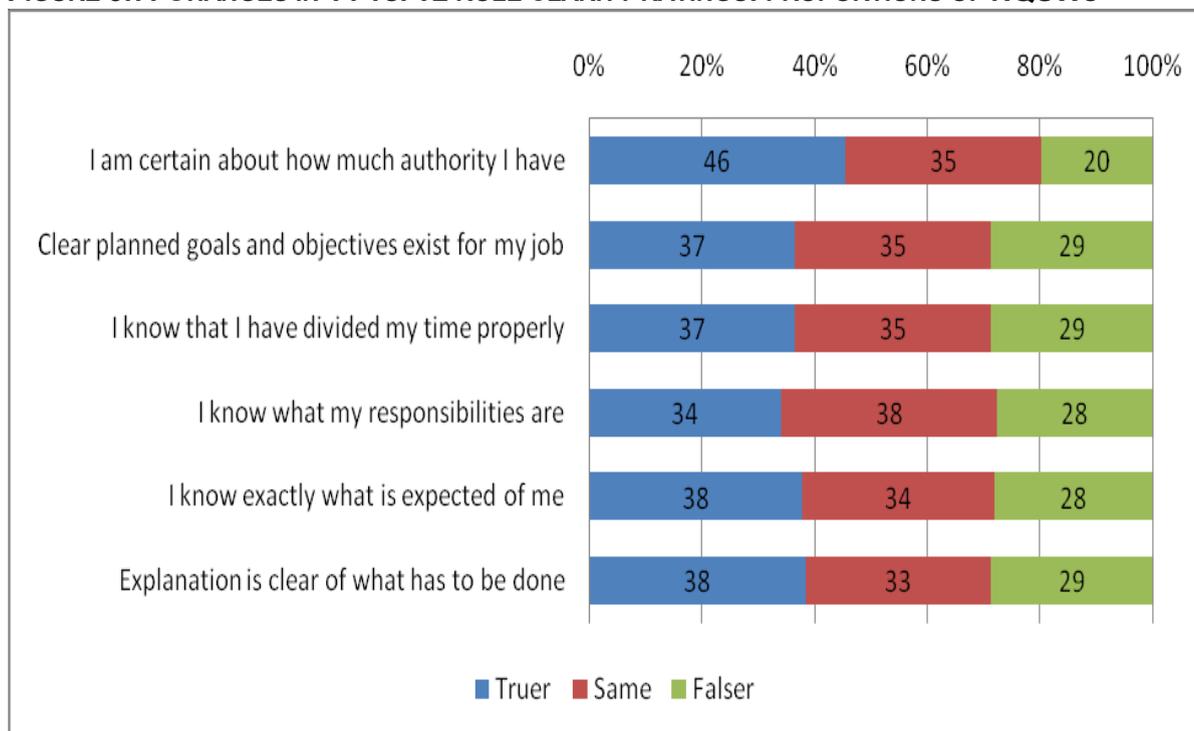

3.3.5. Role conflict

For the same matched NQSWs, there was a statistically significant increase in mean total scores for personal role conflict at T2 (Table 3.10). The effect size was somewhat larger than for role clarity but is still classified as medium.

TABLE 3.10: ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS: BASELINE V. TIME 2 PAIRED SAMPLES *T*-TEST

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	Sd	Mean 2	Sd	Mean Diff.	*T*	*p*	Cohen's *d*	Effect size
Baseline v. T2	167	26.08	10.14	29.54	9.64	3.46	5.35	<.001	0.35	Medium

There were statistically significant changes in four of the scale items (Figure 3.8). Thus NQSWs were more likely to report that they received an assignment without adequate resources to carry it out (up from 36 per cent to 43 per cent), that they had to work with two or more groups who operate quite differently (up from 36 per cent to 50 per cent) and that they had to do things that should be done differently (up from 28 per cent to 45 per cent).

**FIGURE 3.8: COMPARISON OF ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS AT BASELINE AND TIME 2**
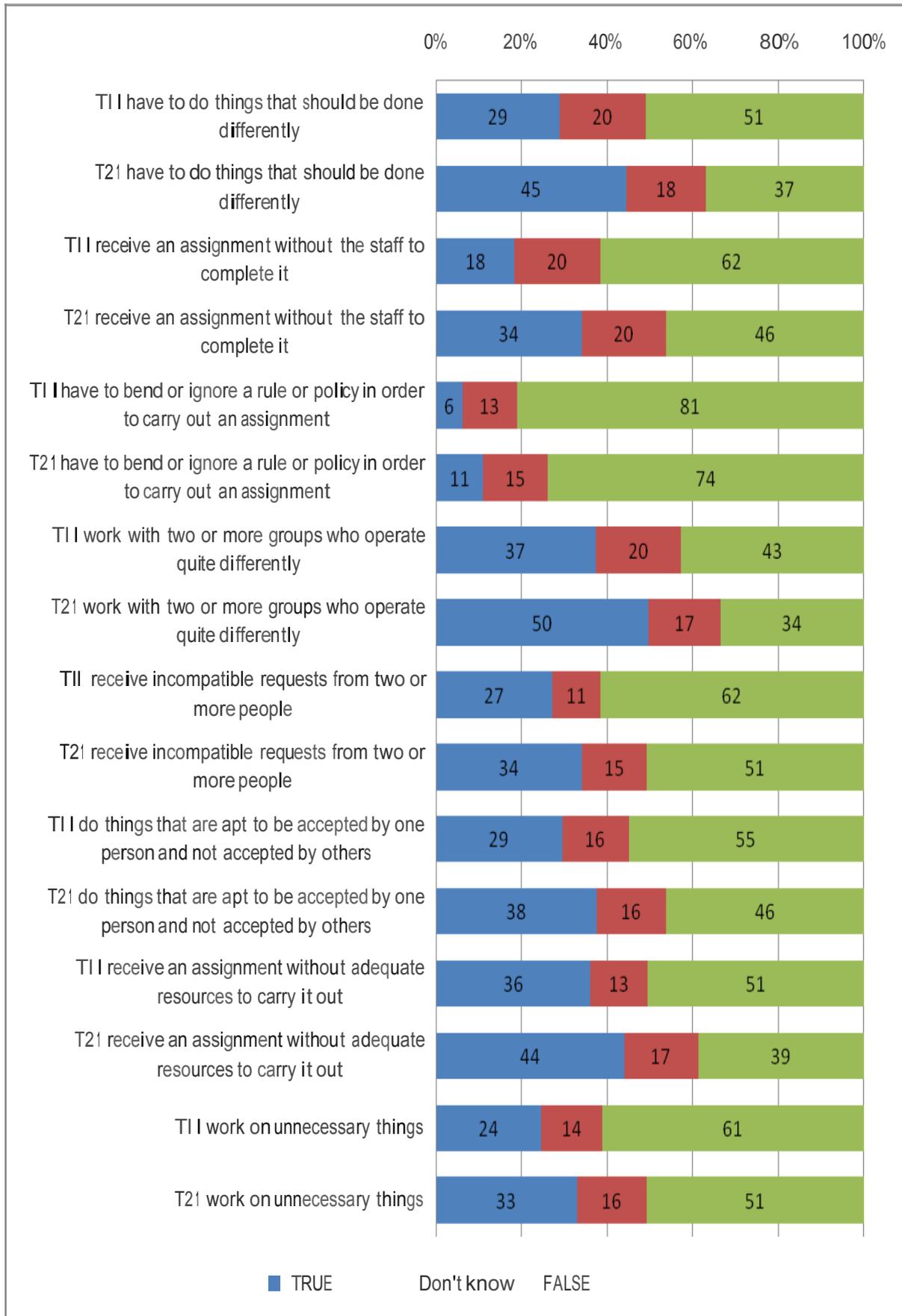
Comparing the blue (True) and green (False) bars in the figure, it can be seen that on three of the items at T2, a higher proportion agreed with the statements than disagreed. These concerned things which should be done differently, working with groups which operated differently and having to carry out an assignment without adequate resources.

The ratings of role conflict given by members of the contrast group (Mean 27.7, SD 10.34) were not significantly different from the NQSW programme participants at the end of the year. This suggests that participation in the NQSW programme did not increase role conflict. Mean total scores at T2 are a little lower than those found in a previous study of social workers (N=62) working in family support services where the mean score was 29.6 (SD 6.25)[21]

The individual change analysis (Figure 3.9) showed increased role conflict for between 40 percent and 52 percent of the participants in relation to the eight items. Bearing in mind the comparison with the (experienced) social workers in the family support study, it is possible that role conflict is experienced to some extent by many social workers; in other words, it may be part of the job and is experienced to a greater extent as social workers take on more complex work towards the end of their first year in employment.

