



# Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme

Evaluation Report on the Second Year

September 2011



**Newly Qualified Social Worker Programme  
Evaluation Report on the Second Year  
(2009 to 2010)**

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

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## **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 was 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 second year of the programme (2009-10) has been compiled by an independent evaluation team from Bristol and Salford universities and King's College London. The evaluation is monitoring three annual intakes to the programme. This report tracks the second intake of social workers participating in the NQSW 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 has been investigated using interviews and focus groups in fourteen organisations and through detailed organisational case studies in a further four local authorities.

A report on Year 1 was published in August 2010<sup>1</sup>. Readers may wish to refer to this for further details of the methodology and previous findings.

The aims of this second year report are to present:

- An analysis of the policy and practice context of the NQSW programme and,
- Findings on participation in the programme, its implementation and the outcomes for NQSWs, making comparisons with Year 1 where appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup>[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1070/NQSW\\_Y1\\_Evaluation\\_full\\_colour.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1070/NQSW_Y1_Evaluation_full_colour.pdf)

## **Policy and Practice Context**

The NQSW Pilot Programme was launched in 2008 as a response to a growing concern that the transition from social work student to post qualified practice was, in many instances problematic for both agencies and individual practitioners. This has particularly been the case in children's services where a combination of a high demand for services and high thresholds meant that newly qualified staff were often carrying large complex caseloads.

In September 2009 the programme was expanded so that it was available to all NQSWs entering children and families social work. Despite the challenging economic environment in which services are being delivered there has been continuing government investment in the programme in 2010-11 and 2011-12 with the programme so far having supported over 5,000 NQSWs working for 152 employers<sup>2</sup>.

The NQSW programme has been implemented in the context of wider process of social work reform, including the work of the Social Work Task Force, the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) and the Munro Review. The Task Force report argued that there should be clearer standards around supervision and workload for NQSWs. It also recognised that managers themselves needed more robust support if they are to deliver both a more managed workload and higher quality supervision. These aspects were already key elements of the NQSW programme. A further recommendation was that the NQSW programme should be superseded by a more formal assessed supported year in employment (ASYE). This has been endorsed by the SWRB. Although the Munro Review makes no specific reference to NQSWs, the analysis and recommendations in the report is consistent with the recommendations with regard to NQSWs made by the SWRB.

The last two years have seen a substantial increase in demands for children's social care services, particularly child protection. At the same time, high vacancy rates and retention problems have been reported by employers. The Coalition government has stated that services should be focused on the most vulnerable families; budget reductions have impacted on support services. The government is reviewing the current legislative framework for local authorities. The implications for social work in general and NQSWs in particular is that this is not a period when the sector can expect large scale national programmes with prescribed, target driven detailed procedures. Instead the government is expected to set out a framework within which local policy makers and managers will be expected to implement using their own judgement as to what fits local circumstances most appropriately; a less procedural system which will make greater demands in terms of social workers using their discretion and judgement.

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/nqsw>

## **Newly Qualified Social Workers' participation in the programme**

A total of 2,020 social workers were initially registered by their employers in the second year of the programme. During the course of the year, 104 NQSWs (five per cent of those initially registered) were withdrawn by their employers and eight had a delayed start to the programme. This represents a near doubling of registrants compared to the initial pilot year 2008-09 (1,035 NQSWs) and a much lower withdrawal rate (five per cent compared with 22 per cent).

## **Newly Qualified Social Workers' experiences of the programme**

The response rate to the baseline survey (24 per cent) was noticeably lower for the early cohort of registrants on the second year of the programme than for the late cohort (55 per cent), giving a combined baseline response rate of 38 per cent in 2009-10, compared with 51 per cent in 2008-09. The responses to the follow up survey at the end of the year were very similar (32 per cent compared to 33 per cent in the previous year). These response rates should be borne in mind when reflecting on the findings. Overall, three quarters of NQSWs who responded at baseline reported that they were satisfied with the overall package of work, support and training they were receiving from their employer. This had reduced to 68 per cent at the end of the year, but this proportion is still substantially higher than the 58 per cent of satisfied respondents to the end of Year 1 survey.

Satisfied respondents highlighted supportive managers and being given time to focus on the NQSW programme. They particularly appreciated the opportunity for structured reflective supervision (ranked most important by 35 per cent of respondents). Having a reduced caseload was rated most important by 31 per cent at baseline, reducing to 26 per cent at follow up. Peer support meetings were most highly rated by 22 per cent of respondents at follow up, increasing from 13 per cent at baseline.

A quarter of baseline respondents (n=175) were dissatisfied, increasing to nearly a third (n=180) at follow up. The primary causes of dissatisfaction were poor management of the programme in their organisation, unsupportive managers and a perceived lack of caseload reduction. There was a tendency for these respondents to be employees of an organisation participating in the programme for the first time, but this was not a simple correlation.

## **Senior managers' and team managers' views**

Overall, senior managers interviewed held positive views about the programme. They perceived an increase in the quality of staff applications for NQSW posts, NQSWs having a better idea of their career expectations and future planning; organisations being better able to consolidate good practice and able to promote the development of their staff through more formalised and systematic training.



Team managers believed that the programme was effective in raising the profile of supervision and of continued learning and development. In addition, it was considered helpful in increasing awareness of the NQSWs' needs for support in the crucial first year.

### **Implementation of the programme**

There was evidence from the case study sites that the implementation of the programme had been smoother for the second year than for the first year. Particular improvements commented upon were: an increase in flexibility and autonomy given to the NQSWs to develop their own programme and better management of the NQSWs' workload as the needs of the NQSWs on the programme were more clearly understood by their supervisors and team managers. Those coordinators that were positive had a strong sense of being supported by the senior management and the team managers. Where these factors applied the coordinators commented that the programme was gradually being embedded within the organisation.

Difficulties were most apparent in relation to NQSWs' caseloads, and managers' interest and support (still considered to be a large barrier by one in five programme coordinators at the end of the programme).

Reflective supervision was considered by programme coordinators and managers to be to be the core of the programme. At baseline, over half the NQSWs reported receiving their full entitlement to supervision and this increased to over two thirds by the end of the year. However, there was significant dissatisfaction concerning the availability and frequency of supervision for around one in five respondents.

NQSWs expressed broad satisfaction with the training they were receiving through the programme, particularly when it covered material which they had not had the opportunity to consider on their degree course.

Fewer programme coordinators complained about a lack of integration between the NQSW programme and the Postqualifying (PQ) Award than in the previous year, generally because they had taken initiatives to link the two. However, this matter was a significant source of frustration to a small proportion who believed that CWDC should give a lead rather than encouraging local flexibility. Similarly, there was evidence from programme coordinators that guidance on the completion of a portfolio was much better understood. Nevertheless, the large majority of NQSWs remained negative about the requirement to complete, considering it repetitive of their degree work and an unnecessary burden<sup>3</sup>.

In the end of year survey, the majority of programme coordinators was satisfied with the support they had received from CWDC, considering staff to have been accessible and helpful. This was an improvement on the first year, although there remained room for

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<sup>3</sup> This requirement has since been replaced by a more flexible 'record of achievement'.

improvement, notably in the presentation of materials and the timeliness of their delivery. Opinion regarding the support advisors was variable.

## **Outcomes**

At the end of the programme, supervisors and programme coordinators rated the efficacy of the NQSWs and also made retrospective ratings of their efficacy at the beginning. Ratings were much higher at the end of the programme than at the beginning of the programme.

In general, self-rated outcomes for NQSWs in terms of self-efficacy (confidence) were very similar to findings from Year 1 where substantial gains were reported. For example, the proportion reporting 'high confidence' in relation to the outcome statements on referral and assessment doubled from around a third to two thirds. There was a highly statistically significant increase in the summary self-efficacy ratings from the beginning to the end of the programme, with a large effect size.

Findings in relation to role clarity were mixed: there was an overall increase, but the pattern of responses suggested that around three in ten had actually become less clear about some aspects of their work. As in Year 1, there was a statistically significant increase in mean role conflict scores. For example, at the end of the year 43 per cent indicated that they "have to do things that should be done differently" compared to 31 per cent at baseline.

Job satisfaction was generally very high and remained so throughout the year. Perhaps not surprisingly in the current economic climate, the proportion satisfied with their job security fell from 86 per cent to 73 per cent. *Dissatisfaction* with public respect for social work, at around two thirds, remained almost as high as in the previous year, in spite of government-funded publicity campaigns.

As in Year one, there was a statistically significant increase (from 31 per cent to 36 per cent) in the proportion of NQSWs exceeding the self-reported threshold for stress. The end of year figure is somewhat lower than that for respondents in Year 1 (43 per cent). At the end of the programme, 44 per cent of NQSWs indicated it was 'fairly likely' or 'very likely' that they would be looking for a new job in a year's time, compared with 47 per cent at the same stage in Year 1. Intention to leave was, not surprisingly associated with higher levels of stress and lower extrinsic job satisfaction. However, the recruitment and retention survey showed that the actual turnover rate was only 9 per cent, compared with 15.5 per cent in the previous year. This needs to be viewed in light of the reduced level of alternative job opportunities.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The NQSW programme and the aims of this report

The Newly Qualified Social Worker [NQSW] 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 was 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<sup>4</sup>.

This report presents findings from the evaluation of the second year of the programme. A report on Year 1 was published in August 2010<sup>5</sup>. Readers may wish to refer to this for further details of the methodology and previous findings.

The aims of this report are to present:

- an analysis of the policy and practice context of the NQSW programme
- findings on participation in the programme, its implementation and the outcomes for NQSWs, making comparisons with Year 1 where appropriate.

A detailed comparison of the findings from the qualitative components across year one and year two has not been possible in this second year report due to some difficulties (extraneous to the evaluation) in the data collection phase. This left insufficient time for the year on year comparison. These difficulties are detailed below in the account of the qualitative component of the evaluation.

The final report, due in March 2012, will incorporate data from further online surveys of NQSWs in the third year of the programme, their supervisors and local programme coordinators. It will also include findings from a series of interviews with senior managers in children's services and the analysis of a number of organisational case studies. The report will integrate findings from across the three years of the evaluation on the implementation and outcomes of the programme and seek to identify lessons for the future support of NQSWs in children's services.

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<sup>4</sup>[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/nqsw](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/nqsw)

<sup>5</sup>[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1070/NQSW\\_Y1\\_Evaluation\\_full\\_colour.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1070/NQSW_Y1_Evaluation_full_colour.pdf)

## 1.2. Policy and practice context

### 1.2.1 Policy

The Newly Qualified Social Work programme was launched as a response to a growing concern that the transition from social work student to post qualified practice was, in many instances, problematic for both agencies and individual practitioners. This has particularly been the case in children's services where a combination of a high demand for services, particularly in relation to child protection concerns, and high thresholds meant that newly qualified staff were often carrying large complex caseloads.

The NQSW programme was therefore an initiative that sought to facilitate a more managed and graduated transition for the first year after the point of qualification with a programme of support that included enhanced supervision and protected time for professional development. In its first year the programme was a pilot with 1035 NQSWs participating in 87 local authorities and one voluntary agency. In September 2009 the programme was expanded so that it was available to all NQSWs entering children and families' social work.

Despite the challenging economic environment in which services are being delivered there has been continuing government investment in the programme in 2010-11 and 2011-12, with the programme so far having supported over 5,000 NQSWs working for 152 employers<sup>6</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Policy – indirect

The NQSW Programme has been implemented in the context of wider process of social work reform. The Social Work Task Force [SWTF] was established by the last government with all party support in January 2009 with a remit of identifying ways that the social work profession could be strengthened and made more effective, presenting its final report in December 2009<sup>7</sup>. The Taskforce, which drew together stakeholders from across both the sector and social work profession, reported on the very challenging environment for social work practice. It highlighted the high demand for services and that many practitioners felt that they were operating in a highly bureaucratised system that limited their opportunities for working directly with children, young people and their families.

The report argued that:

*...the current mix of practical and professional support to frontline social workers is inconsistent and sometimes inadequate. To be effective, social workers need appropriate technology and equipment, secure access to supervision and robust sources of research and information – and enough time to make good use of all of these resources. (SWTF, 2009: 4)*

The Taskforce raised questions to how well social work students were being prepared for practice, highlighting the lack of suitable statutory placements on some qualifying programmes,

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/nqsw>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-01114-2009>

*...new social workers are often not properly prepared for the demands of the job. The education system does not effectively support on-going development and specialisation.* (SWTF, 2009: 2).

The report of the Task Force identified the role that frontline managers play in improving the quality of support for practitioners in general, and NQSWs in particular, which is also a feature of the NQSW Programme. The report argued that there should be clearer standards around supervision and workload for NQSWs. However it also recognised that managers themselves needed more robust support if they are to deliver both a more managed workload and higher quality supervision. A further recommendation was that the NQSW programme should be superseded by a more formal Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) which, if successfully negotiated, would enable NQSWs to attain a *licence* to practice.

The recommendations of the Social Work Task Force were broadly welcomed by the last government and the Social Work Reform Board was established in December 2009 to take forward its work. The Coalition Government, following the election in May 2010 reiterated its support for the SWRB and has continued to express commitment for its desire to promote reform of the social work workforce.

The Reform Board has developed the SWTF's recommendations in a number of important ways. The proposal of most relevance to this project is bringing forward the introduction of the ASYE from 2016 to as early as 2012. At the time of writing discussions as to the final model that will be adopted for the ASYE are continuing but may, among other factors, be informed by the experiences of the NQSW Programme.

The most recent and in many ways most significant recent policy development has been the publication of the Review of Child Protection undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro<sup>8</sup>. Her final report is the last of three reports she has authored in which she has analysed the child protection system in England. While she was given a remit of looking at inter-agency child protection processes she was specifically asked to focus on how social workers' confidence and expertise can be promoted. Using a systems approach, her critique of the children's social care system was that it was risk averse, over-proceduralised and undermining of individual expertise. This analysis is congruent with the analysis of the SWRB and thus potentially any measure that comes out of either of these initiatives should complement one another. While Munro makes no specific reference to NQSWs the "direction of travel" she has taken in the reports is consistent with the recommendations with regard to NQSWs made by the SWRB.

### **1.2.3 Delivery**

The last two years have, particularly since the inquiry into the death of Peter Connelly seen a substantial increase in demands for social work services. The Association of Directors of Children's Services (April 2010) *Safeguarding Pressures Project*<sup>9</sup> reported in a survey of 86 authorities an increase of 21 per cent in the numbers of Section 47 enquiries in the two years Oct-Dec 2007 to Oct-Dec 2009 (p.10). This has also been reflected in the number of children subject of child protection plans, which rose from 26,400 in 2006 to 39,100 in March 2010<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup><http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/Munrointerimreport.pdf>

<sup>9</sup>[www.adcs.org.uk/download/news/adcs-sg-pressures-p2-report-final.pdf](http://www.adcs.org.uk/download/news/adcs-sg-pressures-p2-report-final.pdf)

<sup>10</sup>[www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/statistics/england\\_wdf49858.pdf](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/statistics/england_wdf49858.pdf)

Given the tightening labour market due to budgetary pressures it might be expected that the high vacancy rates amongst social workers that have been a rising concern over the last decade might ease. This may well be in the case in time but in the period covered by this report there is an indication that social work vacancy rates in England rose slightly from 10.9 per cent in 2009 to 11.3 per cent in 2010<sup>11</sup>. As a consequence, almost three quarters of local authorities (72 per cent) had recruitment difficulties for children and families social workers in 2009, up from 64 per cent in 2008, and three fifths (60 per cent) reported retention difficulties (up from 39 per cent in 2008)<sup>12</sup>.

It is in this context that CWDC launched the Early Professional Development (EPD) programme<sup>13</sup> with a view to providing on-going support and development beyond the first year in employment and into next stage of practitioners' careers. However, the organisational context remains challenging in many agencies with significant organisational restructuring in local authorities taking place in 2010-11 in response to and in preparation for, budget reductions. In some areas this has included the merging of teams within local authorities.

#### **1.2.4 General election**

The second year of this evaluation has taken place against the backdrop of the election of a new Coalition Government. This Government has stated its commitment to social work reform and has both continued existing and embarked on new initiatives to take this process forward. The Government's wider agenda has had a significant impact on the policy environment in which the NQSW Programme has been implemented. The Coalition Government has made the elimination of the budget deficit within the life span of this Parliament its primary economic objective. This has led to a challenging comprehensive spending review (CSR) and financial settlement for local government and in turn for their voluntary sector partners. Furthermore in order to ensure these financial targets are realised the budget reductions have been front loaded into the first two years of the parliament and so the years 2010-12 promise to be the most challenging.

The government however has wider policy ambitions than simply overseeing budget cuts. There has in its first year been the promotion of the idea of localism and its associated idea of the "big society". The belief underlying much of new policy development has been that greater power needs to be devolved to local government and indeed to frontline practice. It is proposed that there be less regulation and prescription from central government and a relaxation of the performance management culture. Alongside the Localism Bill<sup>14</sup> there is a review of the current legislative framework for local authorities. Already the requirement for Children's Plans has been removed as well as prescribed organisational structures such as Children's Trusts. This vision reflects many of the themes of the Munro review with a greater emphasis on professional discretion and judgement and local decision making. This theme is also reflected in the Health and Social Care Bill<sup>15</sup>, currently under review, which has proposed far reaching changes to health care commissioning.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2010/08/25/115153/one-in-10-social-work-posts-vacant.htm](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2010/08/25/115153/one-in-10-social-work-posts-vacant.htm)

<sup>12</sup> [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/workforce-data/state-of-the-young-peoples-workforce-report](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/workforce-data/state-of-the-young-peoples-workforce-report)

<sup>13</sup> [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/epd](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/social-work/epd)

<sup>14</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/)

<sup>15</sup> [www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Legislation/Actsandbills/HealthandSocialCareBill2011/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Legislation/Actsandbills/HealthandSocialCareBill2011/index.htm)

The implications for social work in general and NQSWs, in particular, is that this is not a period when the sector can expect large scale national programmes with prescribed, target driven detailed procedures. Instead we can expect government to set out a framework within which local policy makers and managers will be expected to implement, using their own judgement as to what fits local circumstances most appropriately.

This approach is reflected in five coordinated policy reviews of which the Munro Review is only one. Together these five reviews represent an important part of the process of realising the Coalition's vision for child welfare. The other reviews are in relation to early intervention (Allen)<sup>16</sup>, Poverty (Field)<sup>17</sup>, early years (Tickell)<sup>18</sup> and family justice (Norgrove)<sup>19</sup>. While the reviews are at different stages of the reporting process, and while they are not all directly relevant to children and families social work, they do begin to suggest that social workers may well be working in a changing organisational and professional environment in the coming years. That is, a less procedural system which will make greater demands in terms of social workers using their discretion and judgement.

### **1.3 Roles and responsibilities in implementing the NQSW programme**

As described above, the NQSW programme was designed by CWDC to help employers give participants in the programme 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 the needs of participants in the NQSW programme. To enable employers to meet their commitments to the programme, CWDC provides:

- funding to employers;<sup>20</sup>
- 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 participants in the NQSW programme and their supervisors; and
- training for those supervising participants in the NQSW programme, to help them in this role.

The key features of the NQSW programme can be found in the NQSW handbook for employers and social workers.<sup>21</sup> The handbook sets out the programme structures, explains who is eligible, sets out key roles and responsibilities and summarises the support provided by CWDC.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/g/graham%20allens%20review%20of%20early%20intervention.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110120090128/http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <http://media.education.gov.uk/MediaFiles/B/1/5/%7BB15EFF0D-A4DF-4294-93A1-1E1B88C13F68%7DTickell%20review.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/policy/moj/family-justice-review-interim-rep.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> 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.

<sup>21</sup> The NQSW handbook for employers and social workers can be accessed via the CWDC website: [http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0227/NQSW\\_handbook\\_for\\_employers\\_and\\_social\\_workers\\_v1\\_0.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0227/NQSW_handbook_for_employers_and_social_workers_v1_0.pdf)



In terms of the guidance supplied by CWDC for the programme the main change, as identified above, was that the requirements for a portfolio were clarified and it was not as prescriptive<sup>22</sup> (indeed in the current 2010-11 guidance material there is no explicit reference to portfolio, only to the record of achievement and the “notepad”, a tool for NQSWs to use (usually with others) in order to promote reflection.

## **1.4 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 participating in the NQSW programme 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’.

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 (DfE), the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and the General Social Care Council (GSCC). The advisory group also reviews and comments on the research reports.

## **1.5 Methodology**

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

- implementation of the programme;
- outcomes of the programme for newly qualified social workers and supervisors;
- retention and recruitment of children’s social workers.

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

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<sup>22</sup> [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0227/NQSW\\_handbook\\_for\\_employers\\_and\\_social\\_workers\\_v1\\_0.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0227/NQSW_handbook_for_employers_and_social_workers_v1_0.pdf)



## 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 are 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 20 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.

### 1.5.1 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 participants in the NQSW programme 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 (see Appendices 6-8). All programme coordinators were surveyed at the beginning (T1) and end of the year (T2) (see Appendices 10 and 11). Supervisors of participants in the NQSW programme were only surveyed at the end (T2) of the programme (see Appendix 9).

#### 1.5.1.1 Newly qualified social workers

The survey was sent to NQSWs on three occasions (T1, T3MR and T2), to two groups (or cohorts) of participants, 'early starters' (who had registered by 01 December 2009) and 'late starters' (who had registered between 01 December 2009 and 31 March 2010). There were no important statistically significant differences in the demographic profiles of these two groups and results have been combined in this report.

The number of eligible respondents and the response rates for the three survey points are presented in Table 1.1 below. A total of 2,020 NQSWs were initially registered with CWDC for participation in the programme in 2009-10. Some registered participants were withdrawn from the programme by their employers 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 1,933 NQSWs participating in the programme.

**TABLE 1.1: PARTICIPANTS IN THE NQSW PROGRAMME AND RESPONSE RATES FOR THE NQSW EVALUATION SURVEY IN YEAR 2 (2009-10)**

	Time 1		Time 3MR		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Registered participants	2020*	100.0	2020*	100.0	2013**	100.0
<i>Early starters (as a proportion of all participants)</i>	1208	59.8	1208	59.8	1194	59.3
<i>Late starters (as a proportion of all participants)</i>	812	40.2	812	40.2	819	40.7
Participants withdrawn by their employer	95	4.7	95	4.7	104	5.2
Delayed start (maternity/long term sick)	8	0.4	8	0.4	10	0.5
Participants eligible to respond to programme evaluation	<b>1933</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>1933</b>	<b>95.7</b>	<b>1919</b>	<b>95.3</b>
Respondents and response rate	<b>705</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>30.3</b>
<i>Early starters (as a proportion of all early starters)</i>	383	31.7	290	24.0	318	26.6
<i>Late starters (as a proportion of all late starters)</i>	322	39.7	188	23.2	263	32.1

Note: \* Based on CWDC Stocktake January 2010

\*\* Based on CWDC Stocktake August 2010

Discounting the participants in the NQSW programme whose start was delayed (eight NQSWs), 35 per cent of the NQSWs who had started the programme responded to the baseline survey (Table 1.1)<sup>23</sup>, compared with 51 per cent of those in the Year 1 cohort. At T3MR participants in the NQSW programme 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.

The response rate at T2 dropped to 30 per cent, which was slightly lower than in the Year 1 cohort (33 per cent.) The findings need to be considered in the light of these response rates. It is not possible to say whether the responses of those who completed the survey were representative of the NQSWs as a whole.

In total, over 1,200 of the 1,933 eligible programme participants (61 per cent) responded to the survey on at least one occasion. Of these 1,187 (93 per cent) provided full demographic information.

The demographic profiles of the NQSWs at the different times in Year 2 of the NQSW programme to date are shown in Table A13.1 (Appendix 13). The percentages in the table relate to the total number of NQSWs for which demographic data are available in Year 2<sup>24</sup>. Table A13.2 (Appendix 13) shows the demographic profiles of respondents completing surveys at mutually exclusive time points. There were only two statistically significant differences in the proportions of respondents by group: white respondents were more likely than BME respondents to respond at all three time points; and those from the South West were more likely to respond at all three survey time points than respondents from other regions. However, since the numbers involved were small and also because the analysis involved multiple comparisons, these results should be treated with caution. Overall, we can conclude that the respondents at each time point were representative of the respondents as a whole.

<sup>23</sup> As previously noted in the Baseline Report, the response rate was much lower for the early starters than for the late starters. The reasons for this are not known. There was no difference in the way in which the survey was administered.

<sup>24</sup> Initial analyses revealed that there were some differences between early starters and late starters in terms of ethnicity, type of employer and region of employment. There were relatively more respondents from BME groups, London boroughs and the Northwest who were late starters. However, for the purposes of this report, early starters and late starters have been combined.

### 1.5.1.2 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.

Programme coordinators were surveyed in February 2010 (Time 1) and again in February 2011 (Time 2). Unlike in the first year of the NQSW programme where CWDC sent the survey link to programme coordinators, in Year 2 the evaluation team sent programme coordinators an email invitation to complete the online surveys at both time points.<sup>25</sup>

Programme coordinators were asked to rate possible barriers to the implementation of the programme using a standardised 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.

As Table 1.2 shows, the baseline survey was completed by 49 of the 104 programme coordinators in the local authorities (47 per cent). At Time 2, one year later, 63 programme coordinators replied (57 per cent). Only 16 programme coordinators (17 per cent) completed both surveys. The findings from these surveys are presented below.

**TABLE 1.2: PROGRAMME COORDINATORS IN THE NQSW PROGRAMME AND RESPONSE RATES FOR THE NQSW EVALUATION SURVEYS IN 2009-10**

	Time 1		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Programme coordinators eligible to respond to programme evaluation	104*	100	110**	100.0
Programme coordinators responding to weblink invitation/email invite and response rate	49	47.1	63	57.3

Note: \* 56 new sites entered NQSW programme in Year 2 plus 48 sites from Year 1 changed programme coordinator.

\*\* 12 new programme coordinators began their role by the end of Year 2 of the NQSW programme.

### 1.5.1.3 Supervisors

Those staff that 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<sup>26</sup>. They were asked whether they had participated in the CWDC training programme for supervisors and, if not, whether they planned

<sup>25</sup> The change in approach was deemed to be a more efficient less time consuming method to establish contact both for CWDC and the evaluation team and less confusing for the organisations sampled.

<sup>26</sup> 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](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/2832/Providing_Effective_Supervision_unit.pdf)

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. An invitation email was sent by the evaluation team to supervisors identified by the CWDC. This contrasted with the first year of the NQSW programme in which CWDC sent out a survey link to supervisors.

Supervisors of social workers participating in Year 2 of the NQSW programme were scheduled to be surveyed in April 2010, but this had to be cancelled because of Cabinet Office restrictions on contact with local government employees during the pre-general election period<sup>27</sup>. Consequently they were only surveyed at Time 2, in February 2011. Although 62 supervisors out of a possible 279 accessed the online survey, only 50 provided answers to all the questions (see Table 1.3 below). The findings from this survey are presented below.

**TABLE 1.3: SUPERVISORS OF NQSW SOCIAL WORKERS IN THE NQSW PROGRAMME AND RESPONSE RATES FOR THE NQSW EVALUATION SURVEYS 2008-09 AND 2009-10**

	Time 1		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Supervisors of NQSW social workers eligible to respond to programme evaluation	NA*	-	279	100.0
Supervisors of NQSW social workers responding to weblink invitation/email invite and response rate	NA*	-	62**	22.2

Note: \* Supervisors survey not carried out at Time 1 of Year 2 of the NQSW programme.

\*\* Incomplete data for 12 supervisors, final N=50.

### 1.5.2 Qualitative study and samples

In the qualitative component of the evaluation, data were collected from fourteen organisations across England, all local authorities<sup>28</sup>.

In each organisation a member of the evaluation team, using agreed schedules (Appendices 2-5), conducted the following:

1. an individual face to face interview with the programme coordinator;
2. an individual face to face interview with the senior manager responsible for the programme, usually the assistant director of children's services, (where face to face meetings could not be arranged the interview was conducted by telephone);
3. a focus group to which all NQSWs in the organisation were invited;
4. focus groups to which all of supervisors of NQSWs in the organisation were invited (this included both line-managers and, in some organisations, senior practitioners or freelance supervisors; in this report the views of line-managers and supervisors have not been separated).

Participating organisations were designated as one of two types (Table 1.4):

<sup>27</sup> [www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/briefings/snpc-05262.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/briefings/snpc-05262.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Although, one coordinating voluntary organisation agreed to facilitate focus group meetings with social workers, managers and co-ordinators from several voluntary organisations no one actually came. This site visit occurred too late in the data collection process to make alternate arrangements.

1. “case studies” which were selected to represent the different types of organisations that provided social work services to children and families (county, unitary, metropolitan, London borough and voluntary organisations) across the different regions of England.
2. “organisational studies”, in which additional data were collected from individual NQSWs and their supervisors. In the final report (Spring 2012) these organisational studies will be used as examples to show how the NQSW programme was implemented and developed locally over the first three years; they are not reported separately here.

Table 1.4: Qualitative study sample by NQSW programme year<sup>29</sup>

Authority	Type	NQSW (Pilot Programme) (2008-09)	NQSW (2009-10)
<b>London Boroughs</b>			
A	Borough	organisational study	organisational study
B	Borough	case study	
C	Borough		case study
<b>South East</b>			
E	County	case study	case study
F	Unitary	case study	
<b>South West</b>			
J	Unitary	organisational study	organisational study
K	County	case study	
L	County		case study
<b>North East</b>			
M	Metropolitan	case study	case study
O	County		case study
R	Metropolitan	case study	
<b>Yorkshire</b>			
T	Metropolitan		case study
U	Metropolitan		organisational study
<b>North West</b>			
V	Metropolitan	organisational study	
W	Metropolitan	case study	case study
Z	County		case study
<b>West Midlands</b>			
AB	County	organisational study	
AC	Metropolitan	case study	
AD	County		organisational study
<b>East</b>			
AF	County	case study	
AG	County		case study
AH	Unitary		case study

<sup>29</sup> Note the sample comprised fourteen organisations in total for the qualitative components of the 2009-10 evaluation. .

Authority	Type	NQSW (Pilot Programme) (2008-09)	NQSW (2009-10)
<b>East Midlands</b>			
None			
<b>Voluntary</b>			
AK	National NGO	case study	
Total number of sites (case + organisational)		10+4=14	10+4=14

Following the initial pilot (2008-9), the NQSW programme was extended to all organisations employing children's social workers. With this in mind, it was planned to increase the number of case studies from ten to fourteen and the number of organisational studies from four to six. This would enable an analysis of implementation in organisations which were new to the programme. However, while additional organisations were identified and agreed in principle to participate, it proved impractical to collect data. Changes in the organisational climate arising from financial restructuring, staffing changes and re-organisation led to a decision by some of the selected organisations to withdraw late in the data collection period. This made it impossible to arrange suitable substitute organisations. In other cases staff who had agreed to take part in focus group meetings or interviews were unable to attend because of pressure of work, court attendance, participation in case conferences or absence for sickness. Since there was no requirement for organisations or staff to participate in this component of the evaluation, the research team was unable to make progress.

The numbers of staff interviewed individually or participating in focus groups are detailed in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Numbers and designations of staff participating in the case and organisational studies by organisational type

Type of employer and number	NQSWs	Team leader	Other Supervisor	Programme coordinator	Senior Manager	Total
County Council (4)	23 (107)	19	2	8	5	57
London Borough (3)	15 (35)	1	3	2	1	22
Metropolitan (6)	15 (40)	5	0	3	0	23
Unitary (3)	17 (42)	2	0	2	2	23
Voluntary (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (17)	70	27	5	15	8	125

Note: the total numbers of NQSWs in the organisations at the time of data collection are given in brackets

### 1.5.3 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 (see Appendices 6-8 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 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 into the third year of the programme and will be presented in the final report.

## 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)<sup>30</sup>, 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)*

Because self-efficacy might be related to organisational constraints on social workers carrying out their role, a measure of role conflict was included in the survey. Multivariate analysis was used to investigate whether there was a relationship between self-efficacy and the experience of role conflict, with other variables being held constant.

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"<sup>31</sup> (see 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<sup>32</sup>. 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

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<sup>30</sup>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.

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup>CWDC (2008) *NQSW Outcome statements and guidance*. Leeds: CWDC.

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.

## **1.7 Recruitment and retention**

### **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<sup>33</sup>. 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 employers participating in the case and organisational studies were asked to provide *retrospective* data on recruitment and retention plus vacancy and turnover rates for NQSWs participating in the programme in 2009-10.

## **1.8 Data Analysis**

### **1.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The interviews and focus groups followed structured formats (see Appendices 2-5) 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. This data set was then added to the qualitative data analysis programme (NVivo) and analysed thematically.

The analysis was further developed through 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 the final report the evaluation team will provide an analysis of how organisational and individual experiences change as the programme developed from the piloting stage<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> Note: because it was not possible for the evaluation team to have any contact with the local authorities during the General Election period, the timetable for data collection had to be amended and the data collection was significantly delayed. This made it impossible to complete the longitudinal analysis envisaged in the remaining time available.



### 1.8.2 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data analysis began with descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation of demographic variables and responses to the outcome measures. The NQSW Year 2 baseline report<sup>35</sup> 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 reported in detail below 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 (e.g. 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 explore the statistical predictors of the various outcomes.