FIGURE 3.9: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWS

---
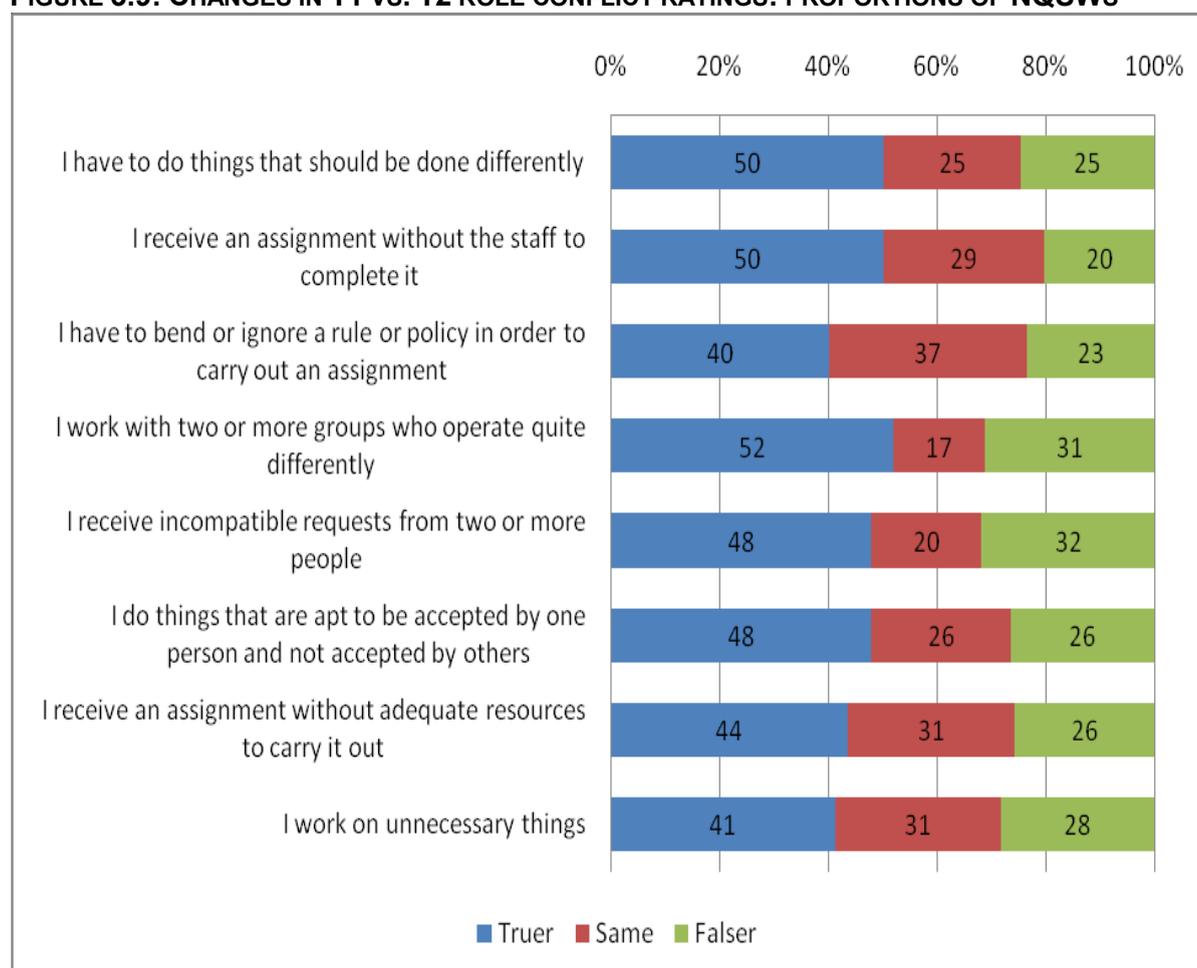
[21] Carpenter J. et al. (2003) *Outcomes and Costs of Family Support for Vulnerable Children*, Report to Dept. of Children, Schools and Families.

3.3.6. Intrinsic job satisfaction

Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to satisfaction with the nature of the job itself, the challenges involved and satisfactions with your own accomplishments. This remained high (Table 3.11). The large majority (80 per cent) were satisfied with these aspects of their job. There was no statistically significant difference between baseline and the end of the year in any of the ratings (Figure 3.10). The mean total ratings of intrinsic job satisfaction made by the contrast group were very similar (27.0 [SD 4.01] compared to 27.4 [SD 4.71] for the programme group). This difference was not statistically significant.

TABLE 3.11: INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION BASELINE V T2: PAIRED SAMPLES *T*-TEST

Paired samples	N	M 1	Sd	M 2	Sd	Mean Diff.	*T*	*p*	Cohen's *D*	Effect size
Baseline v. T2	166	27.67	3.02	27.57	3.39	-0.10	-0.44	.662	0.03	Negligible

FIGURE 3.10: INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT BASELINE AND TIME 2
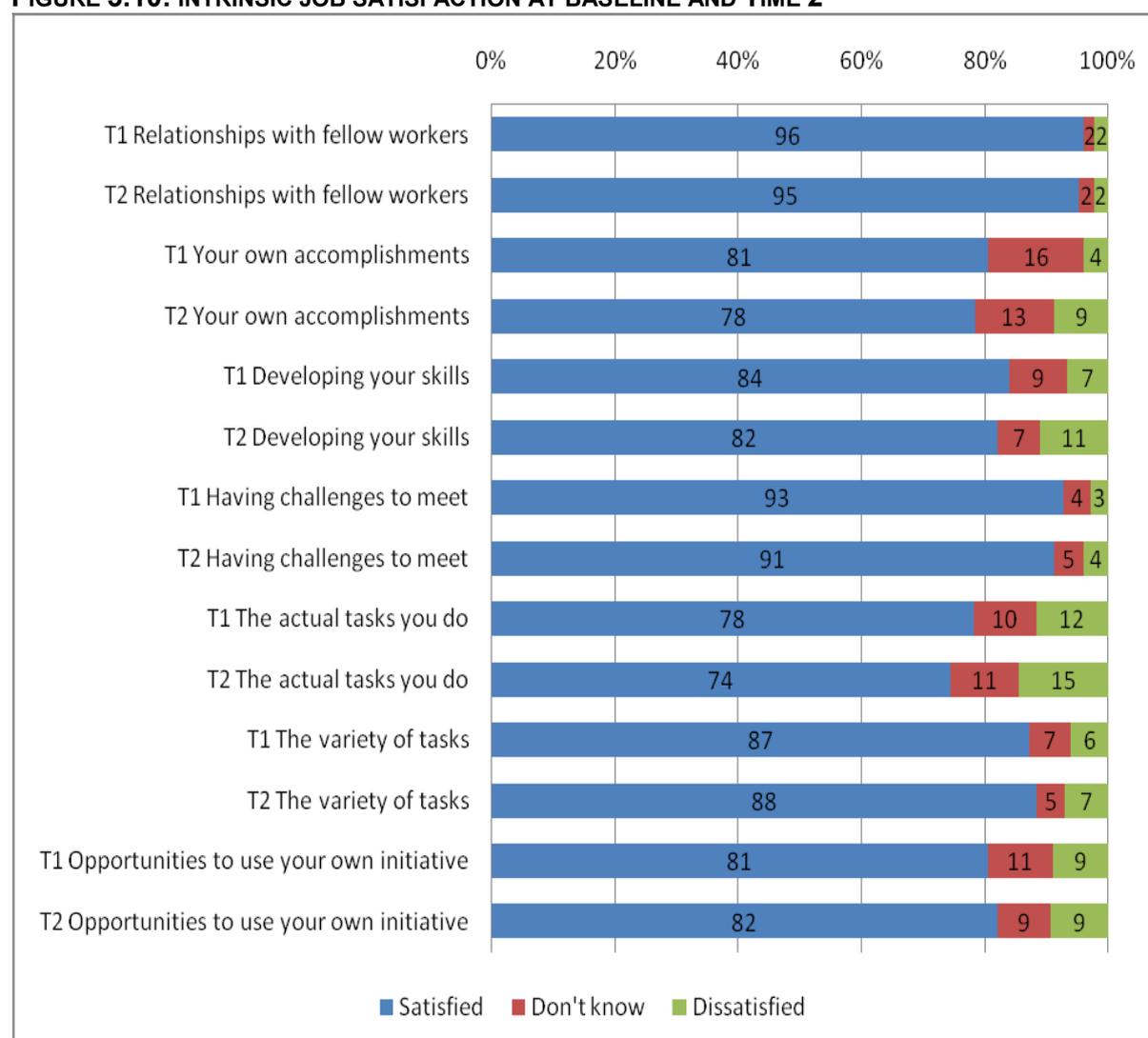
The proportions of NQSWs who increased and decreased their intrinsic job satisfaction are shown in Figure 3.11. The proportions who were more satisfied balanced the proportions who were less satisfied.