## 2 Findings

### 2.1 Implementation of the programme

#### 2.1.1 Participation in the programme

As noted above, 2,020 social workers were initially registered by their employers in the second year of the programme. During the course of the year, 104 NQSWs (five per cent of those initially registered) were withdrawn by their employers and eight had a delayed start to the programme.

For comparison, in 2008-09, 253 NQSWs (22 per cent of those initially registered) were withdrawn from the programme in the first year (35 of whom had a delayed start)<sup>36</sup>.

Table 2.1: Participants in Year 1 and Year 2 of NQSW programme

	NQSW Year 1 (2008-09)			NQSW Year 2 (2009-10)		
	Time 1	Time 3MR	Time 2	Time 1	Time 3MR	Time 2
Registrants	1035	1000	1000	2020	2020	1925
Withdrew		NA	162		95	9
Delayed start	35			8	6	2

##### 2.1.1.1 Reasons for withdrawals

Programme coordinators provided CWDC with reasons for the withdrawal of 96 (92 per cent) of the 104 social workers (see Table 2.2). More than a quarter (n=26) left their post for a different social work position and less than a quarter (n=20) declined to participate in the NQSW programme for personal reasons.

<sup>35</sup> Baseline Report to CWDC October 2010 (unpublished).

<sup>36</sup> All information on withdrawals for Year 1 and Year of the NQSW programme was provided to CWDC and was not collected as part of the evaluation.

**TABLE 2.2: REASONS FOR WITHDRAWALS AND DELAYED STARTS IN YEAR 2 OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME (N=94)**

<b>REASON</b>	<b>Number</b>
Left for a different social work position	26
Declined to participate for personal reasons	20
Registered but never started	12
Left social work post to other/unknown job	11
Registered in error	11
Contract was terminated by employer	7
Other reason	7
Employer organisation withdrew	0
Total	94*

Note: \*Reasons for withdrawal and delayed starts not provided for eight registered participants.

## **2.1.2 NQSWs' experiences overall experiences and expectations**

### **2.1.2.1 Satisfaction with NQSW programme**

Three quarters of respondents at Time 1 were satisfied with the overall package of work, support and training they received from their employer (see Table 2.3 below).

In the previous (2008-09) cohort of NQSWs, this question was asked only at Time 2 when it was found that 58 per cent of respondents were generally satisfied with the overall package of work, support and training which they had been receiving from their employer. It can be seen that, although satisfaction rates dropped between the start and end of the 2009-10 cohort, NQSW satisfaction ratings were still 10 per cent higher than in the first year. This is an encouraging finding.

**TABLE 2.3: SATISFACTION WITH OVERALL PACKAGE OF WORK, SUPPORT AND TRAINING AT THE THREE SURVEY TIME POINTS**

	T1		T3MR		T2	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Satisfied	519	74.8	134	69.8	389	68.4
Not satisfied	175	25.2	58	30.2	180	31.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Fifteen NQSWs responding to the T3MR survey, and 153 NQSWs responding to the Time 2 survey provided written comments on their experience of the NQSW programme. Around a third of these commented positively. Positive comments were associated with those who had supportive managers and were given adequate time to focus on the NQSW programme:

*I feel that this course has given me the opportunity to consider my practice and reflect more effectively on my own professional development. Having the time to consider through the use of practice supervision has been a wonderful way to be critical of my practice in a safe environment without fear of it impacting on my employment and being able to voice, analyse and consider realistic ways of improving both my practice and confidence. (NQSW Time 3 month review survey)*

Further, this satisfaction was associated by the following respondent with retention in her post:

*I am more than happy and feel that this has kept me in the post. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

It is important to note that those who were dissatisfied were much more likely to write about their experiences than those who were satisfied. At the end of the programme, just over 100 NQSWs (18 per cent of the respondents overall) wrote expressing dissatisfaction with the support they were receiving.

A quarter of the NQSWs who commented negatively in the Time 2 survey reported dissatisfaction with poor management of the programme within local authorities . For example:

*I have only just been given appropriate advice on my portfolio. I have had had no training that was identified in my training plan, no support, no reduction in case load and just more work to do!! (NQSW Time 3 month review survey)*

The other most common cause for complaint was that team managers were unsupportive. A fifth of the NQSWs that commented negatively in the Time 2 survey stated that this was an issue, for example:

*I was not supported by my line manager, I was not allowed to have a protected case load, nor was she helpful when it came to the portfolio. I had difficulty getting my study days off work and did not receive all my entitlement. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

Dissatisfied respondents were more likely to be employees of an organisation which was participating in the NQSW programme for the first time. Three quarters of the comments from those whose employers were engaged in the programme for the first time were negative compared to a half for those whose organisation was in its second year. The social worker quoted below recognised that this was a factor in her organisation:

*I think there has been a lack of awareness about the newly qualified social work programme in its initial year. There has been an expectation that we up our workload and complexity of workload much quicker than the programme intends... it leaves workers with insufficient time for reflection, outside reading and completion of the academic parts of the programme. Thus, I feel... that the course is tokenistic (sic), which is a real shame, as I feel that the ideas behind the course are excellent and should be followed through. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

In common with the previous year, the pressure of work on some teams was clearly an impediment, as one NQSW explained ruefully:

*Not all teams are able to give protected caseloads and allocated time for training and development to NQSWs. Where this happens NQSWs end up having same caseload as experienced workers, no protected time, extra demands from NQSW programme, and less pay. Not a winning combination. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

### **2.1.2.2 Benefits of the programme**

Participants in the NQSW programme were asked to rank (from greatest to least) the benefits to them as social workers of participating in the programme (see Table 2.4 below). In the first two surveys (T1 and T3MR) respondents were asked to rate the *potential* benefits on the grounds that it was probably too early for them to make an informed judgement. At the follow up survey (T2) they were asked to rate the *actual* benefits which they had experienced.

Regular, structured supervision was ranked the greatest benefit of the NQSW programme by over a third of social worker respondents at both the beginning and end of the programme. The second most important benefit was a reduced caseload. These rankings followed those found in 2008-09 (at T2).

**TABLE 2.4: POTENTIAL/ACTUAL BENEFITS OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME AT TIME 1 (OR TIME 3MR) AND TIME 2**

Benefit		T1&T3MR		T2	
		Potential		Actual	
		N	%	N	%
Reduced (90%) caseload	Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	258	30.8	144	26.2
	2	212	25.3	86	15.6
	3	129	15.4	101	18.4
	4	104	12.4	73	13.3
	Ranked 5 <sup>th</sup>	134	16.0	146	26.5
	Total	837	100.0	550	100.0
Regular, structured supervision	Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	300	35.8	193	35.2
	2	250	29.8	145	26.5
	3	135	16.1	96	17.5
	4	108	12.9	73	13.3
	Ranked 5 <sup>th</sup>	46	5.5	41	7.5
	Total	839	100.0	548	100.0
Peer support	Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	110	13.1	119	21.7
	2	146	17.4	129	23.5
	3	196	23.4	124	22.6
	4	206	24.6	99	18.0
	Ranked 5 <sup>th</sup>	180	21.5	78	14.2
	Total	838	100.0	549	100.0
Allocation of 10% workload for training	Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	78	9.3	29	5.3
	2	156	18.6	117	21.3
	3	294	35.0	183	33.3
	4	228	27.2	166	30.2
	Ranked 5 <sup>th</sup>	83	9.9	55	10.0
	Total	839	100.0	550	100.0
Additional funds for training and development	Ranked 1 <sup>st</sup>	81	9.7	43	7.8
	2	71	8.5	65	11.8
	3	118	14.1	101	18.4
	4	181	21.6	107	19.5
	Ranked 5 <sup>th</sup>	386	46.1	233	42.4
	Total	837	100.0	549	100.0

By the end of the programme, a significantly higher proportion of NQSWs valued peer support as most important (up from 13 per cent to 22 per cent.) As one commented:

*I did enjoy the opportunity to network with other NQSWs. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

But there was a drop in the proportion ranking a reduced caseload as the most important element. For example, one respondent who had given low ratings regarding the actual benefits of caseload reduction and time for training commented at the end of the programme:

*It should have been valuable, but it didn't happen. I do not feel I have had a reduced caseload or had 10% time for training and development. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

A third of those commenting in the Time 2 survey stated that a lack of reduction in caseload was a problem. The promise of additional funds for training and development was the least highly

rated anticipated or realised benefit. Seven commented that it was difficult to obtain the additional funding, or that they were not aware of the additional funding. However, those who had received funding were appreciative:

*I have had a NQSW training programme and NQSW funds available from my employer, and have attempted to make best use of these. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

### **2.1.3 Managers' opinions on overall effectiveness of the programme and confidence in NQSWs**

#### **2.1.3.1 Senior managers**

Seven of the twelve senior managers interviewed commented on the impacts of the programme. Two of them were strongly supportive of the programme and the other five were moderately supportive. Those who made specific reference to benefits of the programme mentioned improvement in recruitment and retention, an increase in the quality of applications for NQSW posts, NQSWs having a better idea of their career expectations and organisations being able to consolidate good practice<sup>37</sup>. These views are detailed summarised in Table 2.5.

**TABLE 2.5: SUMMARY OF MANAGERS' OPINIONS (INTERVIEWS)**

<b>Comments on Effectiveness of NQSW programme</b>	<b>Senior Managers</b>	<b>Team managers</b>
Improvement in recruitment & retention	2/7	4/10
Increase in the quality of staff applications for NQSW posts	2/7	
NQSWs having a better idea of their career expectations and future planning	1/7	4/10
Organizations being better able to consolidate good practice and to promote the development of staff	2/7	
Provided NQSW with support and opportunities to continue their learning in a protected environment		6/10
NQSWs received higher quality of support from peers and across the organization		1/10
Supervisors/ TMs are better able to understand the needs and expectations of NQSWs		2/10
Negative impacts, e.g. costs, stress		3/14

#### **2.1.3.2 Supervisors and team managers**

In the data gathered through the case and organisational studies, supervisors/team managers in ten out of 14 focus groups were positive about the impact and effectiveness of the programme. Nearly half of these expressed a consensus view that the programme had had a positive impact on recruitment, while others expressed the view that it was premature to comment. Supervisors/team managers in three of the 14 sites expressed negative views about the programme; one focus group was concerned about the cost of the programme, another was

<sup>37</sup> Senior managers' opinions of the NQSW programme are being investigated in a sample of 30 from across the country. Findings will be reported in the final report.

not able to identify differences made by the NQSW programme, while the remaining group worried about the additional stress on teams and the organisation.

Significant impacts and benefits were identified by most managers. According to the supervisors/team managers in six sites, the programme reduced the sense of anxiety experienced by NQSWs and provided them with support and opportunities to continue their learning in a safe and protected environment. Due to the programme, NQSWs were now viewed as a distinct group within the organisation, one with professional needs that were different from other practitioners. Hence, NQSWs were able to access increased levels of higher quality support both from their peers and also across the organization more generally. Two focus groups expressed the view that they were better able to understand the needs and expectations of NQSWs. Similarly, in four of the ten sites expressing positive views, respondents believed that NQSWs would have a more detailed understanding of their future career path.

Those that considered the programme to be less effective related this to the difficulties experienced by some organisations in protecting NQSWs' caseloads. In responses to the online survey, five supervisors commented specifically on this matter, as illustrated by the following observation:

*The organisation is not able to protect NQSW case loads due to pressures of cases thus planned gradual introductions into more complex work does not regularly happen but is more dependent on organisations needs not workers developmental needs. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey)*

Another supervisor considered that their NQSWs needed more time to settle into post before beginning the NQSW programme:

*My current NQSW was a late starter to the scheme due to when she began working in the team. She missed the introductory sessions and as a consequence is not totally clear about the scheme. I believe she required two months in post to familiarise herself with the work of the team and her allocated cases prior to beginning the NQSW scheme as this has felt like an overload of information for her. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey)*

One commented that a NQSW's development can not necessarily be associated with the NQSW programme itself, but may be more so with the general quality of the team they are in and the supervisor that they have:

*I feel the programme has been useful in a way, it is important to emphasise that the progress made by NQSW students can be just as much, or more, to do with good supervision/team support than the actual programme. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey).*

Conversely, it is quite possible that the programme helped some NQSWs to make progress in spite of poor team support and high levels of role conflict.

#### **2.1.4 Programme coordinators' perspectives on implementation**

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".

Forty seven programme coordinators provided responses at baseline and 63 at the end of the programme. At both time points, programme coordinators reported that managers' interest and support (approximately one in five) and programme coordinators' own time (approximately one in six) were the largest barriers to implementation (see Table 2.6 below). There were no statistically significant differences<sup>38</sup> in the strength of barriers identified by programme coordinators at the two time points in 2009-10.

In 2008-09, manager's interest and support and programme coordinator's own time were also identified by programme coordinators as the two biggest barriers.

**TABLE 2.6: PROGRAMME COORDINATORS' ASSESSMENTS OF BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NQSW PROGRAMME AT T1 AND T2**

Barrier		T1		T2	
		N	%	N	%
Managers' interest and support	No barrier	8	17.0	8	12.7
	Slight	12	25.5	7	11.1
	Small	7	14.9	15	23.8
	Modest	12	25.5	20	31.7
	Large	8	17.0	13	20.6
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
My time	No barrier	9	19.1	15	23.8
	Slight	8	17.0	9	14.3
	Small	9	19.1	7	11.1
	Modest	14	29.8	21	33.3
	Large	7	14.9	11	17.5
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
My knowledge and skills	No barrier	19	40.4	32	50.8
	Slight	11	23.4	17	27.0
	Small	5	10.6	7	11.1
	Modest	11	23.4	6	9.5
	Large	1	2.1	1	1.6
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
Clarity about my role	No barrier	22	46.8	26	41.3
	Slight	8	17.0	18	28.6
	Small	9	19.1	13	20.6
	Modest	6	12.8	4	6.3
	Large	2	4.3	2	3.2
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
NQSWs' commitment to the programme	No barrier	12	25.5	9	14.3

<sup>38</sup> Statistical significance tested using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.



Barrier		T1		T2	
		N	%	N	%
	Slight	17	36.2	12	19.0
	Small	11	23.4	22	34.9
	Modest	6	12.8	17	27.0
	Large	1	2.1	3	4.8
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
Quality of supervision for NQSWs	No barrier	10	21.3	11	17.5
	Slight	12	25.5	14	22.2
	Small	8	17.0	9	14.3
	Modest	12	25.5	21	33.3
	Large	5	10.6	8	12.7
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0
Quality of support from CWDC	No barrier	16	34.0	17	27.0
	Slight	12	25.5	15	23.8
	Small	10	21.3	12	19.0
	Modest	5	10.6	19	30.2
	Large	4	8.5	0	.0
	Insurmountable	0	.0	0	.0
	Total	47	100.0	63	100.0

In the data gathered through the case and organisational studies the views of coordinators were equally divided between those that were positive and those that had reservations about the way in which implementation of the NQSW programme had been undertaken. Half (seven out of 14 sites) were positive, commenting that the implementation had been smooth for the second cohort and that this was an improvement on the experience of those in the first cohort.

Particular improvements commented upon were, an increase in flexibility and autonomy given to the NQSWs to develop their own programme and better management of the NQSWs' workload as the needs of the NQSWs on the programme were more clearly understood by their supervisors and team managers. Those coordinators with positive views had a strong sense of being supported by the senior management and the team managers. Where these factors applied, the coordinators commented that the programme was gradually being embedded within the organization. The overall view of this group was best expressed in the words of one coordinator "we are making good progress".

In the survey data some coordinators commented on the availability of time as a factor in the implementation of the programme. Six commented that because coordinating the NQSW programme was not their only role, time was a significant barrier and they felt that they were unable to give the programme the full attention that it needed, for example:

*Because we are a small unitary authority NQSW is only a small part of my role and at times other pressures make it difficult to give it the time I would like. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

Conversely and unsurprisingly, this did not seem to be an issue for those whose only role was to coordinate the programme.

In addition in the case and organisational studies, some coordinators also pointed out the importance of a more coordinated approach within organisations rather than having to rely on individual managers in the implementation process. Nevertheless, these coordinators remained committed to the NQSW programme at the end of the second year.

### 2.1.5 NQSWs' caseloads

This section summarizes available data about NQSWs' caseloads from the responses of programme coordinators and NQSWs.

The surveys of *programme coordinators* did not ask them to make any ratings concerning the size or nature of NQSWs' caseloads. However, thirteen programme coordinators who responded to the open questions in the survey considered that the NQSWs' high caseloads were a significant barrier to the implementation of the programme. In addition, the judgement of what could be taken to be a reduced caseload was not easy:

*All NQSWs want to be committed but as their caseload increase this becomes more difficult –and it's always difficult to say what a 90% workload actually is. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey).*

However, two supervisors commented that protecting caseloads was a difficult task as some cases allocated to NQSWs can develop in to more complex cases very quickly, before they have completed their first 'protected' year in practice:

*The professional practice moves faster than the NQSW. My workers have all had child protection cases and been involved in [court] proceedings before they are meant to according to the NQSW guidelines. They have had to learn quickly and have been efficient and proactive in their learning. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey)*

There was a tension for managers between protecting NQSW caseloads and the need to fulfil organisation priorities for case allocation:

*The organisation is not able to protect NQSW case loads due to pressures of cases thus planned gradual introductions into more complex work does not regularly happen but is more dependent on organisations needs not workers developmental needs. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey)*

As in the first year of the programme, nearly all of the NQSWs who commented on this issue in the surveys believed that they had not received the ten per cent reduction in caseloads. This was attributed to high team caseloads and staffing issues:

*Due to the demands of our team, and the lack of staff and the increase in work load, it has not been possible to have reduced caseloads. (NQSW T3MR survey)*

None the less, one in five NQSWs commented specifically that their managers were proactive in protecting their time and space as an NQSW. Consequently, the following social worker for example, explained that their NQSW experience was very positive:

*Thanks to good manager - very protective of NQSW. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

Without the reduced caseload the NQSW programme was sometimes viewed as an additional burden – adding even more to their workload, rather than something helpful:

*The support is a nice idea in theory but with the reality of a social worker's workload, NQSW ends up feeling like an additional pressure. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

Several NQSWs felt that it was not possible to argue their case for the reduced caseload because this was something very difficult to quantify; from being a student, it was hard to know what a 'reduced caseload' might reasonably comprise. This comment echoed the views of the managers above:

*We have not had a noticeable 10% reduction in our caseload and this could not be proved or disproved. (NQSW Survey Time 2)*

### **2.1.6 Managers' commitment – programme coordinators' views**

In the first year of the programme, coordinators seemed concerned about the level of support from senior management; whereas in the second year this no longer seemed to be such an issue. In the case and organisational studies the level of commitment by team managers towards the programme was considered 'mixed' (eight out of 14 sites). Some managers valued the programme highly and demonstrated a strong level of commitment. Of those that expressed a particularly high level of commitment one was strongly motivated by senior management approval of the NQSW programme and the other by personal sympathy with the core philosophy that underpinned the programme.

Those managers in the four sites which expressed a lesser commitment to the programme gave as their main reason the limited time available to devote to programme tasks. This was echoed in the survey data.

One in six programme coordinators in the Time 2 survey commented on the issue of line managers' commitment. They considered that although line managers were often supportive of the programme in principle, many were struggling with the demands of the programme on NQSWs' time:

*There is a big commitment from senior management but line managers feel that the programme places time restraints on their NQSWs through their attendance at courses and having time for completion of their portfolio. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

Some line managers were reported as having problems in finding the time to commit to the programme, in spite of commitment at senior level:

*Top management is committed to the programme, but first line management find it difficult to find the time to focus on it in supervision or attend briefings on the requirements of the programme. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

One programme coordinator felt that due to financial pressures managers were struggling to implement the programme, creating staffing issues and making it increasingly difficult to manage caseloads and provide protected time for NQSWs:

*The cutbacks with workers and managers unsure how to progress and plan in the context of uncertainty. For example, two workers were made redundant last year before they were able to complete the programme. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

### **2.1.7 Supervision: case management and reflective supervision**

This section of the report considers supervision. All social workers, however experienced, should be receiving supervision to ensure competent, accountable practice. This is a standard 'management function' in most organisations. Because the focus of an NQSW's practice is work with and for children, young people and their families this can be described as case management supervision. Discussions between supervisor and supervisee may include the level of risk, assessment, the implementation of the worker's intervention plan and ensuring the case management is in line with the law and with the employer's policies and procedures.

The primary focus here is on 'reflective' supervision, which aims to support the NQSW in engaging with their organisation (the 'mediating function') and their continuing professional development (the 'development function'). Reflective supervision is concerned with the NQSWs learning from their experiences. It allows them to consider 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.

Through the NQSW programme, CWDC provides training for supervisors in a model of supervision<sup>39</sup> which encompasses the three functions mentioned above plus 'personal support'. It also provides employers with the additional resources to provide additional reflective supervision during the first year in practice. Specifically, the NQSW's entitlement is to fortnightly supervision of at least 90 minutes for the first three months. Then, with the agreement of both parties, the frequency of supervision can be reduced to a minimum of once a month for the rest of the programme. The guidance does not stipulate who should provide the supervision and the report of the first year evaluation indicated a range of arrangements.

In 2009-10, the supervisors' Time 2 survey revealed that overall approximately three quarters of supervisors (37 out of 50) were the NQSWs' line managers. Of the remainder, four indicated that they were freelance and two supervisors self-classified as "other".

An analysis of supervision arrangements in the 14 case study sites (Table 2.7) showed that in six organisations team managers provided both case management and reflective supervision. In a further five organisations, the team manager provided case management supervision only, with a senior practitioner or assistant team manager providing the reflective supervision. Two organisations had engaged freelance (external) supervisors to provide reflective supervision and in a third this task was performed by the programme coordinator.

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<sup>39</sup> [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0247/2009-10\\_NQSW\\_guide\\_for\\_supervisors\\_\\_2.33\\_Mb\\_.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0247/2009-10_NQSW_guide_for_supervisors__2.33_Mb_.pdf)

**TABLE 2.7: 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	2	1	1	2	6
London Borough	0	0	1	0	1
Metropolitan	3	0	2	0	5
Voluntary	0	0	0	0	0
Unitary	1	0	1	0	2
Total	6	1	5	2	14

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.

### 2.1.7.1 Frequency of supervision

Overall, more than two thirds of 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 (see Table 2.8 below). Three in ten respondents reported receiving supervision for less than 90 minutes, and/or that their sessions were less frequent. Just 17 of over 500 respondents said that they had not been receiving protected supervision at all at Time 2.

In comparison, in 2008-09, half the NQSWs responding to the T2 survey said that, on average, they received supervision for 90 minutes every two weeks; four in ten reported receiving supervision for less than 90 minutes, and/or that their sessions were less frequent. Six social workers said that they had not been receiving it at all.

**TABLE 2.8: RECEIPT OF SUPERVISION AT TIME 1 (OR TIME 3MR) AND TIME 2**

	T1&T3MR		T2	
	N	%	N	%
Yes, on average	472	54.5	385	66.8
No, less than this	373	43.1	174	30.2
No, I did not receive any structured supervision	21	2.4	17	3.0
Total	866	100.0	576	100.0

The majority were receiving regular supervision in line with the programme requirements. Many reported very positive supervision experiences:

*I had excellent, structured and fully committed supervision from my supervisor. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

In the survey, a third of the fifty NQSWs who commented negatively on their supervision in the Time 2 survey cited work pressures as the reason.

*Because of the pressures on the Team manager, it was often arranged or altered at the last minute; service demands were considered the priority. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

In the case and organisational studies the majority of NQSWs interviewed said they received regular supervision. In one organisation this was very regular with only one respondent reporting disruption due to the manager being sick. In another organisation, where generally the situation appeared more stressed, time for supervision was under more pressure:

*It does happen but is often cut short because of crisis. We try to get on to the non- case bits...things about me and training and they always asked about the NQSW but it did feel very pressurised. (NQSW case study)*

Another reported that she and her supervisor

*...often sit in front of a computer making sure everything is on the system...ICS...which is helpful but it does mean we don't have much time to really talk through the cases in any deep way. (NQSW case study)*

In all the case and organisational studies sites NQSWs received fortnightly supervision in the initial part of their participation on the NQSW programme, which reduced to once a month in the later stages. Time for supervision varied between 30 minutes and two hours; most NQSWs were said to receive around two hours for each supervision session.

In ten of the 14 case and organisational study sites, the NQSW focus groups reported positive experiences of supervision. In seven sites they said that supervision was suitably timed with an adequate amount of reflective supervision. Supervision also covered case management, sickness/annual leave, team issues and training and development.

In five focus groups there was a shared appreciation by NQSWs of their supervisors' ability to enable them to work towards their own decisions, giving advice on how to handle situations, and providing emotional support. These supervisors were commended for challenging the NQSWs to think both about how they made decisions and also the perspectives that they adopted in relation to their cases. Reflective supervision provided opportunities to think creatively, unravel the complexity of cases, to explore the impact of the self on others and to plan.

In addition to formal supervision, social workers in two of the sites mentioned receiving informal supervision as their supervisors adopted an open door policy, which was greatly appreciated.

However, in seven of the 14 organisations one or more NQSWs complained that they did not receive adequate reflective supervision. Sessions had apparently been cancelled or delayed sessions because their supervisors were too busy or had long-term sick leave. One focus group participant said he did not have formal supervision for a six-month period.

In four of the 14 sites some of the NQSWs complained that their supervisors did not have enough knowledge about the NQSW programme to provide the supervision to meet their needs. One asserted that when supervision sessions did happen, a great deal of time was spent by the NQSW helping the supervisor to understand the NQSW programme.

Those organisations that were new to the NQSW programme had more difficulty establishing good supervisory practice and that this impacted on the experience of NQSWs:

*When I first started my social work position, the department that I was working in had no knowledge of the NQSW and I wasn't invited to any of the first sessions. Initially I didn't have a reflective supervisor. When someone was identified I had a few sessions with this person, and then unfortunately they left the department. There was then difficulty finding someone to take over this role as supervisor. So I had a fair period of time without any support. Eventually I had a new supervisor in my final months. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

### **2.1.8 Peer group and team support**

NQSWs in ten of the 14 sites found their peer groups to be supportive. They valued meeting other NQSWs with whom they were able to share experiences and anxieties. This generated a sense for NQSWs of being supported and it engendered confidence in their ability to perform work tasks and left them feeling refreshed.

One in five of the NQSWs in the Time 2 survey who reported that they did not receive their regular structured supervision stated that peer support had proved invaluable:

*Frankly, peer support from other NQSW's has been the lifesaver. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

### **2.1.9 Training**

As part of the case and organizational studies all focus groups of NQSWs commented on training that they had received and expressed broad satisfaction with it. A range of training and informal learning opportunities across organizations was described. The latter included co-working and shadowing, and joint assessment and planning with more experienced workers, work with care leavers. Training included responding to sexually harmful behaviours, courtroom skills, communicating with children, and developing personal education plans). Many of these were regarded as very helpful and met NQSWs' developmental needs. Most NQSWs appreciated the high standard of the training. Of particular value were those courses that covered material not addressed either at all or in sufficient detail as part of their degree course. NQSWs acknowledged that a great deal of learning took place on the job, and they believed that it was what they needed at that stage.

Focus group participants in five sites agreed that they preferred more specific training rather than general training that might duplicate their degree studies. Thus, they would prefer training that is practical and role specific and to have choice about which training is appropriate for their needs. The timing of training was also seen to be important, for example, sessions covering assessment and planning should be provided early as these are central to the NQSWs' work.

Programme coordinators in all 14 organizational and case study sites commented on the NQSWs' training and development plans. All bar one had adopted such plans based either on CWDC NQSW programme documents (six sites) or the organisations' existing staff development and appraisal forms and procedures (seven sites). Where training plans specific to

the CWDC NQSW programme were not adopted it was because organisational arrangements were judged to be satisfactory and appropriate.

In eight sites NQSWs reported having developed individual plans by discussing training needs with other NQSWs both informally and through peer group meetings, with their line managers, and the programme coordinator. Just as the methods used to develop plans varied, so the time span between reviews varied across different organizations and supervisors. In only two of the 13 organizations which used training plans were reviews conducted every three months. Three other organisations reviewed the plan less frequently, within periods ranging from once every four months to annually. They had planned to more frequent reviews but often these did not occur. One of these organizations used money to appoint extra senior practitioners who worked half of their time with NQSWs on their training plans.

The one organization which did not have procedures for training and development plans nevertheless acknowledged the benefits of this approach and was looking at the planned development of NQSWs' professional skills and abilities.

#### **2.1.10 The supervisors' views of the programme overall**

Overall, the majority of NQSW supervisors who commented as part of the survey believed that the programme was positive and would result in long term benefits to teams and departments. This finding was also evident in the supervisors' responses in the data from the organisational and case studies. Eleven of the fourteen focus groups concurred that they were pleased with the NQSW programme. They regarded the programme as important; it was valued for the long term benefit that it would bring to the organisation. However, as noted above, implementation was considered problematic in some organisations because of high workloads.

Of the thirteen supervisors who commented in the Time 2 survey, around half were positive - in particular on the value of reflective supervision for both the NQSWs and themselves, for example:

*I gain a lot of job satisfaction from supporting the development of a NQSW as a member of the team. It is an opportunity for me to revise my own knowledge and reflect on my practice supervision and complete some training. I have enjoyed passing on research and practice. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey).*

Another supervisor emphasised that

*...the most valuable areas of the NQSW scheme have been the extra supervision sessions which have allowed me to really work with the NQSWs on emotional containment, the impact of the job on self and additional support. The protected case loads and extra training days have also been invaluable as they are offered the opportunity to really allow the NQSWs to consider the "doing" part of the job. (NQSW Supervisor Time 2 survey)*

#### **2.1.11 Integration with post qualifying [PQ] awards and universities**

In the survey far fewer respondents than in the first year of the programme complained about the lack of integration with the PQ framework, as many now had this established.



Five of the case and organisational study organizations had already cooperated with a local university and developed links between NQSW and PQ frameworks. For example, one had linked the NQSW with a PQ consolidation module as the university provided a course that met both PQ and NQSW requirements. In another organization some of the NQSWs had completed or commenced the PQ Award before starting NQSW, while some other NQSWs are commenced the PQ Award simultaneously with NQSW.

Nine of the case and organisational study sites had not linked the NQSW and PQ frameworks apparently because CWDC had (deliberately) left this to local discretion. However, in these organisations the NQSWs, managers, and even some coordinators were not very clear about the progression and links among different programmes and qualifications<sup>40</sup>. Several NQSWs in three of the nine organisations which had not made a link with PQ were also dissatisfied that no external credit was available for completing the workbook and portfolios.

### **2.1.12 Evidencing Achievement: Portfolio / Record of Achievement**

Data from the case and organisational studies indicated that most programme coordinators and supervisors thought that the portfolio requirements were clearer and better understood compared to the first year. In addition, some organizations had changed their guidelines to assist with portfolio completion. One of the organizations had re-named the portfolio as 'record of achievement' and encouraged NQSWs to start work on the portfolio early, so that they could collect evidence earlier. Another organization had provided guidelines on *minimum* requirements, so that NQSWs could use a more flexible and less time consuming approach. NQSWs were not solely assessed for progression by the portfolio, so they did not need an extensive volume of evidence, as long as all the components were in place.

According to the senior managers, the programme materials were now more condensed and easier to follow for both the NQSWs and managers. Supervisors were more confident compared with last year about what needed to go into the portfolios. Moreover, portfolios completed during the second year of the programme were thought to be of better quality.

The way in which one employer had adapted the process was summed up by the programme coordinator:

*I think that the whole thing has gone much more smoothly this year, especially with regard to the portfolios. Last year the NQSWs were very unhappy and found them a real chore. However I think we learnt from this and among other measures (bringing the mentoring in-house) I think we used our own initiative and made the portfolio less bureaucratic. I think the CWDC guidance helped but it is not the finished article yet... it is work in progress. (Programme coordinator, organisational study)*

As explained in the first year report, many NQSWs had been unclear about the requirements and thought that the portfolio seemed too complicated. However, where the programme was in its second year, NQSWs indicated that they were clearer about expectations for the portfolios than their colleagues had been in the first year. Nevertheless, the portfolio task remained decidedly unpopular amongst the majority of NQSWs. The views expressed about this requirement were consistent with those reported in the Year 1 report.

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<sup>40</sup> This is now being addressed by the Social Work Reform Board through the introduction of a professional capabilities framework.

The following comment was typical of both years:

*With regards to the portfolio - it was another total waste of time in which I did not benefit from. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

The majority of NQSWs making written comments in response to the Time 2 survey could not see the value or practicality of the portfolios. Even the few who said it may be a good idea, still believed that completion of portfolios was impractical and difficult to realise. Very few of the NQSWs claimed to have received support from managers to complete the portfolio; most had relied mainly on their own efforts.