FIGURE 3.11: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWS
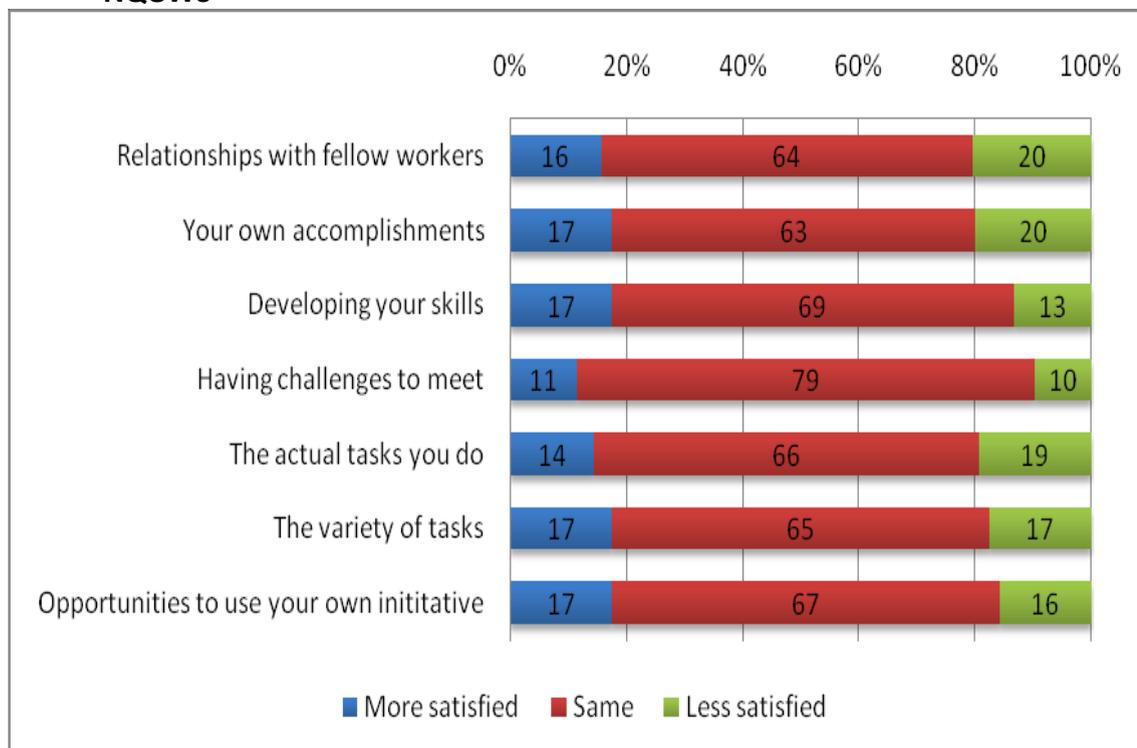
Levels of intrinsic job satisfaction at the end of the year were positively associated with higher self-efficacy ratings (this finding has already been noted above (Sec. 3.3.1). It was also associated with high role clarity and high levels of extrinsic job satisfaction (pay and conditions). However, intrinsic job satisfaction was lower the more dissatisfied NQSWs were with the lack of public respect for social work and the greater the levels of stress they were experiencing (Table 3.12). This is a strong statistical model, accounting for 58 per cent of the variance, which indicates that most aspects of intrinsic job satisfaction could be associated with these factors.

TABLE 3.12: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION)

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
(Constant)	9.892	2.570		3.850	<.001	4.825	14.958
Public respect for social work	-.473	.166	-.138	-2.848	.005	-.800	-.145
Self-efficacy	.035	.015	.143	2.328	.021	.005	.065
Role clarity	.143	.041	.248	3.490	.001	.062	.223
Extrinsic Job satisfaction	.321	.039	.453	8.259	<.001	.244	.397
Stress (GHQ)	-.122	.054	-.127	-2.249	.026	-.230	-.015

Adjusted R square .58

3.3.7. Extrinsic job satisfaction

Extrinsic job satisfaction refers to satisfaction with pay and conditions, job security, hours of work, management and supervision and opportunities for advancement. NQSWs' ratings of extrinsic job satisfaction had decreased significantly at T2 compared to the baseline (Table 3.13). However, the proportion who were satisfied with their work in general was still 75 per cent. The majority were satisfied with most extrinsic aspects of their job. The highest ratings were for job security (over 85 per cent) but lowest for income (45 per cent). There were no statistically significant differences associated with the demographic variables.

TABLE 3.13: EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION EXTRINSIC BASELINE V T2 RATINGS: PAIRED SAMPLES _T_-TEST

Paired Samples	N	Mean 1	Sd	Mean 2	sd	Mean Diff.	_T_	_P_	Cohen's _D_	Effect size
Baseline v. T2	166	33.20	4.66	31.45	5.27	-1.75	-5.08	<0.001	0.35	Medium

The mean total ratings of extrinsic job satisfaction made by members of the contrast group were very similar (31.7 [SD 5.68] compared to 31.5 [SD 5.50] for the programme group). This difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that the programme did not have the effect of increasing job satisfaction among NQSWs.

Considering the individual items, there were statistically significant decreases in satisfaction with various aspects, although the proportions overall reporting that they were "satisfied" remained high. These findings are presented in Figure 3.12. Satisfaction decreased for the number of hours worked (down from 75 per cent to 54 per cent), flexibility of hours (down from 74 per cent to 65 per cent) opportunities for advancement (down from 68 per cent to 55 per cent) and management and supervision (down from 75 per cent to 65 per cent). The proportion of NQSWs dissatisfied with their income was slightly higher than the proportion satisfied (48 per cent versus 46 per cent).

**FIGURE 3.12: EXTRINSIC JOB SA11SFACTION RATINGS AT BASELINE AND TIME 2**
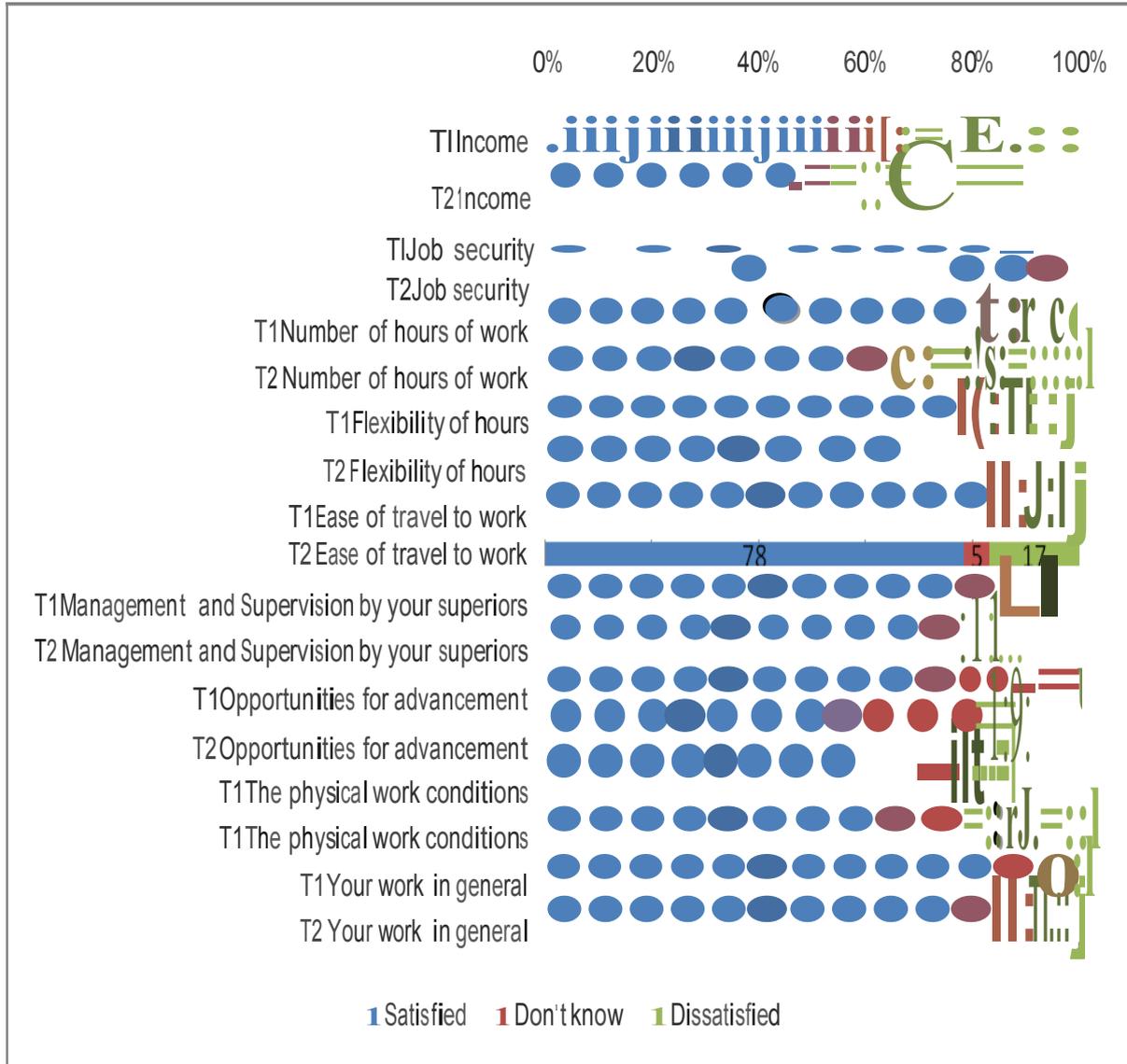
FIGURE 3.13: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs
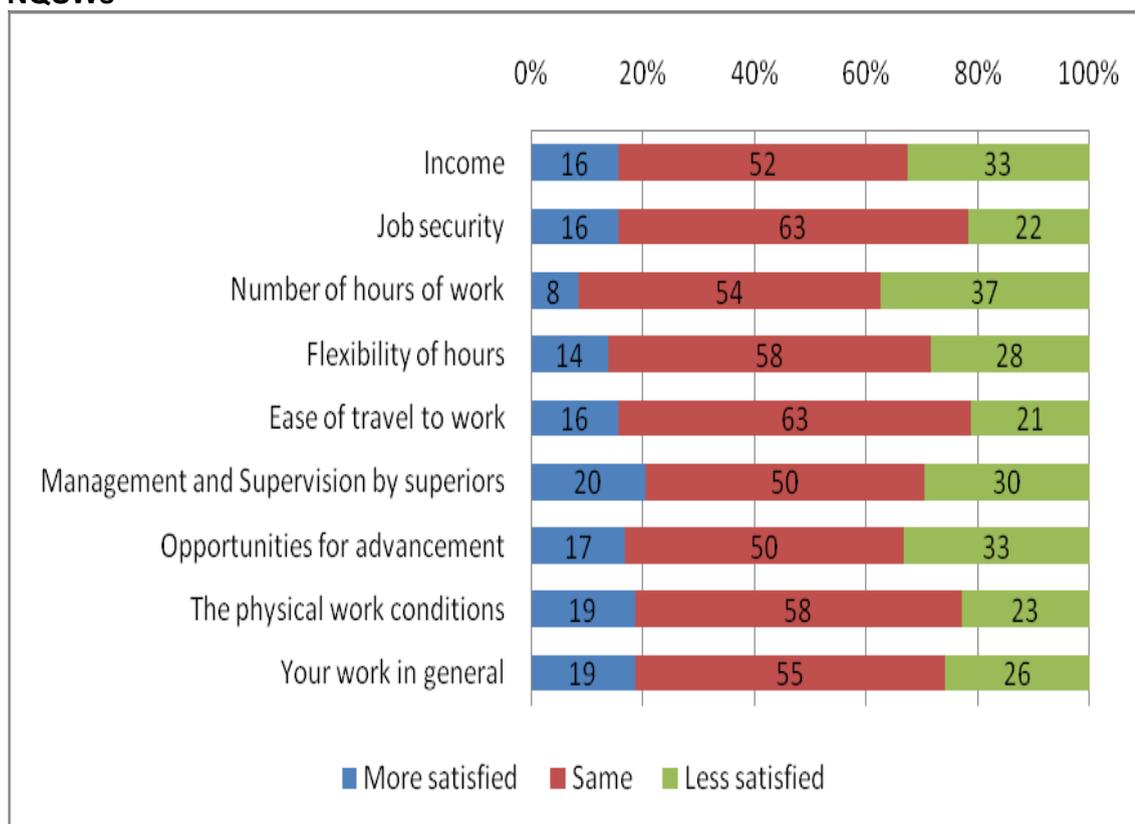
For at least half the NQSWs there had been no change in the various aspects of extrinsic job satisfaction (Figure 3.13). But it is noticeable that a third or more had become less satisfied with their income, number of hours of work and opportunities for advancement.