Many survey respondents complained that they struggled to find the time to complete their portfolio, and had no choice but to do it in their own time. This made it feel like an additional burden. A few claimed that despite asking, they were denied the time off to complete their portfolio by their line manager. Echoing some of the comments from the previous year, seven NQSWs asserted that the portfolio was repetitive of the social work degree:

*I found the completion of a (another) portfolio the least effective or useful part of the NQSW course and a repetition of the two previous portfolios completed during training. (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

Five postgraduate NQSWs remarked unfavourably on the academic level expected:

*I felt the level of issues below that at which I qualified (Masters Level). (NQSW Time 2 survey)*

However, in two case and organisational study focus groups NQSWs expressed positive views about the portfolio. One of the NQSWs considered that some of the portfolio was useful, (e.g. the exercise on interviewing a child) as it encouraged reflection. Another NQSW commented that the portfolio provided a helpful mechanism to link practice to legislation, and to some extent theory. Others said that they liked the “note pad” tool and noted that the requirements from CWDC were less prescriptive than the previous year, in response to employers’ feedback.

In summary, it would appear that the less prescriptive approach to recording achievement introduced in Year 2 was, in the opinion of the great majority of respondents, a move in the right direction. In Year 3, CWDC has further reduced the formal evidence requirements and there is no longer mention of a portfolio. It will be interesting to see how this is received by participants.

### **2.1.13 Making the programme work**

Half the programme coordinators interviewed as part of the case and organisational studies mentioned their changes in making the programme work. Various amendments were made following feedback from participants in the first year of the programme, for example in respect of materials, portfolios, recruitment, training and modes of supervision.

First, since the original material from CWDC was thought to be too complicated, some of the organizations rewrote them into handbook and designed templates for summaries and observations. Simplified materials were then distributed to the NQSWs in the organizations.

Another change was applied to training and workshops. In the first cohort, training sessions for NQSWs were said by NQSWs to be arranged somewhat haphazardly at both local and national level. However, they were more structured for the second cohort and NQSWs were said to be involved in the design of training sessions in order to meet their needs and interests.

In some organisations the mode of supervision and responsibilities were also amended to cope with the greater numbers of NQSWs in the second year. The supervision responsibilities were mainly reliant on individual managers, but more group supervision sessions and peer support groups were introduced to reduce the burden of managers. Two organizations had employed extra workers to support NQSWs and handle supervision. One of the organisations changed from employing external mentors and used seconded internal mentors, an approach that had worked well.

Besides, learning from the first cohort, it was also very important to let the group know about the programme in the stage of recruitment. Thus, NQSWs would have expected to participate in the programme and be prepared to engage with it positively. Nevertheless, support from senior management and changing the culture of the organization as a whole was of major importance to the success of the programme within an organisation.

There was a sense amongst many organisations that key problems with the programme in its first year had been dealt with and that the programme had improved in its second year. In particular in respect of local implementation, awareness of, and senior management commitment to, the programme was stronger in the second year:

*I feel we have dealt with some of the earlier 'barriers' -- e.g. senior management ownership, staff and managers unaware of the NQSW Programme. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

#### **2.1.14 Support from CWDC**

In the T2 survey, the majority of programme coordinators were satisfied with the support they had received from CWDC, finding staff accessible and helpful:

*I have been very happy with the support provided by CWDC. The materials are very helpful, and they have been responsive in making changes where feedback from participating organisations have identified that improvements could be made. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

This was an improvement on the first year of the programme where there had been rather more negative comments regarding support from CWDC. The picture that emerged from the case and organizational studies was more mixed (data were available from ten out of fourteen sites). Seven coordinators specifically commented favourably about the CWDC supervision training; it had been very well-received and appreciated by the participants.

The negative comments may well be taken as pointers for further improvement in subsequent years. Four coordinators were concerned about the clarity of guidelines and materials. They considered the information packs to be repetitive, inconsistent and not user-friendly. Five coordinators responding to the survey commented that CWDC were slow in revising materials:

*I have found this to be not very helpful and some things have taken too long to be in place (such as the revised editions of the paperwork last year). (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey)*

In addition the materials were seen by coordinators in the case and organisational studies to rely on a 'tick box' approach that did not place sufficient emphasis upon reflective practice. Thus, there was a view that to assist with the implementation of the programme, CWDC should provide clearer guidelines and condense their materials into one clear and simple handbook. In addition, more work was thought to be needed to simplify and integrate the programme so that NQSWs would not have to do multiple and repetitive tasks. For example, the training plan should be blended into other systems, such as NQSW outcome statements or internal appraisals.

### **2.1.15 Support advisors**

Programme coordinators' responding to the survey gave mixed opinions about their CWDC support advisors. A few programme coordinators commented positively stating that they found the support helpful:

*The quality of support from the support advisor was great. (Programme Coordinator Time 1 survey)*

Whereas, in the first year of the programme, many stated that they found that the support advisors acted more in an auditing role, this did not seem to be a predominant issue in the second year. Although, there were a couple who felt somewhat scrutinised during their support visits:

*The support from [name of organisation removed] has not been particularly helpful and has tended to focus on what hasn't been completed rather than the positive work and effort applied within the programme. (Programme Coordinator Time 2 survey).*

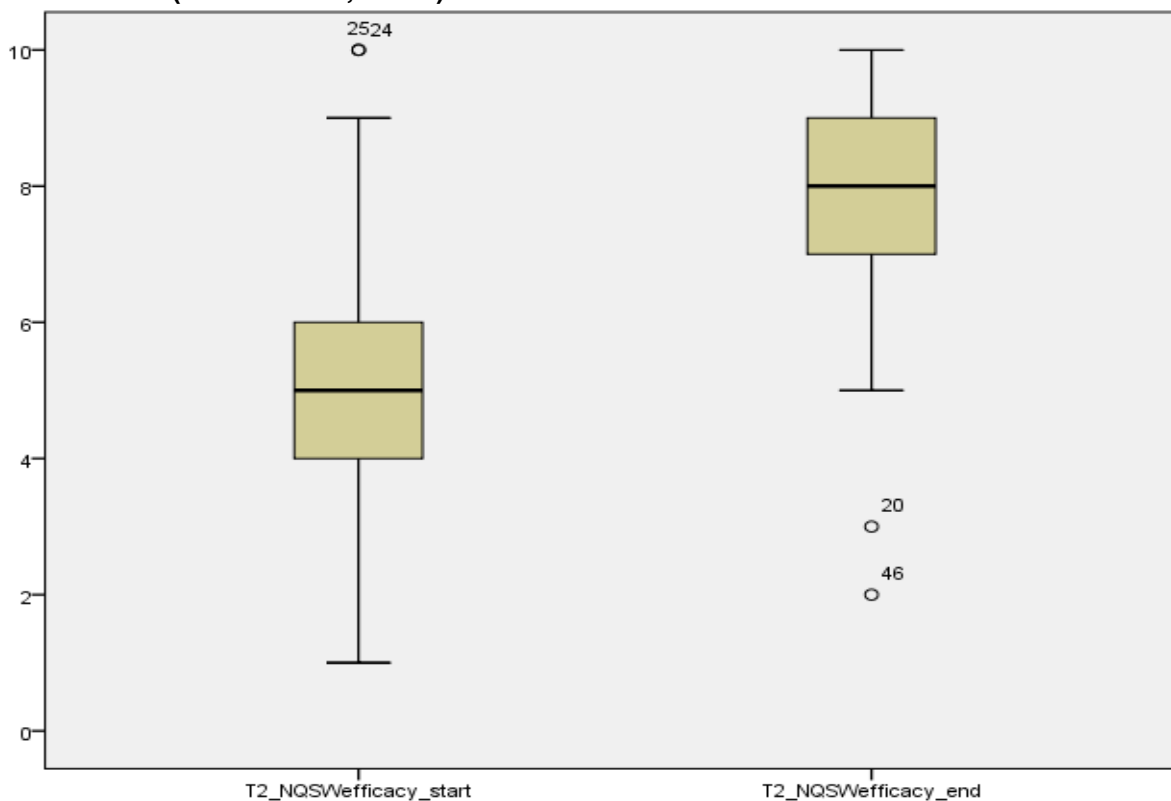
### 3 Outcomes of the Programme

#### 3.1 Managers' and programme coordinators' confidence in NQSWs at T2

##### 3.1.1 Supervisors

Supervisors were asked to rate their confidence in participants in the NQSW programme in their organisation who started the NQSW programme between September 09 and September 10 as children and families social workers at the beginning and end of the NQSW programme. Since there was no Time 1 survey, they were asked to do this retrospectively for the start of the programme. A total of 40 supervisors completed these ratings at Time 2. Figure 3.1 shows that supervisors rated the efficacy of social workers much higher at the end of the programme than at the start. The median retrospective rating of 5 ("neither confident nor unconfident") increased to a median rating of 8 (very confident") at the end of the programme<sup>41</sup>.

**FIGURE 3.1: SUPERVISORS' RATINGS OF THE NQSWs' EFFICACY AT START AND END OF NQSW PROGRAMME (TIME 2 ONLY, N=40)**



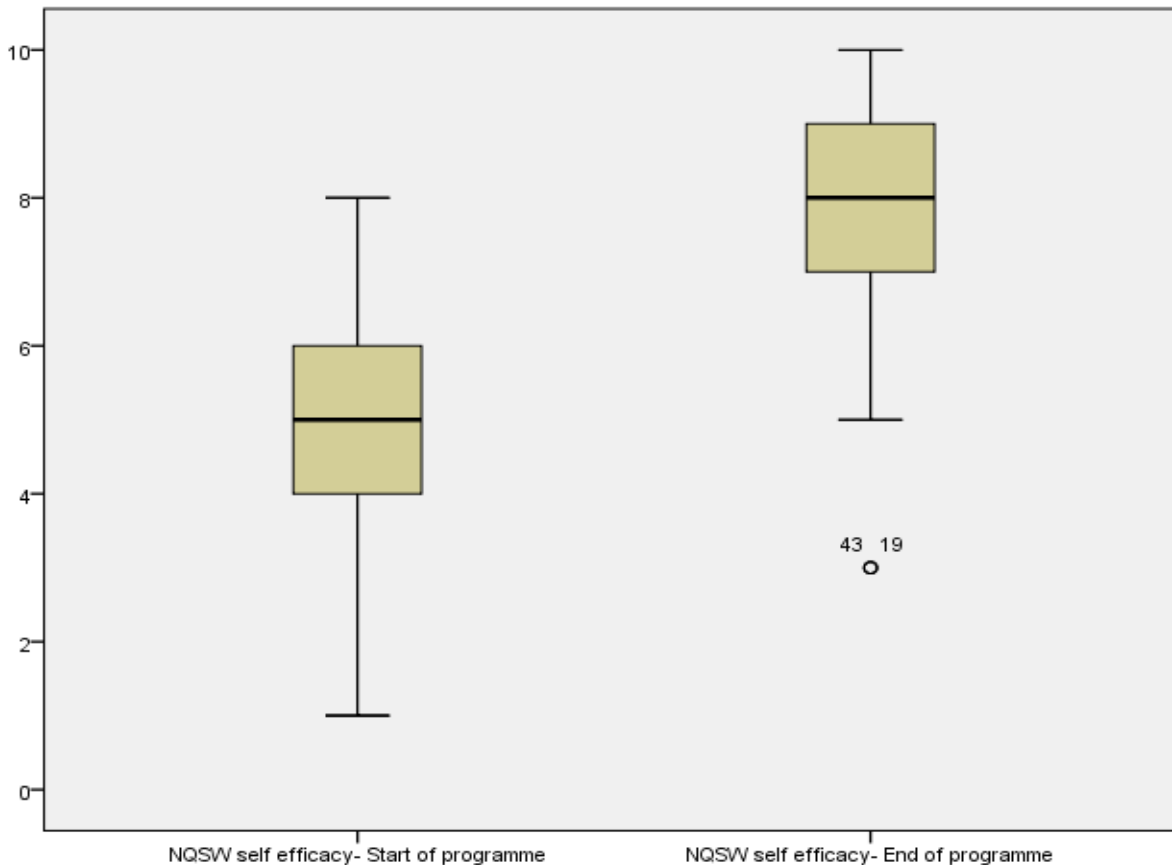
##### 3.1.2 Programme coordinators

Programme coordinators were similarly asked to rate their confidence in NQSWs in their organisation who started the NQSW programme in the last year (2009-10) as children and families social workers at the beginning and end of the NQSW programme. A total of 61

<sup>41</sup> In the survey the supervisors were not asked whether they attributed this increase in confidence to the NQSW programme itself or to greater experience of the job.

programme coordinators completed these ratings at Time 2. Figure 3.2 shows that the programme coordinators' ratings very similar to those of the supervisors, rating the efficacy of social workers much higher at the end of the programme than at the start. The median retrospective rating of 5 ("neither confident nor unconfident") increased to a median rating of 8 (very confident") at the end of the programme

**FIGURE 3.2: PROGRAMME COORDINATORS' RATINGS OF NQSWs' EFFICACY AT START AND END OF NQSW PROGRAMME (TIME 2 ONLY, N=61)**



### 3.2 Outcomes for NQSWs at three month review and the end of the 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. 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.

As outlined earlier, these outcomes were assessed by online surveys using standardised measures of self-efficacy, role clarity, role conflict, job satisfaction, stress and 'intention to leave'. These measures use Likert-type scales: respondents were asked to tick or rate a series of predetermined responses for the various measures.

Details of the response rates to the surveys are provided in Sec. 1.5.1.

### 3.2.1 Self-efficacy ratings

As outlined in Sec 1.6, the NQSW programme is based on a series of 11 Outcome Statements that reflect the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected of children's social workers in their first year after qualifying. The outcome statements cover:

- Referral
- Assessment
- Planning
- Review
- Formal meetings
- Recording
- Communication
- Relationships
- Multi-agency working
- Working with disadvantage groups
- Professional development and accountability.

Respondents were asked to score each self efficacy item using a ten point Likert scale: 'not at all confident very false' (=1); 'moderately confident' (=7); extremely confident (=10).

Professional development and accountability were presented in the surveys as two separate items. Thus, self-efficacy scores could range from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 120.

#### 3.2.1.1 Overall increase in self-efficacy

There were substantial increases in the proportions of respondents at the three time points in 2009-10 who reported "high confidence" in relation to the outcome statements (Table 3.1). The table presents the equivalent data for the first year (2008-09). It can be seen that the pattern of increases is very similar. This adds credibility to the findings.

Considering these findings in more detail, Table 3.1 presents (a rating of 8 to 10 on the Likert scale) on the self-efficacy items at all survey time points in both programme years. Unlike the analyses, which follow below, these comparisons are not matched; in other words, they include all respondents at all survey time points regardless of whether or not they provided self-efficacy ratings at more than one time point. An additional column, 'T2-T1', has been added which shows the net change in "high confidence" between the start and end of the programme.

As the table shows, the net average increase in social workers reporting high confidence between the start (T1) and end (T2) of the programme in Year 2 ranged from a low of +16 per cent for professional accountability to a high of +34 per cent for referral. Large increases in high confidence were also found for assessment (+33 per cent) and review (+32 per cent). On average, the proportion with high self-efficacy increased from 37.5 per cent at T1 to 61 per cent at T2. As noted above, these findings were very similar to those in 2008-09.

**TABLE 3.1: SELF EFFICACY: ‘HIGH CONFIDENCE’ RATINGS AT THREE TIME POINTS IN NQSW PROGRAMME YEARS**

	Year 2 (2009-10)				Year 1 (2008-09)			
	T1	T3MR	T2	T2-T1	T1	T3MR	T2	T2-T1
	%	%	%	Net %	%	%	%	Net %
<b>Referral</b>	34	51	68	+34	35	42	67	+33
<b>Assessment</b>	31	52	64	+33	31	41	63	+32
<b>Planning</b>	24	40	51	+28	23	34	49	+26
<b>Review</b>	24	44	56	+32	23	35	51	+28
<b>Formal meetings</b>	38	57	66	+28	35	47	60	+25
<b>Recording</b>	45	61	69	+25	42	54	63	+21
<b>Communication</b>	44	58	66	+22	44	52	63	+19
<b>Relationships</b>	52	65	74	+23	48	58	70	+22
<b>Multi-Agency Working</b>	44	59	69	+25	45	53	67	+22
<b>Disadvantaged groups</b>	30	49	56	+26	31	39	57	+26
<b>Professional Development</b>	39	57	60	+21	41	51	53	+11
<b>Professional Accountability</b>	58	69	73	+16	52	63	71	+19
<b>Overall</b>	<b>38.5</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>+25.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>+23.5</b>
<b>Total sample N =</b>	633	384	520		467	409	241	

The remaining analyses are more robust statistically because they are based on comparisons of individual social workers’ ratings at the different time points. The same pattern of increasing self-efficacy over time is evident. In general, self-efficacy increased from baseline (T1) to the time of the three-month review (T3MR). The difference between the baseline ratings and the ratings at the end of the year were statistically significant and very substantial.

Specifically, the analysis used matched samples of respondents providing ratings at both Time 1 (or Time 3MR) and Time 2 (n = 182 and n = 184 respectively). In terms of their demographic profile, these NQSWs are representative samples of participants in the programme overall.

There was a statistically significant increase in mean total ratings from the start of the programme to the three-month review (Table 3.2). The statistical analysis showed that the effect size was ‘medium’, indicating that the changes were not just statistically significant but quite substantial. This replicates the results from respondents in 2008-09.

At the three month review, NQSWs were also asked to give a retrospective rating (T3MRr) of their self-efficacy at baseline, i.e. “if you knew then what you know now, how would you rate your efficacy”. This approach was used in the first year evaluation when it was found that NQSWs in general gave themselves lower retrospective ratings than their initial baseline ratings. In other words, they had realised that they had not known as much and were not as skilled as they had thought at the beginning of the programme. Alternatively, they had realised that the outcomes envisaged in the outcome statements were more complicated or demanding than they had appreciated.

The NQSWs’ retrospective ratings were significantly lower, by an average of over eight points, compared to baseline. In 2008-09, the difference was just over six points, but the effect size was the same; ‘medium’.



**TABLE 3.2: SELF EFFICACY RATINGS: PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST**

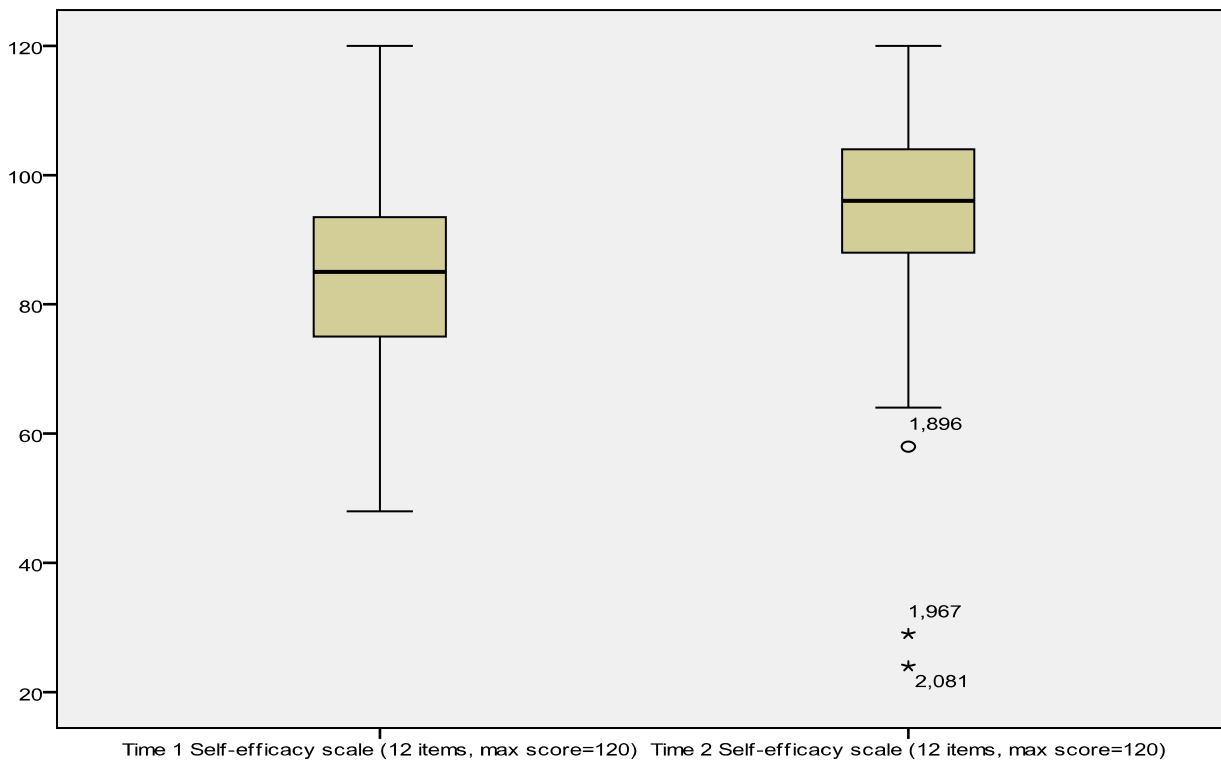
Paired samples	N	Mean 1	sd	Mean 2	Sd	Mean Difference	t	P	Cohen's d	Effect size
T1 v. T3MR current	182	85.32	14.53	91.32	13.40	6.00	7.07	<.001	0.43	Medium
T1 v. T3MR retrospective	182	85.32	14.53	75.80	17.65	-9.52	-8.28	<.001	0.59	Large
T1 v. T2	184	83.93	13.77	94.50	13.82	10.57	10.72	<.001	0.77	Large

The average increase of over ten points between baseline and the end of the programme was statistically significant and the effect size was “large”. This is illustrated in Figure 3.3 which show the distribution of ratings<sup>42</sup>. At T2, three-quarters of the NQSWs gave total ratings of 88 or above, equivalent to a mean rating per outcome statement of 7/10. This is equivalent to “medium confidence”. 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).

In 2008-09, the average increase was over 12 points between baseline and the end of the programme and was statistically significant; the effect size was “very large”. 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. Again, this is equivalent to “medium confidence”. Similar to T2 in 2009-10, the median was equivalent to a rating of 8/10 on each outcome statement. When T2 ratings are compared with three month retrospective ratings, the increase in mean total ratings was somewhat lower than in 2009-10 (just over 16 points).

**FIGURE 3.3: BOXPLOTS OF MATCHED TIME 1 VERSUS TIME 2 MEAN SCORES (N=184)**

<sup>42</sup> 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”.

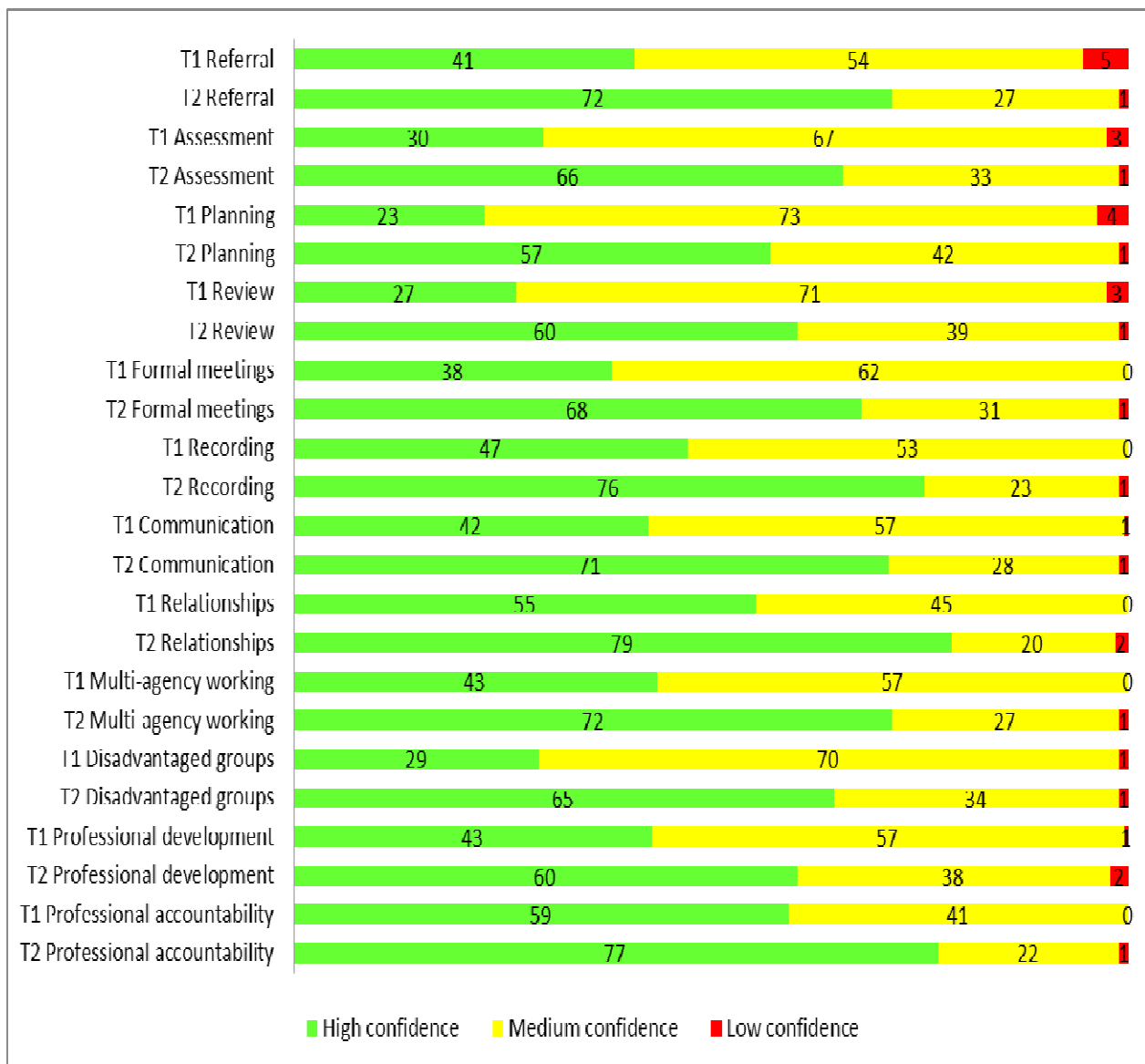


### 3.2.1.2 Changes in self-efficacy for individual outcome statements

There were also highly statistically significant increases ( $p < .001$ ) between baseline and the end of the programme for all the NQSW outcome statements.

This can be seen in Figure 3.4 which compares the proportions of “high” (8 to 10), “medium” (4 to 7) and “low” (1 to 3) ratings. The largest increases in high confidence for self-efficacy between T1 and T2 were found for assessment, working with disadvantaged groups, planning and review.

**FIGURE 3.4: NQSW OUTCOME STATEMENT RATINGS AT TIME 1 AND TIME 2 (N= 184 NQSWs PROVIDING DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AND TIME 1 AND TIME 2 SCORES)**



At baseline only four in ten NQSWs were very confident about dealing with referrals. This had increased to seven in ten by the end of the programme. A large increase in high confidence was also seen in terms of assessment; increasing from 30 per cent at baseline to 66 per cent by the end of the programme. The proportion of respondents reporting high confidence in reviewing increased 33 per cent between the start and end of the NQSW programme (27 per cent at baseline, compared with 60 per cent at the end of the programme). Planning saw a 34 per cent increase in high confidence ratings; increasing from 23 per cent at baseline to 57 per cent by the end of the programme.

Large improvements in high confidence between the start and end of the programme were also found for: working with disadvantaged groups (+36 per cent); formal meetings (+30 per cent); multi-agency working, recording, and communication (+29 per cent each); and relationships with clients (+24 per cent). Professional accountability (+28 per cent); professional development (+27) showed somewhat smaller increases in high confidence between the start and end of the programme; 18 and 17 per cent); and, relationships with clients (+24 per cent).

These findings largely replicated those for 2008-09, although it is noticeable that there was a larger improvement in “professional development” compared to the first year (+27 per cent versus +14 per cent).

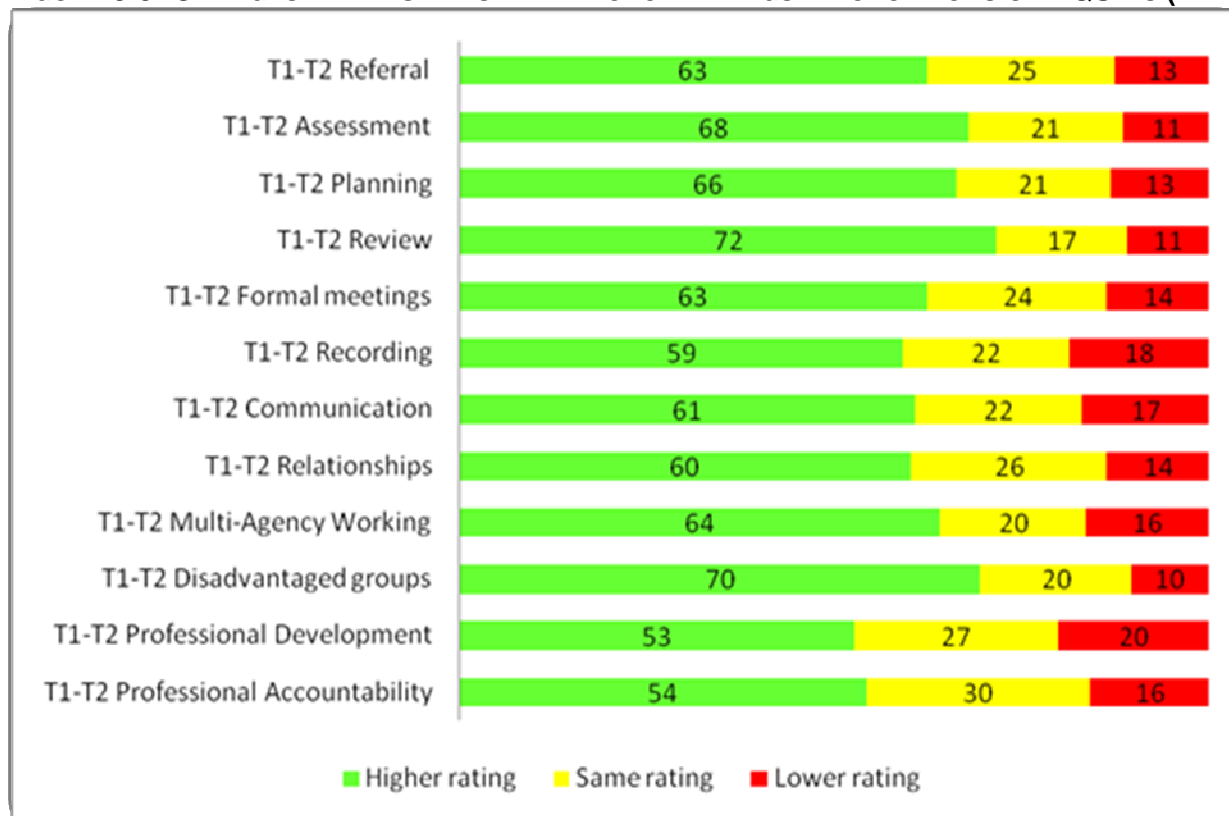
### **3.2.1.3 Changes in individual self efficacy scores**

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 3.5 below. The figure shows that a high proportion of NQSWs (between 53 per cent and 72 per cent) had increased their self-efficacy ratings for the various outcome statements. Between 20 and 30 per cent of respondents gave similar ratings between T1 and T2. However, between 11 and 20 per cent indicated an apparent decrease in self-efficacy in relation to outcome statements relating directly to practice. Twenty 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 two per cent of NQSWs gave low confidence ratings at T2 for this outcome statement (Figure 3.2 above).

Similarly, in 2008-09, it was found that a high proportion of NQSWs (between 55 per cent and 72 per cent) increased their self-efficacy ratings for the various outcome statements. Twenty-two per cent gave lower self-efficacy ratings for ‘taking responsibility for professional development’ at T2. Only three NQSWs (two per cent) gave low ratings at T2 for this outcome statement in 2008-09.

**FIGURE 3.5: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 SELF-EFFICACY RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs (N=184)**



### 3.2.1.4 What predicts self-efficacy at T2?

In order to understand whether social workers’ self-efficacy at the end of the programme was associated with their age, gender, level of qualification, previous experience or the type organisation in which the NQSWs were employed, further analyses were conducted<sup>43</sup>.

The T2 analysis was based on 492 NQSWs. Pre-degree practice experience of six months or longer in child care social work and high role clarity remained significant predictors (compared to the baseline model). Perhaps surprisingly, high role conflict was a statistically significant predictor of self-efficacy. This means that self-efficacy was not dependent on the constraints of the team or organisation in accomplishing the task. Intrinsic - as opposed to extrinsic – job satisfaction (as found in the baseline) were significant predictors as well (see Table 3.4 below). Finally, there was a negative and statistically significant relationship between high stress and low self-efficacy. In other words, the higher the reported stress levels of NQSWs, the lower their scores on self-efficacy. The statistical model in T2 accounts for 28 per cent of the variance, which was lower than that found in the baseline sample (36 per cent). Numerous other factors played a much less significant part: for example, age, gender, ethnicity, 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 at the end of the programme.

In 2008-09, T2 regression analyses also found that high role clarity and role conflict were

<sup>43</sup> Multiple regression 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 employer in which the NQSW is working.

statistically significant predictors of self-efficacy. The strongest predictor, as at baseline, was role clarity. As in T2 in 2009-10, higher levels of satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of the job (nature of the tasks and your own accomplishments) were associated with higher self-efficacy scores. Unlike 2009-10, however, female NQSWs rated themselves significantly more confident than men at T2, with all other variables being controlled. The 2008-09 T2 statistical model accounted for 47 per cent of the variance, which was much higher than the 2009-10 model.