As before, regression analyses were used to examine which variables were associated statistically with extrinsic job satisfaction. At baseline an analysis based on 439 NQSWs found that lower job satisfaction was associated with being aged 41+, being a member of a BME group and experiencing higher levels of role conflict. Higher extrinsic job satisfaction was associated with high role clarity, high intrinsic job satisfaction and higher ratings for public respect for social work.

At T2, an analysis based on 227 NQSWs showed that the strongest association with high extrinsic job satisfaction was high intrinsic job satisfaction and with a feeling of positive public respect for social work. Lower extrinsic job satisfaction was associated with role conflict and being in the 41+ age group (Table 3.14). This is another strong model, accounting for nearly half (49 per cent) of the variance.

TABLE 3.14: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION)

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
(Constant)	14.191	4.044		3.509	.001	6.218	22.164
Age > 41	-1.390	.703	-.114	-1.977	.049	-2.775	-.004
Public respect for social work	.601	.261	.124	2.301	.022	.086	1.117
Role conflict	-.071	.034	-.129	-2.087	.038	-.139	-.004
Intrinsic job satisfaction	.785	.095	.555	8.259	.000	.597	.972

Adjusted R square .488

3.3.8. Stress

Stress was measured by means of the General Health Questionnaire (12 item version)[22]. Responses can be analysed to give a mean rating which may be used to compare groups and to investigate the statistical predictors of stress. They may also be analysed to show the proportions of NQSWs who, according to scale norms, are above the clinical threshold for stress, in other words, where it would be appropriate to seek a professional consultation. This threshold is considered to be a score of four or more.

Overall, a third of the NQSWs scored above the threshold for stress at baseline. This proportion, although higher than for the general population (around 20 per cent), is lower than that found in previous surveys of social workers. However, at T2 there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of NQSWs above the threshold, rising to 43 per cent (Table 3.15). This figure is high but is comparable to previous surveys of children's social workers. For example, Coffey et al., (2004) reported that 42 per cent of a sample of 209 children's social workers (response rate 33 per cent) scored above the threshold[23]. The same proportion (42 per cent) was reported by Collins et al., 2009) from a survey of 131 social work students (59 per cent response rate)[24].

Nineteen of the forty-seven members of the contrast group had scores above the threshold. The difference between the two groups in the proportions above the threshold was not statistically significant. This suggests that the increase in stress could not be attributed to participation in the programme. Further, there were no statistically significant differences in the proportion experiencing stress which were associated with age group, gender or ethnicity of the NQSWs.

---

[22] The GHQ is a standardised self-rating scale which is very widely used to measure stress in the general population and in research on occupations.

[23] Coffey, M., Dugdill, L. and Tattersall, A.J. (2004) Stress in social services: mental well-being, constraints and job satisfaction, *British Journal of Social Work, 34*(5): 735–46.

[24] Collins, S. et al., (2010) Social Work Students: stress, support and well-being, *British Journal of Social Work,* 40, 963-982.

TABLE 3.15: GENERAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Baseline						Time 2					
Below 4		4 or Above		Total		Below 4		4 or Above		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
119	66.9	59	33.1	178	100.0	104	57.1	78	42.9	182	100.0

The responses of 163 NQSWs at both time points were compared. This found that 28 (17 per cent) who had been below threshold for stress at baseline were above the threshold at T2; conversely 15 (nine per cent) who were above the threshold at baseline were no longer so at T2. (This difference is statistically significant (z = -1.982, p=.047). However, 120 (74 per cent) stayed the same. This indicates that for some NQSWs stress is transitory.

With what factors are these high levels of stress associated? At baseline, higher stress was associated with low role clarity, high role conflict, low intrinsic job satisfaction, low satisfaction with public respect for social work. It was also associated with this not being their first job in children's social care.

At T2, stress was associated only with low role clarity, high role conflict and low intrinsic job satisfaction (Table 3.16)[25].

TABLE 3.16: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF STRESS AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION)

|	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
(Constant)	14.312	2.728		5.246	.001	8.933	19.691
Role clarity	-.181	.052	-.303	-3.482	.001	-.284	-.079
Role conflict	.072	.028	.176	2.598	.010	.017	.126
Intrinsic Job satisfaction	-.198	.088	-.190	-2.247	.026	-.371	-.024

Adjusted R square 0.374

---

[25] These statistical models account for around 37 per cent of the variance, which is fairly typical in this sort of analysis. In other words, around 60% was associated with other factors which were not measured in this study. Most of these are likely to be personal, for example associated with life changes such as divorce, moving house and bereavement, long-standing issues such as caring for a sick or disabled relative, and life crises such as car accidents and financial problems.

4. Retention/intention to leave

NQSWs were asked how likely they were to be actively looking for another job in the coming year. At baseline, 628 NQSWs responded to this question. Overall, 59 (9 per cent) thought this "very likely" and a further 142 (23 per cent) considered it "fairly likely". In contrast, 21 per cent thought it "not at all likely". Of those "likely" or "very likely" to be looking for another job, over three-quarters (77 per cent) expected this to be in social work and 23 per cent indicated that it might be outside social work; in other words, 7.5 per cent of respondents. There were no statistically significant differences in intention to leave according to the type of authority (unitary, county council, metropolitan) or region in which the NQSWs were working.

It was possible to compare intention to leave on the matched sample of NQSWs completing surveys at both time points. As is shown in Figure 4.1, there was an increase in the proportion of NQSWs who stated that it was very likely that they would be leaving their present position. At baseline a little less than one in ten thought it very likely and this increased to one in six at T2. Of those fairly likely or very likely to be looking for another job, over three-quarters at both time points expected this to be in social work. There were no statistically significant differences according to the type of authority or region in which the NQSWs were working.