**TABLE 3.4: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF SELF-EFFICACY AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION) (N=492)**

	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>95% CI Lower</b>	<b>95% CI Upper</b>
(Constant)	49.415	7.219		6.845	.000	35.229	63.600
Pre-degree practice experience for 6 months or longer	5.294	2.677	.134	1.978	.049	.034	10.555
Role clarity	.938	.111	.410	8.442	.000	.719	1.156
Role conflict	.148	.059	.110	2.524	.012	.033	.264
Job satisfaction – Intrinsic factors	.735	.220	.180	3.342	.001	.303	1.167
Stress score (GHQ-12)	-.423	.193	-.104	-2.187	.029	-.803	-.043
<i>Adjusted R square=0.28</i>							

### 3.2.1.5 Comparison of Supervisors' versus NQSWs' ratings (T2)

The research design involved asking supervisors to make their own confidential ratings of the NQSWs they were supervising, which allowed comparisons to be made with self-efficacy ratings made by the NQSWs themselves (N=510). Although it has been argued that self-efficacy is a good predictor of actual performance, these are still subjective judgements. Unfortunately even fewer supervisors were willing to engage in this task<sup>44</sup> and only 21 ratings were matched despite three email reminders to complete the surveys. This number is too small to make reliable comparisons and these data have therefore been omitted.

### 3.2.2 Role clarity

Role clarity includes having clear, planned objectives and responsibilities in your job and being certain about how much authority you have. Role clarity is an important outcome for social workers at an early stage of their careers. It is measured by a standardised scale comprising six items.

The following six role clarity items were included in the baseline, three-month follow up and end of NQSW programme surveys:

- I am certain about how much authority I have
- Clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job
- I know that I have divided my time properly

<sup>44</sup> 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'.

- I know what my responsibilities are
- I know exactly what is expected of me
- Explanation is clear of what has to be done

Respondents were asked to score each role clarity item using a seven point Likert scale, which ranged from ‘very false’ (=1) to ‘very true’ (=7). Role clarity scores could range from six to forty two.

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 were combined for the purpose of this final report and are referred to henceforth as the baseline (T1).

The following analyses are based on 229 baseline and T2 survey respondents who answered the six questions on role clarity and for whom we have background information (age, gender and ethnicity).

There was a statistically significant increase in mean total ratings at the T2 survey (Table 3.6). The statistical analysis showed that the effect size was ‘small’, indicating that the changes were statistically significant but not substantial; an increase in one point in the overall role clarity scale.

Similar findings in terms of average role clarity scores at T1 and T2, the mean differences in role clarity scores between T1 and T2, and the effect size appeared in 2008-09.

**TABLE 3.6: ROLE CLARITY RATINGS AT BASELINE AND INTERIM (PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST)**

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	SD	Mean 2	SD	Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect size
Time 2 vs. Time 1	229	29.29	5.70	30.29	6.35	1.00	2.49	0.014	0.17	Small

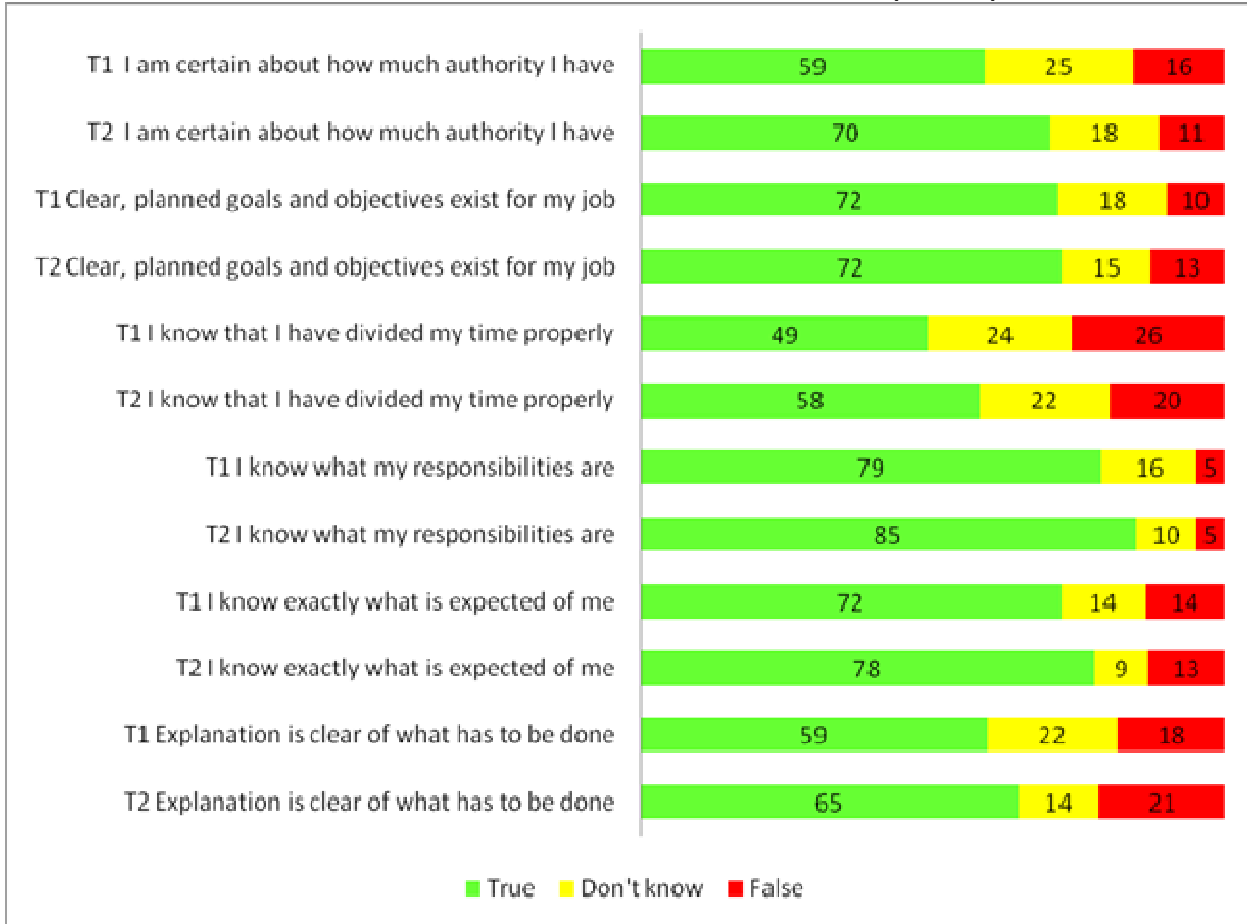
### 3.2.2.1 Changes in role clarity for individual outcome statements

Responses to the six, 7-point role clarity scale items were recoded into ‘false’ (1-3), ‘not sure’ (4, the midpoint), and ‘true’ (5-7). Figure 3.7 (below) shows that there were modest increases in the proportions of respondents between baseline and the T2 survey who stated that the statements were true except for one item: “clear, planned goals and objectives exist for my job”. The positive increase between baseline and interim of respondents agreeing with the statements were only statistically significant for “I know that I have divided my time properly” and “I know what my responsibilities are”.

In 2008-09, the only statistically significant change between baseline and T2 was in agreement with the first statement "I am certain about how much authority I have".



**FIGURE 3.7: ROLE CLARITY RATINGS AT BASELINE AND T2 SURVEYS (N=229)**

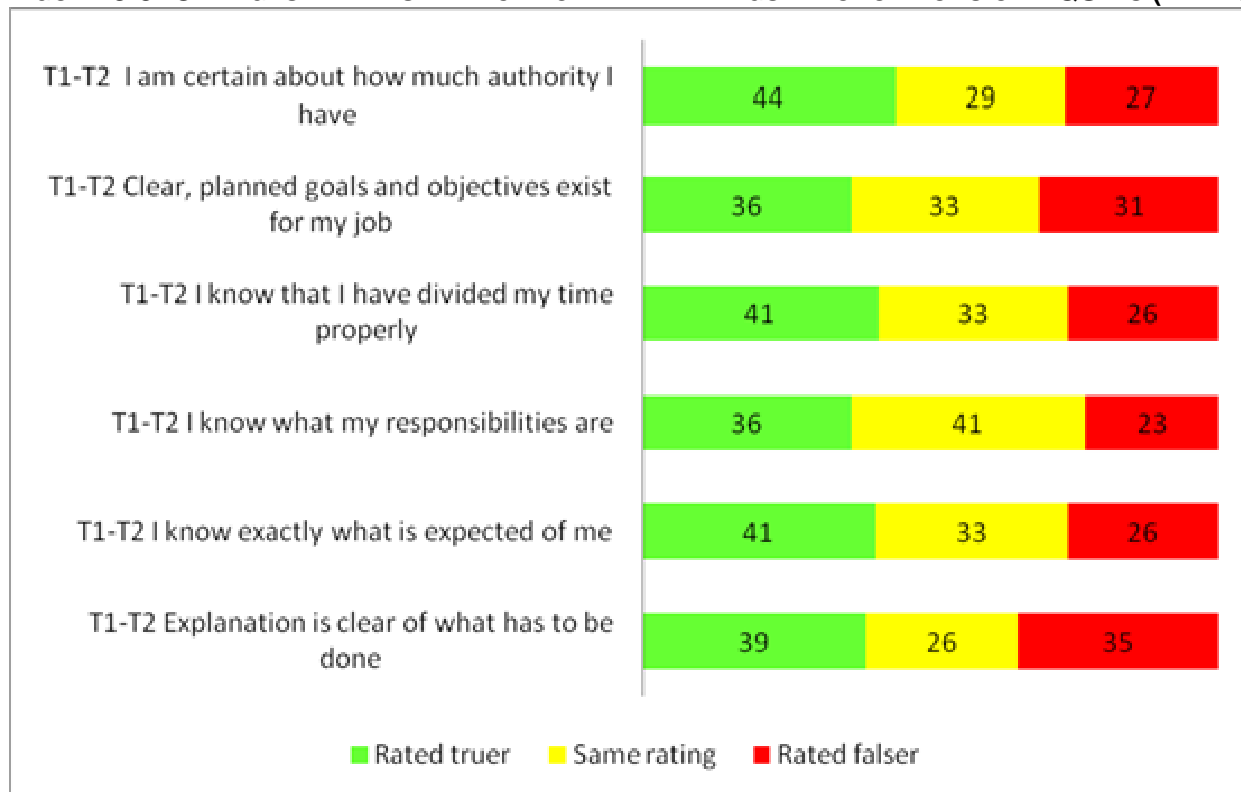


### 3.2.2.2 Changes in individual role clarity scores

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-three and thirty five per cent indicated a decrease (see Figure 3.8 below). 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.

As in 2009-10, at least a third of NQSWs reported an increase in the dimensions of role clarity, and between twenty and twenty-nine per cent indicated a decrease between baseline and T2 surveys in 2008-09.

**FIGURE 3.8: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 ROLE CLARITY RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs (N=229)**



### 3.2.3 Role conflict

Role conflict on the other hand, may be considered a less positive outcome. It arises from competing demands, inadequate resources, incompatible requests, and disagreement at the level of management.

The following eight role conflict items were included in the baseline and interim surveys:

- I have to do things that should be done differently
- I receive an assignment without the staff to complete it
- I have to bend or ignore a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment
- I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently
- I receive incompatible requests from two or more people
- I do things that are apt to be accepted by one person and not accepted by others
- I receive an assignment without adequate resources to carry it out
- I work on unnecessary things

Respondents were asked to score each role conflict item using a seven point Lickert scale, which ranged from 'very false' (=1) to 'very true' (=7). Role conflict scores could range from six to fifty six.

Once again, the ratings of NQSWs who had responded to the three-month review but not the T1

survey were combined for the purpose of this report. The following analyses are based on 229 baseline and T2 survey respondents who answered the six questions on role clarity and for whom we have background information.

For the same matched NQSWs, there was a statistically significant increase in mean total scores for personal role conflict at T2 (Table 3.8). The effect size was larger than for role clarity and can be classified as “medium”.

In 2008-09, there was a similar statistically significant increase in mean total scores for personal role conflict at T2 and as in 2009-10 the effect size was classified as “medium”.

**TABLE 3.8: ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS AT BASELINE AND INTERIM (PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST)**

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	SD	Mean 2	SD	Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect size
Time 2 vs. Time 1	229	26.75	8.46	29.37	10.54	2.62	3.98	<0.001	0.27	Medium

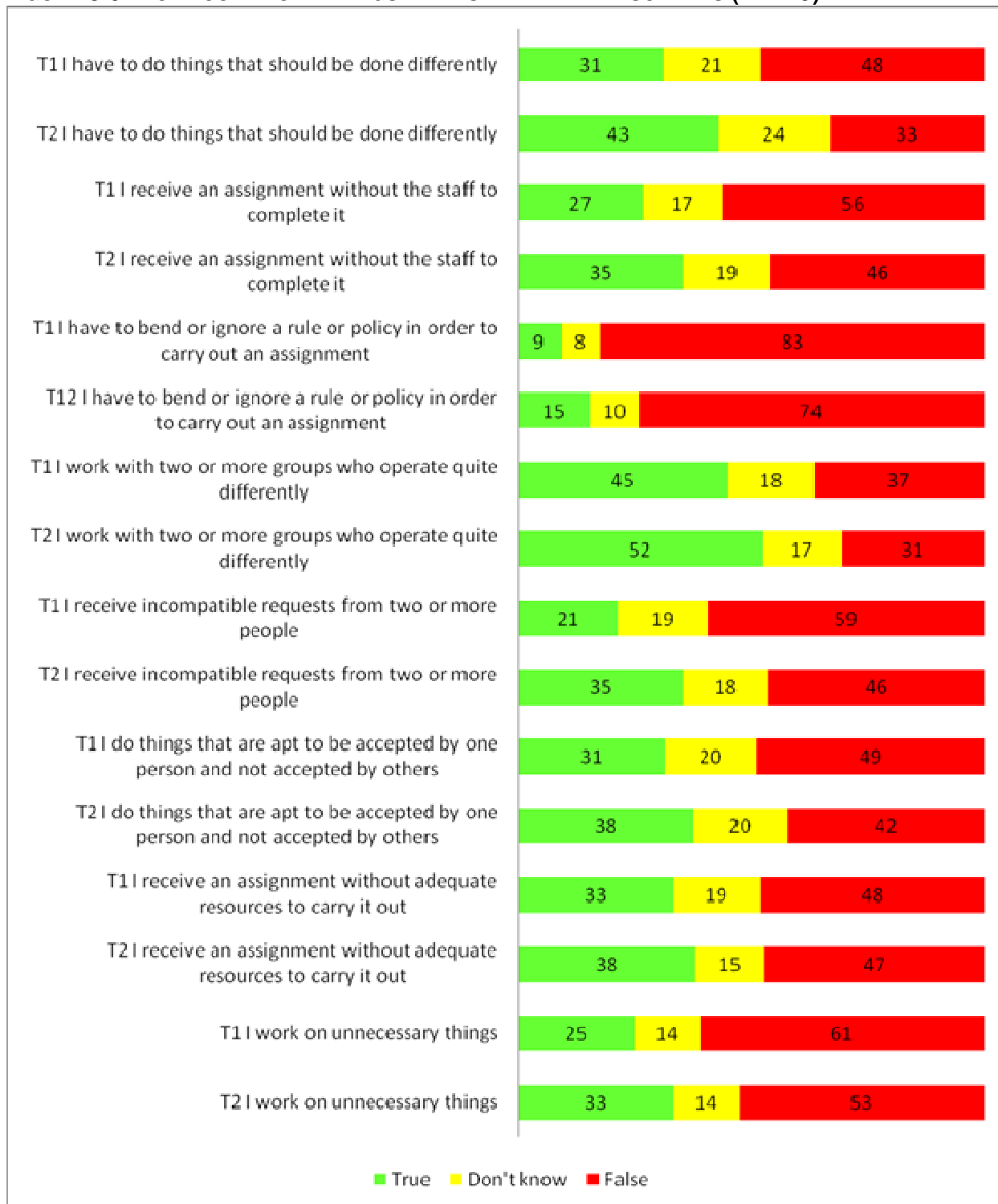
In 2008-09, three quarters of EPD social workers at T2 gave total ratings of 22 or above, equivalent to a mean rating per outcome statement of 3/7 or “a little false”.