FIGURE 4.1: LIKELINESS TO LOOK FOR A NEW JOB (PERCENTAGES)
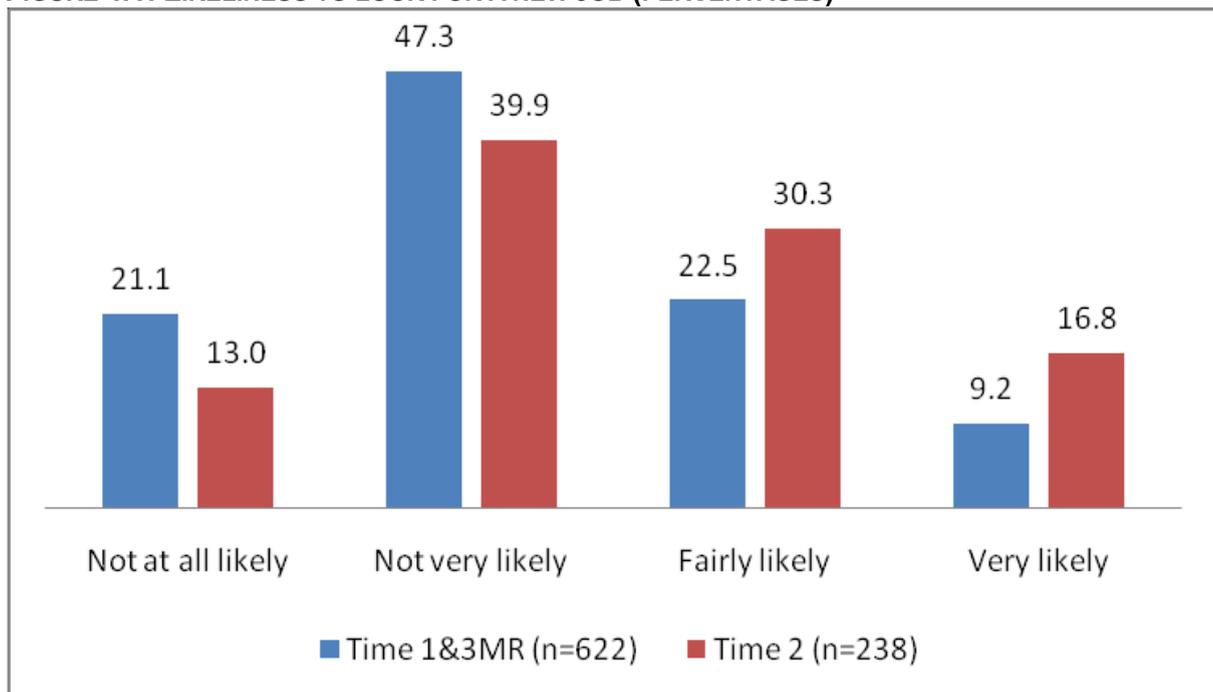
NQSWs in the contrast group[26] were asked the same question at T2. Ten of the forty-seven said that they were "very likely" to leave and a further eleven "fairly likely" to leave. The difference in the proportions in the contrast group and the programme group saying that they were likely or very likely to leave was not statistically significant.

---

[26] Please see the methodological note on the contrast group in appendix two.

4.1. How does this compare with intention to leave and turnover in children's social care services generally?

Research in Wales (Evans and Huxley, 2008)[27] involving over 900 social workers (45 per cent of those in post) suggested that 10 per cent were "very likely" and 17 per cent "fairly likely" to leave in the next six months. (Note the shorter timescale.) Twenty-five per cent said that they were actively seeking alternative employment or already had a job offer. The analysis indicated that intention to leave was associated with job dissatisfaction and low pay. Employers' data showed that turnover rates at around 15 per cent were lower than expressed intention to leave.

4.2. How does this compare to other newly qualified professionals?

Unfortunately, because studies have been conducted in different ways, it is difficult to make comparisons with newly qualified workers in other professions. A 2007 study of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) funded by the then DCSF found in a survey that four per cent did not expect to be teaching in four years and a further five per cent didn't know. However, 15/73 (20.5 per cent) NQTs interviewed in a series of case studies indicated that they would probably leave the profession.

Internationally, the situation is worse for nurses than for social workers in the current study. One in seven (14 per cent) of newly qualified nurses and midwives in the UK apparently chose not to enter their profession at all. There are no reports in UK specifically about newly qualified nurses' retention. In Canada, 13 per cent of young, newly qualified nurses (who received their professional qualifications during 2004) intended to leave the profession. A multinational European study reported that in 2002, almost 16 per cent of European nurses frequently considered leaving the nursing profession. When broken down by country, 32 per cent in the UK, 21 per cent in Italy and 14 per cent in Finland often considered leaving, while in the Netherlands and Belgium the figure was a little under ten per cent.

4.3. What predicts intention to leave?

A statistical analysis using logistic regression was carried out with the baseline data to identify the statistical predictors of 'intention to leave'. This is reported in the Baseline report. Women NQSWs were 42 per cent less likely than men and postgraduates were 27 per cent less likely than undergraduates to state that they are likely to be looking for a new job in a year. Compared with those with less than six months pre-degree practice experience, all were between 62 and 70 per cent less likely to be actively seeking a new job in a year. In other words, those with more than a minimum level of experience are more likely to remain in their posts.

Job satisfaction was, not surprisingly, a strong predictor of whether or not NQSWs will be actively seeking a new job in the next year. NQSWs with job satisfaction scores above the mean were half as likely as those reporting scores below the mean to report that they would be actively seeking a new job in a year. Thus, the more satisfied the NQSWs are with pay, working conditions and so on, the more likely they are to stay in their posts.

Finally, NQSWs scoring above the threshold for stress (GHQ-12) are more than twice as likely as those below the threshold to say that they are going to seek a new job. Simply put, higher stress is a strong statistical predictor that NQSWs will be thinking about leaving their post.

---

[27] Evans, S and Huxley, P. (2008) Factors associated with recruitment and retention of social workers in Wales: employer and employee perspectives. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 17, 254-266.

All agencies participating in the first year of the programme were sent a request via the programme coordinators for the number of NQSWs (full- and part-time) hired and who left during the year. A total of 52 sites responded to date and the total figures are present in Figure 4.2. Of the 765 full-time NQSWs hired in these 52 sites, 127 left during the year (16.6 per cent), whereas the percentage of part-time NQSWs leaving during the year was somewhat lower at 5.8 per cent. The overall rate (15.9 per cent) is very similar to that reported in the Wales study (section 4.1 above). This suggests that NQSWs were no more likely to leave their posts than social workers in general. Similarly to the findings from Wales, the actual rate of leaving over the course of the year was less than that suggested by the NQSWs' responses to the question about intention to leave in the baseline survey.

Finally, participating sites were also asked to provide their overall vacancy rates for NQSWs, which was estimated to be approximately 13 per cent.

FIGURE 4.2: NUMBER OF NQSWS HIRED/LEFT DURING THE YEAR (N = 52 LOCAL AUTHORITIES)

5. Conclusion

Launching the NQSW programme in 2008 with 89 employers, over one thousand NQSWs and hundreds of supervisors was a huge undertaking. As might have been anticipated, there were a number of problems in the implementation of the programme. At a local level, these were associated mainly with the lack of interest and support from managers and supervisors in some of the authorities. There were also significant difficulties in many organisations in ensuring that NQSWs had sufficient workload relief and time to undertake the programme. In addition, some NQSWs were reluctant to engage with at least some aspects of the programme, such as the portfolio. Nevertheless, there was evidence that the barriers had reduced over the course of the year.

The majority of NQSWs (58 per cent) indicated that they were generally satisfied, but very many (42 per cent) were dissatisfied. Overall, satisfaction with the support they were receiving was closely related to the extent to which they were receiving their entitlement to reflective supervision to develop their practice in accordance with the NQSW outcome statements. NQSWs whose expectations were not being met were understandably dissatisfied. They were also more likely to complain about the poor organisation and delivery of the programme locally.

Despite the many challenges, there was evidence that the programme objectives were being achieved. Thus:

Helping NQSWs improve their skills, competence and confidence as children's social workers in a systematic manner during their first year of practice.

- Overall, NQSWs' self-efficacy had improved significantly in the key areas of children's social work practice identified in the outcome statements; at the end of the year, their ratings were higher than those for social workers in the contrast group[28] of local authorities which did not participate in the programme. Supervisors gave very similar ratings of the NQSWs' efficacy.

- Role clarity had also improved, significantly, although this may be attributed to general professional development through experience and support in the job because the contrast group showed similar high ratings at the end of the year.

Enabling employers to provide focused supervision, support and guidance.

- Employers were being supported to provide reflective supervision through the programme and the training for supervisors, and over half the NQSWs had been receiving supervision in excess of the requirements of the programme during the first year. Regular, structured reflective supervision was the feature of the programme most highly appreciated by the NQSWs.

Contributing towards NQSWs' post-registration training and learning.

- CWDC funds were being used to pay for training courses and learning with support from programme coordinators and, in some cases, independent reflective supervisors.

---

[28] Please see the methodological note on the contrast group in appendix two.

Improving job satisfaction and promoting retention within the children's social worker workforce.

- For over three-quarters of NQSWs, job satisfaction had started high, and had remained so over the course of the year. There was no evidence that participation in the programme had increased job satisfaction. Overall levels of satisfaction with pay and working conditions had decreased over the course of the year. These aspects are not within the remit of the programme.

- The follow-up survey supported findings from previous research that a high proportion of children's social workers (42 per cent) experience clinical levels of stress. This is twice the figure reported in general population surveys. This proportion represents an increase from 32 per cent at the start of the year. There is no evidence that the programme itself causes stress. High levels of stress are associated with low job satisfaction and 'intention to leave' their job.

- It is too early to draw any conclusions about the impact of the programme on the retention of NQSWs. At the end of the year, one in six NQSWs thought it very likely that they would leave their current post within the next twelve months, and a further 30 per cent thought it "fairly likely". However, three-quarters of these expected their next job to be in children's social work.

- An initial recruitment and retention survey of 52 employers / organisations showed that the first year turnover rate of 15.9 per cent is similar to social workers in general.

5.1. Social Work Task Force

During the first year of the evaluation 'The *Final Report of the Social Work Task Force'* (2009) was published. This included a number of significant recommendations in relation to the NQSW programme. In particular, the Task Force highlighted the need for: a supported and assessed first year in practice; clear, universal and binding standards for employers; and a dedicated programme of training and support for managers of frontline social workers. (Social Work Task Force, 2009, p7-8)

The proposed assessed year in practice includes requirements on employers to provide:

- time for reflection, study, learning, contact with mentors
- good quality supervision
- a managed and balanced caseload
- access to training
- opportunities for shadowing and co-working with more experienced staff
- a formal training contract covering entitlements and responsibilities.

The assessed year of practice has particularly strong resonance with the NQSW programme, which could be seen as a potential model for its introduction. All of the requirements for the assessed year of practice are, to some degree, part of the programme. The extra points identified by the Task Force include the need for good quality ICT and access to research literature and a formal training contract. These are not part of the NQSW programme. The major difference between the current NQSW programme and the assessed first year in practice is that, as recommended by the Task Force, NQSWs would have formally to "pass" their first year in practice to become fully licensed as social workers. This could assist with the current problem around the position of the portfolio and record of achievement, assuming that this first year was properly linked into a continuing professional development framework.

6. Afterword from CWDC

This report reflects data collected during the first year of the NQSW programme, which is now entering its third year. It is a pilot programme and CWDC is committed to making sure learning from the experiences of employers and NQSWs taking part improves the programme in real time. Over the past eighteen months, we have taken a number of steps that address issues raised by those who have contributed to this evaluation.

We have simplified the programme documentation. In the second year, we reduced the number of handbooks and made them easier to navigate. Following positive feedback, we have further streamlined the guidance documents for the third year of the programme, which begins in September 2010.

We have provided greater clarity about the use of portfolios and how NQSWs can evidence their achievement of the outcome statements. In summer 2009 our support advisors facilitated regional workshops for employers, which focused on this subject. They emphasised that most evidence will be gathered as part of an NQSW's day-to-day activity. They explained that employers and NQSWs decide, in line with their organisation's policies, how evidence is recorded and stored, and whether this means creating a hard copy portfolio or cross-referencing with documents located in case records or elsewhere. Employers shared with each other their approaches to supporting NQSWs to evidence their achievements. For the third year of the programme, we have revised the programme guidance to it easier for employers and NQSWs to see how evidencing the outcome statements can be achieved.

The NQSW programme was designed so that employers could use it to enhance or support their current arrangements for supporting continuing professional development, where these were well established. We think it is important that employers are able to choose the training and development opportunities that best meet the needs of their NQSWs. Some employers have used elements of the current Post Qualifying framework to help their NQSWs demonstrate achievement of the outcome statements. In 2009, the Social Work Task Force recommended that there should be a more coherent and effective national framework for the continuing professional development of social workers and a single, nationally recognised career structure with clear expectations of social workers at different stages of their career. CWDC will contribute to the work the Social Work Reform Board in preparing proposals for national career and continuing professional development frameworks based on the learning from the NQSW programme and our other social work activity.

We have provided training for 1,000 [check figure] supervisors of NQSWs on the programme. The training, developed for CWDC by recognised experts on supervision, is supported by a practical guide to providing high quality reflective supervision for social workers in their first year of employment. We continue to emphasise that reflective, as well as management, supervision is important to NQSWs' development.

To support local authorities in engaging social work managers in delivery of the NQSW programme, and other CWDC social work activities, we have asked Directors of Children's Services to nominate a senior social work manager to be our key strategic contact in 2010-11. We have streamlined our interactions with local authorities to reduce paperwork and do more to support them in joining up the different aspects of our social work programme for their organisation.

We will continue to learn from what employers and NQSWs tell us in the programme's third year. In 2009, the Social Work Task Force recommended that the Government introduce an assessed year in employment. The Social Work Reform Board is now working to develop

potential models for an Assessed Year in Employment that will build on learning from this NQSW programme and the equivalent for adult services. CWDC – drawing on the experiences of employers and NQSWs who have worked with us – will play a key part in this activity. The Social Work Reform Board has also asked us to consider the development of the Assessed Year of Employment in shaping the questions that will be asked in the final year of the evaluation of the NQSW programme.

We are pleased that employers report that the support they receive from CWDC improved over the first year of the programme. We continue to welcome the feedback we receive about the programme and to address the issues is raises.

Appendix 1. The Outcome Statements – evidence indicators, service users' perspectives and the NQSW portfolios

As described above in section 1.4.2, Sunderland Young People's Group and ATD Fourth World worked with the team to develop criteria for the assessment of portfolios and records of achievement produced by the NQSWS. Here the guidance given in the NQSW handbook in respect of each outcome statement is noted and related the comments provided our partners. For each statement a brief example of the evidence provided in the portfolios which the panel reviewed is presented. Together, this offers a perspective on the level of achievement by NQSWs at the end of the year.

Outcome Statement 1 - Referral
Collect, accurately record and critically analyse all relevant information at the point when a referral is received or you assume responsibility for an existing case within your organisation, and take appropriate actions that fulfil statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of specific children, young people, their families and carers.

In the NQSW handbook, the evidence includes taking and responding appropriately to information at the referral stage, responding to different levels of referral and including the views of children and their carers. The young people and the parents groups consulted both stressed the importance of social workers not jumping to premature and judgemental conclusions about families; they felt good social work practice was making a rapport and relationship with the family before undertaking a thorough assessment.

An example of evidence in a portfolio was a description of a social worker who had received information from a school about a child who had disclosed concerns about how his siblings had been treated at home. The supervisor illustrated the NQSW's development in this area by describing how the NQSW had visited the family and sensitively gathered the information before deciding a more in depth assessment was required.

Outcome Statement 2 - Assessment
Critically analyse all necessary information to produce assessments that comply with statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements, and that respond to the needs of specific children and young people and any current or emerging safeguarding issues.

The handbook describes assessment as a key task of social workers and argues that assessments should be based upon an ecological approach that is rooted in child development. Like at the referral stage the handbook emphasises the importance of including families in the assessment stage. This latter point was strongly echoed by the service user groups. The carers recognised the importance of social workers intervening in family life when circumstances made that necessary but believed that an involvement should be based upon a fair and balanced assessment. Some carers cited examples of occasions when assumptions had been made or they felt they had been "written off" at the assessment stage. The young people stressed the importance of relationships between families and professionals in the assessment process and also wanted the assessment to identify services that would support the family.

An example from a portfolio was a case in which the NQSW had described carrying out an assessment of a vulnerable 13-year-old who had moved in from another borough where they had been the past subject of a child protection plan. The NQSW undertook a core assessment and identified a range of services needed. The supervisor commented that this

assessment had been based on an analysis of the previous child protection plan and chronology

Outcome Statement 3 – Planning
Based on a critical analysis of all evidence, plan and co-ordinate the support and intervention required for children and young people in two contexts.

The handbook recognises that NQSWs will be involved in a wide range of planning processes with children and their families, depending upon the context in which they are working. There is a common theme that such plans are based upon a personalised service and respond to need as well as risk. Some of the young people consulted had experience of growing up in the care system and believed that social work (and other professionals) often displayed a lack of insight into the experience of growing up in care. They recognised that social workers were under pressure but said that they had been constantly let down "We don't care about the reasons you are not here, we just remember being let down again". The young people and carers also expressed frustration about begin asked the same questions over and over again. The carers also believed planning should involve the delivery of services rather than "only assessing risk".

A portfolio example was of an NQSW attempting to involve an eight-year-old child in a planning process. The supervisor described in the record of achievement how the NQSW used the exact words of the child in the record of the child's view of the plan and had used play as a medium for gathering the child's views.

Outcome Statement 4 – Review
Critically review all information against plans in order to evaluate achievements and outcomes and identify required changes in accordance with statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements.

The handbook argues that reviewing is a complex task that requires a significant level of critical reflection. It emphasises the importance of involving children, young people and their carers in the review process. The young people believed a good review could be an effective quality assurance mechanism, ensuring that they got the service that they needed. However, they did express concern that reviews could be very bureaucratic; there was a danger of young people becoming "lost" in the process. The carers also identified the dangers of an overly bureaucratic approach with one stating "I want to be treated as a human being, not just form filling".

In one portfolio a social worker described how they had undertaken a review of a plan where there were concerns due to the parent having chronic depression. This was carried out not in a paper-based exercise but through a joint visit with a specialist mental health worker.

Outcome Statement 5 – Formal Meetings
Work with children, families and other professionals to develop a plan to respond to the assessed needs of specific children or young people; take part in statutory and other reviews and decision making forums, providing information, based on the plan, about children and families' needs. This may include representing their views.

The handbook stresses the importance of NQSWs being clear about the outcomes they seek from formal meetings and also of involving parents and young people from the preparation through to the de-briefing stage. This view was reinforced by the feedback from

both the young people and carers. One young person described a harrowing meeting where he witnessed his mother crying. He described how he reassured her on hearing the plans that he would be moving away from the family home that he would be returning at some point. The carers were able to provide illustrations of good practice when they felt social workers had given them a high level of support throughout the process. However, some carers described feeling belittled and disempowered in formal meetings.

An example of the expected more inclusive approach was provided in a portfolio by a NQSW who prepared and supported a young person through a mental health tribunal. The NQSW helped the young person to express their views about their family life and also ensured that they had adequate representation. This was all recorded by their supervisor in the record of achievement.

Outcome Statement 6 – Recording
Record, report and communicate using accurate, up-to-date, evidence based information, which differentiates between fact, views of those involved and professional judgements; ensuring that the information is expressed in plain English, taking account of requirements to respect service user confidentiality and statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements.

The handbook links this outcome statement to both information sharing and the ability of the NQSW to differentiate between fact and professional judgment/ opinion. It stresses the importance of records being accessible in their presentation and language. The young people said recording causes a lot of concern. They cited several examples of reading information about themselves that was wrong and the impact this had on them. Likewise, the carers described the power of language, with one parent saying she read a report in which she was described as having "little potential" (she also said she proved them wrong!).

In the portfolios many of the supervisors noted NQSWs' proficiency at using the ICS system although there were other more discursive examples. In one record of achievement, for example, the supervisor praised a NQSW for the child centred language that had been used in a core assessment report.

Outcome Statement 7 – Communication
Identify the communication needs of children, young people, their parents, families and carers, and use appropriate communication methods and techniques to engage them, ensuring the wishes and feelings of the child or young person are ascertained and taken into consideration before decisions are taken.

Communication is recognised at being at the heart of good social work practice and the evidence indicators reflect the strong relationship between the quality of communication with the users of services and the quality of the service. The young people described communication as a "massive part of being a social worker". The carers described good social work practice: the majority of the points they made were in relation to how the practitioner had communicated with them, encapsulating the degree to which the social worker was able to make the aspiration of partnership a reality.

An example of good communication skills was a description by a supervisor in one of the portfolios of an NQSW's direct work with four children aged three and under who had witnessed domestic violence. The supervisor described how the NQSW was able to use the information gained in this work to enrich a report for a review child protection conference.

Outcome Statement 8 – Relationships

Create and maintain effective relationships with children, young people their parents, families and carers that comply with statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements, using information about their life experiences, needs and expectations.

The importance of relationships is recognised in different ways in the handbook. A high quality professional relationship with a young person and/ or their carer is seen as crucial not only to providing a lever for change but also as means for being able to ascertain a clear understanding of the family's circumstances. There is, however, recognition that there may be a number of obstacles to be overcome if such as relationship is to be built and sustained. Overcoming such difficulties was also a strong theme that came out of the consultation with young people. They recognised that they and their peers could on occasions be "challenging". Nevertheless, social workers had a duty to stay with the young person and not give up on them. They, like the parents, were also very mindful of the power imbalances in the relationship between the users of services and social workers. The parents saw the quality of the relationship as a practical expression of respect and the means by which trust is established.

In one portfolio a supervisor wrote in a supervision record about a social worker who was working with a parent who had physically assaulted his son. The supervisor praised the social worker for recognising the multiple stressors in this man's life (debt, depression, immigration status) and for building a positive relationship with the father that had enabled the social worker to explore alternative forms of chastisement.

Outcome Statement 9 – Multi-Agency Working
When contributing to the work of multi-agency teams, apply your skills, knowledge and professional judgement within statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements, seeking appropriate direction from line managers/supervisors in situations of uncertainty.

A striking feature of the context in which NQSWs have been practicing in recent year has been the increasingly multi-agency environment. The handbook reflects this by not only identifying the need for social workers to recognise this context but also the need for them to be proactive in building these relationships with other professionals. The young people focused on the importance of social workers and those in youth services of communicating and working in a complementary way. However they also stressed the importance of social workers recognising what information was private and did not need to be shared. Interestingly, although the carers described instances when they felt social workers had been judgemental, they believed social workers were often the professional who could stand up for them against other professionals such as teachers or health professionals when they felt them to be judgmental.

In one portfolio a supervisor wrote in the record achievement about how in the case of a family about whom there were concerns about neglect the NQSW had worked closely with both a primary school and health visitor.

Outcome Statement 10 – Disadvantaged Groups
Identify and work with others to review the needs of, and the support for, specific children and young people from diverse and disadvantaged communities to improve their life chances, in accordance with statutory, organisational and local multi-agency requirements.

The handbook takes as a starting point that social workers need to recognise that many of the children and young people with whom they work will be experiencing different forms of

disadvantage. The outcome statement is linked to an ecological approach to assessment and social workers will inevitably be working with differences. As such they have a responsibility to access specialist knowledge about families where appropriate. In incorporating such knowledge social workers must not lose a focus on the child.

The carers were members of a group, ATD Fourth World which campaigns against poverty and the one carer described the impact of poverty on family life in detail. The carers also described the idea of "povertyism" whereby professionals on occasions did not pay sufficient regard to the implications poverty had on their role as parents and their capacity to "cooperate" with professionals' plans. In the course of the consultation with the young people a 16-year-old asylum seeker gave a powerful testimony as to her experience of growing up in the north of England. She not only highlighted the cultural differences and beliefs that exist between home and England but also the impact of racism.

In one portfolio a social worker was praised by their supervisor for winning over the trust of a child who had multiple difficulties, including experiencing racism from her peers at school. She was living with domestic violence in very overcrowded accommodation and the supervisor noted how initially she had been very wary of engaging with the NQSW.

Outcome Statement 11 – Professional Development and Accountability
Use self-reflection, supervision and development activities to improve your social work skills and knowledge. Be accountable for your behaviour and the quality of your work ensuring that you comply with the GSCC Codes of Practice and your employer's requirements for conduct, performance and behaviour.

The last outcome statement links professional development with accountability, making the overall point that decision making in vulnerable families' lives has to be on the basis of a robust, up to date and transparent knowledge base. The young people focused on the word accountability and felt that this was something to which only "lip service" was paid. They felt that it was crucial that service user's perspectives, especially those of young people were included in any training and other CPD activities. The carers concurred with this view; they felt that social workers often encountered families as "clients" and did not see them in the round. They believed that it was important for social workers to be up to date and thought this was one of the advantages of having a recently trained and qualified social worker as opposed to a more experienced worker.

Most of the evidence within the portfolios about professional development related to course attendance. The portfolios which were not simply the records of achievement also had attendance certificates appended and some also supplemented these with a learning log.

Appendix 2. Contrast group – a methodological note

Sampling

As the report indicated, there was quite a lot of variation in the NQSW programme sample. This was evident in the case studies. Some organisations functioned more effectively than others in terms of their implementation of the programme. Turnover and vacancy rates in teams varied, and so did the perceptions of management. In general the analysis utilised mean total scores on the various scales. This means that statements about programme participants are made on the basis of averages across the 87 participating organisations.

The contrast group was drawn from 13 local authorities who were not participating in the first year of the NQSW programme. The exact make-up of their newly qualified social workers in terms of age, gender and ethnicity is not known. The best estimate is that they had recruited around 100 newly qualified social workers and numbers within each organisation varied between 3 and 15. There were 47 respondents, so the response rate, at just under 50 per cent, was probably a bit less than the baseline for the NQSW programme participants for demographic data, but somewhat higher for the Time 2 outcomes data because the response rate for the programme group had dropped. The analysis is therefore undertaken with data drawn from quite a large population (100 NQSWs), representing a substantial number of 13 organisations.

It is important to recognise that this does not represent a control group. However it was considered to be useful to try to establish this contrast group despite the methodological challenges and deficits. Certain working assumptions needed to be made. These were, first that contrast group respondents were fairly representative of NQSWs in the organisations which were not taking part in the programme. Second, some of these organisations were probably more effective than others; in other words, similar in profile to the programme (intervention) group organisations.

Outcome measures and comparisons

The primary outcome measure is the 12 self-efficacy ratings on the outcome statements[29]. Analysis shows that these are highly intercorrelated and that greater than 75 per cent of the variance is accounted for by one underlying factor, self-efficacy. This meets the criteria for undertaking analyses based on total or 'summative' scores.

There are three sets of variables which may be predicted to affect this self rating outcome at T2:

1. The individual characteristics and previous experience of the NQSWs

2. The quality of the induction and support they are given in the first year

3. Organisational factors (quality of management, workload, pay etc.) or more specifically, how the NQSW experiences the organisation.

From the surveys data are available on 1 (demographic) and 3 (NQSW extrinsic job satisfaction).

The programme group data were compared with the contrast group data: there were no statistically significant differences. In other words, the possibility that differences in outcomes

---

[29] Intrinsic job satisfaction, stress and intention to leave are considered to be secondary outcomes. The same arguments apply.

at T2 were attributable to the contrast group respondents being better educated, more experienced and older, can be rejected.

There were no statistically significant differences in the mean total extrinsic job satisfaction ratings. This suggests that, in general, contrast group NQSWs did not perceive their managers as being better, their hours of work longer/shorter, or working conditions poorer or better.

Conclusion: differences in the outcomes at T2 are attributable to demographic and other background variables in group 2. There are two possible alternative explanations:

1. Social desirability: the programme participants may have wished to please organisations (or in fact the researchers) by claiming to be more confident than they actually were. This may be discounted as the NQSWs had not been particularly keen to please in their responses to other questions, eg indicating dissatisfaction with the programme, reporting role conflict, thinking about leaving their current job, etc.

2. The programme participants' greater familiarity with the outcome statements compared to the contrast group. This possibility is mentioned in the report.

The structure of the induction and support programmes in the contrast group organisations is not known. The survey did collect data from the contrast group participants' reported receipt and experiences of their "programmes".

Appendix 3. Group Interview Schedule – NQSW groups

1.   Introductory

For the purposes of building the group process, enabling participants to remind themselves of their expectations, and providing data for comparison, this section will explore hopes and fears of participants prior to undertaking their first social work role.

General question: What were your expectations of social work with children and families when you took up your post as NQSW?

Then

General question: How does the reality of your experience of working as a newly qualified social worker with children and families compare with your expectations?

Areas to cover:
−   Positive features and challenges of working as a newly qualified social worker with children and families

(Note: group leaders should try to take discussion of positives after the difficulties have been dealt with, in order to help create a constructive working climate for discussion of more difficult issues subsequently)

2.   Training

What were your training and development needs when you took up your post as NQSW?

Then

General question: What are your experiences of the Newly Qualified Social Workers Pilot Programme

Areas to cover:
−   Strengths and weaknesses
−   Extent to which the programme has met, or is meeting, individuals training and professional development needs in the first year as a newly qualified social worker working with children and families

3.   Workload

General question: To what extent do your workloads meet the expectations of the NQSW pilot programme?

Areas to cover:
−   Size and complexity of workloads compared with 90% recommendation of the workload for an experienced social worker
−   Use made of the recommended 10% protected time
−   Who ensures that this time is protected
−   Organisational arrangements to ensure time is protected
−   Managing workloads: processes used

4.   Supervision

General question: What have your experiences been of supervision since taking up your post as a newly qualified social worker?

Areas to cover:
- Degree of satisfaction
- Frequency and content of supervision: extent used to discuss NQSW Pilot Programme (e.g. for developing NQSW training plan)
- Extent to which supervision is experienced as supportive: balance between developmental supervision and managerial accountability
- Extent of supervisors knowledge of the NQSW Pilot Programme
- Time for reflection?

5.   Portfolio and record of achievement

General question: What have your experiences been of developing your record of achievement and supporting portfolio of evidence?

Areas to cover:
- Extent to which these items have supported your professional development: contribution to NQSW Pilot Programme objective of improving the quality of training and skills for children's social workers.
- Rewarding or a burden to complete
- Process of completion; extent of help and support

Appendix 4. Group Interview Schedule – Supervisors

1. Impact on the wider organisation
General question: Overall, from your perspective in the organisation, has the NQSW Pilot Programme impacted on your agency to date?

Areas to cover:
- Costs (resources; staff time; capacity to undertake core tasks etc.) of the programme to the wider organisation
- Benefits to the wider organisation
- How well the programme has been implemented

2. Training Plans

General question: How have you supported newly qualified social workers in developing and implementing their NQSW training plans?

Explore both:
a) how you personally have supported NQSWs, and
b) how the organisation has supported them

Areas to cover:
- Process of developing NQSW training plan
- Whether the training plan meets individual needs
- Extent to which plans have been implemented

3. Workload
As a preamble to this question the facilitator will provide a brief statement of the workload expectations of the NQSW programme.

General question: How and to what extent do your NQSWs' workloads meet the expectations of the NQSW pilot programme?

Areas to cover:
- Size and complexity of workloads compared with 90% recommendation
- Extent to which participants achieve the recommended 10% protected time
- Process of managing workloads, and barriers to achieving recommended levels.

4. Portfolio and record of achievement

How have you supported newly qualified social workers to develop their record of achievement and supporting portfolio of evidence?

Explore both:
a) how you personally have supported NQSWs, and
b) how the organisation has supported them

Areas to cover:
- supported professional development of NQSWs

- extent to which the record of achievement and portfolio support the NQSW Pilot Programme objective of improving the quality of training and skills for children's social workers

5.   Support for supervisors

As a preamble to the question the facilitator will state that managers who have not been supervisors may have indirect knowledge of supervisors' training and support in various ways

General question: What have your experiences been of training and support for supervisors?

Areas to cover:
- Whether and how it has led to good quality, developmental supervision?
- Whether and how supervisors feel supported by the arrangements?

Appendix 5. Telephone Interviews with Senior Managers

The following questions form the basis of a telephone interview, and will be supplied to participants in advance of the interview.

Introduction

The purpose of these interviews is:

- To enable the most suitable person at managerial level to provide data for the research in the form of opinion, from a strategic perspective, of the value of the NQSW Pilot Programme.

Your knowledge of some areas covered below may be limited; please provide an answer if at all possible based upon your best available knowledge.

Section One: Organisational context

1) How would you describe the main component of your work role?
    a) Senior manager (e.g. Director/Assistant Director/Head of Service)
    b) Operational Manager (e.g. Service Manager/Team Manager)
    c) Staff Development Manager
    d) Other (please specify)

2) What type of social work/care employer is your organisation?
    a) Local Authority
    b) Charity/Not for Profit

3) Size of organisation (no. of paid employees in social work/care)
    a) 10 or fewer
    b) 11-50
    c) 51-100
    d) 101-200
    e) 201+

4) To what extent are you aware of the NQSWs Pilot Programme and what is the extent of your involvement in the programme?

Section Two: Recruitment and retention of social workers in your organisation

5) Prior to September 2008 (when the NQSW PP commenced) what, if any difficulties, has your organisation experienced with recruitment and retention of social workers that work with children and families.

    a) In general
    b) Specifically, in respect of NQSWs

6) Has the NQSW pilot programme affected your recruitment or retention strategies? If so, how?

    a) Have you recruited more or less NQSWs or more experienced staff? If so please discuss reasoning behind this.

Section Three: Support to newly qualified social workers in your organisation

7) How effectively do you consider that your organisation has supported newly qualified social workers prior to the introduction of the NQSWs Pilot Programme in September 2008?

8) Has this support changed as a result of the introduction of the NQSW pilot? If so, how?

Section Four: Implementation of the NQSWs Pilot Programme in your organisation

9) Overall, how effectively do you believe your organisation has implemented the NQSW pilot?

   Prompts:
   a) How and why has it been successful/unsuccessful?
   b) Which elements have been successful/unsuccessful (e.g. workload relief; supervision; training plans, record of achievement, portfolios)

10) Have there been benefits and costs to your organisation as a result of the introduction of the NQSWs pilot programme? If so, what?

Section Five: Conclusion

11) Is there anything you would like to add about the NQSW pilot that you have not had an opportunity to discuss in answering the questions so far?

12) Would you like to correct, amend or withdraw any statements made earlier?

Statement: Thank you for participating in this study

Appendix 6. NQSW survey Time 1 (<mark>insert PDF link</mark>)

Appendix 7. NQSW survey Time 3 month review (insert PDF link)

Appendix 8. NQSW survey Time 2 (insert PDF link)

Appendix 9. Supervisor's survey Time 1 (insert PDF link)

Appendix 10. Supervisor's survey Time 2 (==insert PDF link==)

Appendix 11. Programme Coordinator's survey Time 1 (<mark>insert PDF link</mark>)

Appendix 12. Programme Coordinator's survey Time 2 (==insert PDF link==)