### 3.2.3.1 Changes in role conflict for individual outcome statements

Responses to the eight, 7-point role conflict scale items were recoded into 'false' (1-3), 'not sure' (4, the midpoint), and 'true' (5-7). There were increases in the number of respondents between baseline and the T2 survey who stated that the statements were true (Figure 3.9 below). All but two of these changes between baseline and T2, “work with two or more groups who operate quite differently” and “receiving an assignment without adequate resources to carry it out”, were statistically significant.

This compared to findings in 2008-09, which were that all changes in role conflict ratings between baseline and T2 were statistically significant.

**FIGURE 3.9: ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS AT BASELINE AND T2 SURVEYS (N=229)**

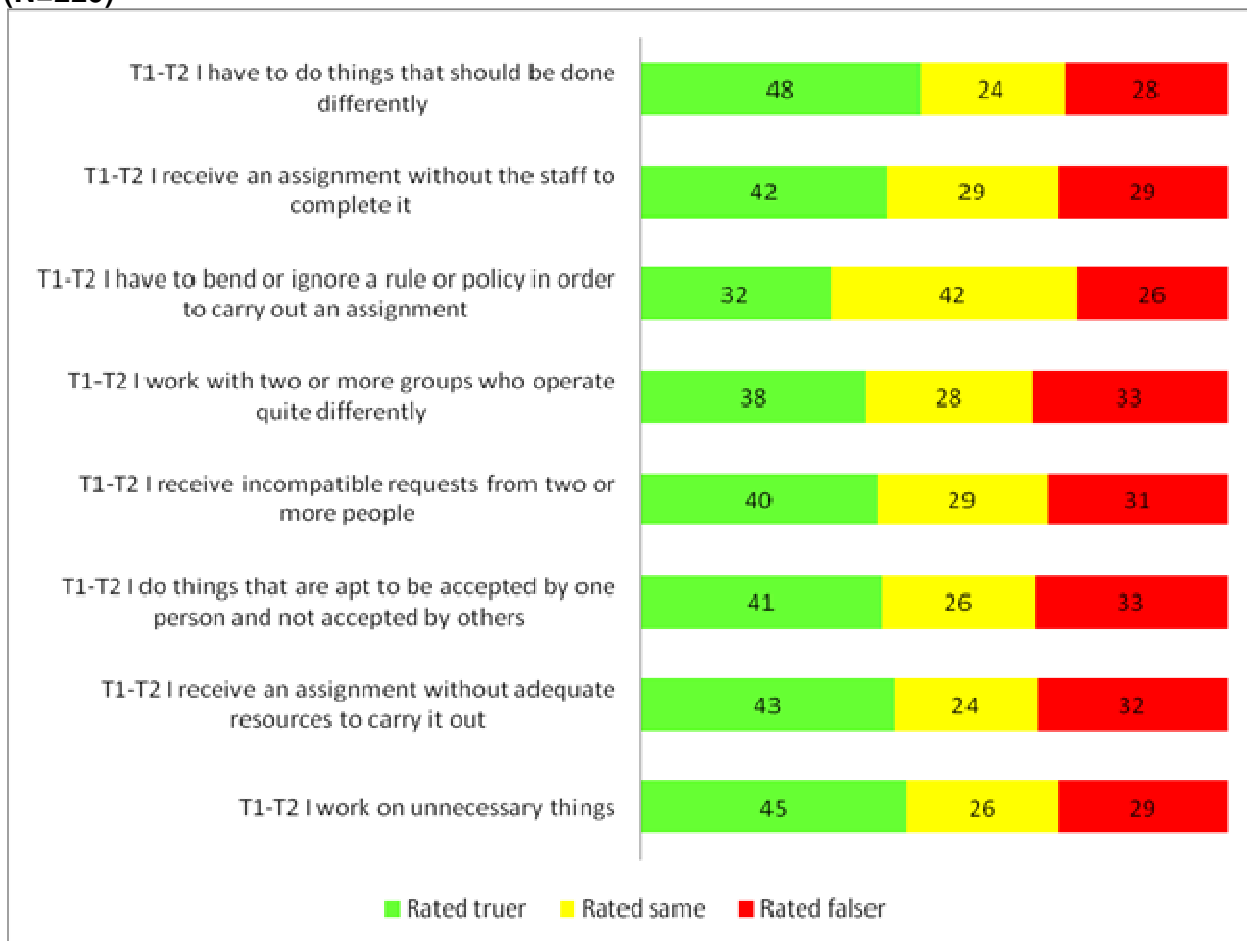


### 3.2.3.2 Changes in individual role conflict scores

The individual change analysis (Figure 3.10) showed increased role conflict of between 32 per cent and 48 per cent of the participants in relation to the eight items. It is possible that an increase in role conflict is experienced to some extent by many social workers, which results from them taking on more complex work towards the end of their first year in employment.

In 2008-09, role conflict increased between 40 per cent and 52 per cent of the participants in relation to the same eight items.

**FIGURE 3.10: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 ROLE CONFLICT RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs (N=229)**



### 3.2.4 Job satisfaction – Intrinsic

Intrinsic job satisfaction refers to satisfaction with the nature of the job itself, the variety of tasks, opportunities to use your own initiative and relationships with fellow workers.

The following seven items were included in the baseline and T2 surveys:

- Relationships with fellow workers
- Your own accomplishments

- Developing your skills
- Having challenges to meet
- The actual tasks you do
- The variety of tasks
- Opportunities to use your own initiative

Respondents were asked to score intrinsic job satisfaction items using a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from ‘very dissatisfied’ (=1) to ‘very satisfied’ (=5). Scores of intrinsic job satisfaction could range from seven to thirty five.

As before, the ratings of NQSWs who responded to the three-month review but not the T1 survey were combined to create the baseline sample in the following analyses.

The following analyses are based on 226 respondents who answered the seven questions on intrinsic job satisfaction and for whom we had demographic information.

There was no statistically significant difference in mean total ratings at the T2 survey (Table 3.10). This was similar to the findings from 2008-09.

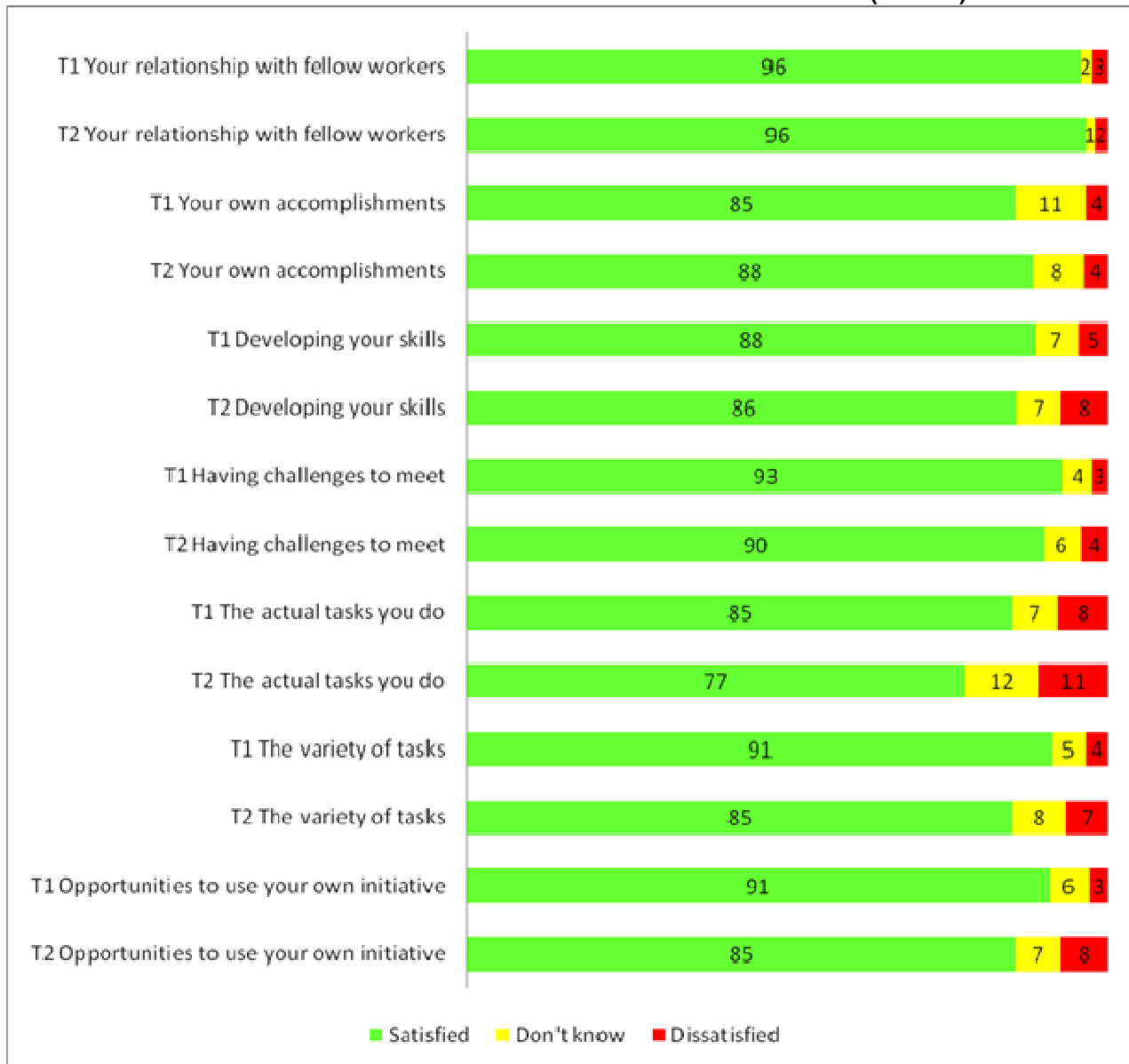
**TABLE 3.10: INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS AT BASELINE AND INTERIM (PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST)**

Paired samples	N	Mean 1	SD	Mean 2	SD	Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect size
Time 2 vs. Time 1	226	28.27	2.73	28.02	3.44	-0.25	-1.25	0.212	0.08	Small

### 3.2.4.1 Intrinsic job satisfaction for individual outcome statements

Responses for each scale item were re-coded into three mutually exclusive categories: dissatisfied=1 (very dissatisfied, dissatisfied), don't know=2, and satisfied (satisfied, very satisfied)=3. Figure 3.11 (below) shows that most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with most aspects of their job, replicating results from 2008-09.

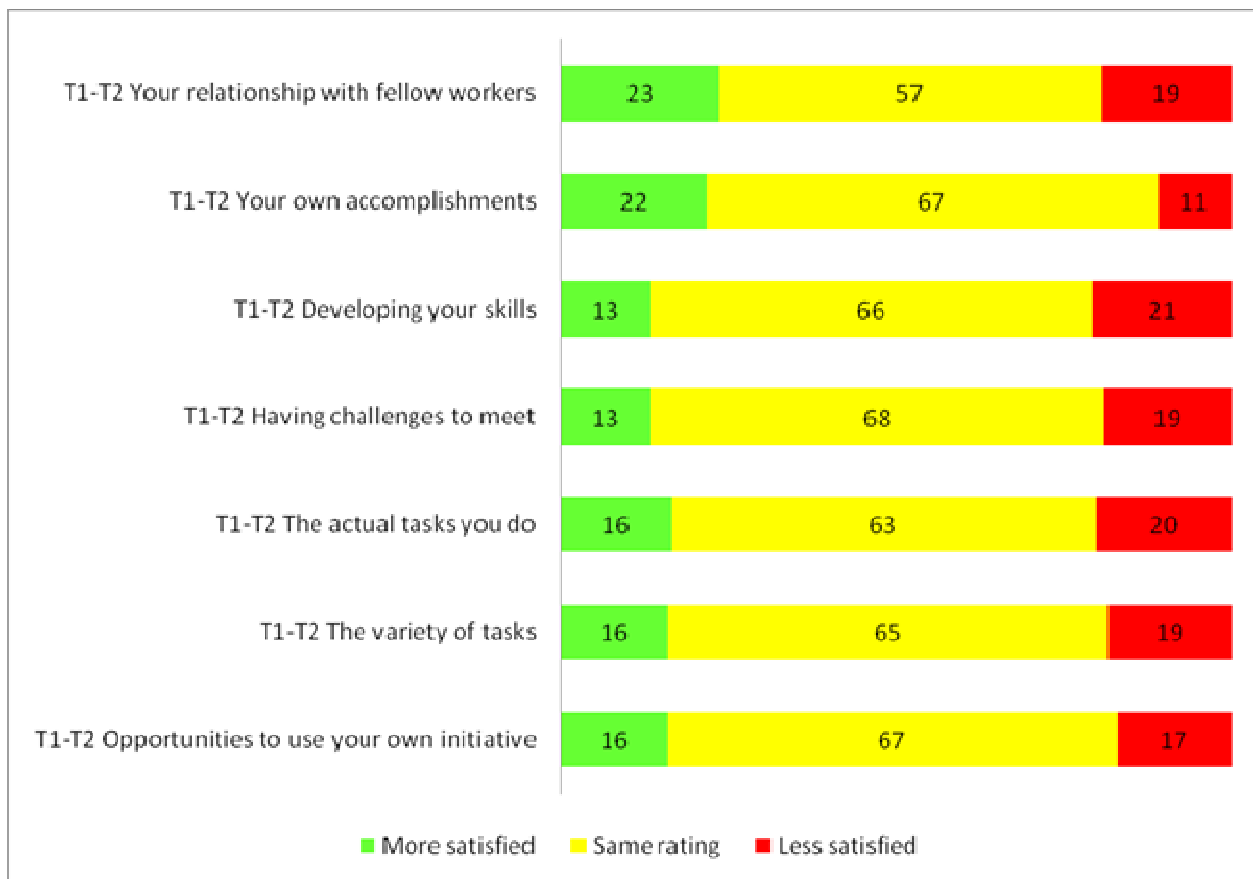
**FIGURE 3.11: INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT BASELINE AND T2 SURVEYS (N=226)**



### 3.2.4.2 Changes in individual intrinsic job satisfaction scores

The proportions of NQSWs who increased and decreased their intrinsic job satisfaction on specific items are shown in Figure 3.12. At T2 respondent were more satisfied with their relationship with fellow workers and their own accomplishments. The proportions who were more satisfied balanced the proportions who were less satisfied between baseline and T2, except for developing their skills and having challenges to meet.

**FIGURE 3.12: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs (N=226)**



### 3.2.4.3 What predicts intrinsic job satisfaction at T2?

Levels of intrinsic job satisfaction at the end of the year were positively associated with higher self-efficacy ratings. It was also associated with high role clarity and high levels of extrinsic job satisfaction (pay and conditions), and lower levels of stress (Table 3.12). This is a strong statistical model, accounting for 48 per cent of the variance, which indicates that most aspects of intrinsic job satisfaction could be associated with these factors. Self-efficacy was the only T2 variable that was not also significant predictor at baseline.

At T2 in 2008-09, intrinsic job satisfaction was also positively related to higher self-efficacy, higher role clarity and high levels of extrinsic job satisfaction (pay and conditions). Again, intrinsic job satisfaction was lower with higher levels of stress social workers experienced. The 2008-09 model accounted for 59 per cent of the variance.



**TABLE 3.12: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF INTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION) (N=492)**

	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>95% CI Lower</b>	<b>95% CI Upper</b>
(Constant)	11.434	1.481		7.721	.000	8.524	14.344
Self efficacy	.032	.009	.129	3.342	.001	.013	.050
Role clarity	.125	.024	.224	5.202	.000	.078	.173
Extrinsic job satisfaction	.300	.029	.436	10.410	.000	.243	.356
GHQ stress	-.087	.040	-.087	-2.153	.032	-.165	-.008
<i>Adjusted R square=0.482</i>							

### 3.2.5 Job satisfaction – Extrinsic

Extrinsic job satisfaction refers to pay and conditions, the quality of management and supervision, ease of travel to work and so on.

Responses for each scale item were re-coded into three mutually exclusive categories: dissatisfied=1 (very dissatisfied, dissatisfied), don't know=2, and satisfied (satisfied, very satisfied) = 3.

The following nine items were included in the baseline and interim surveys:

- Income
- Job security
- Number of hours of work
- Flexibility of hours
- Ease of travel to work
- Management and Supervision by your superiors
- Opportunities for advancement
- The physical work conditions
- Your work in general

Extrinsic job satisfaction was measured using a five-point scale; very dissatisfied=1, dissatisfied=2, don't know=3, satisfied=4, very satisfied=5. Scores of extrinsic job satisfaction could range from nine to forty five.

The ratings of NQSWs who responded to the three-month review but not the T1 survey were combined to create the baseline sample in the following analyses. The following analyses are based on 226 respondents who answered the seven questions on extrinsic job satisfaction and for whom we had demographic information.

There was no statistically significant difference in mean total ratings at the T2 survey; the statistical analysis showed that the effect size was 'negligible (Table 3.13).

**TABLE 3.13: EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS AT BASELINE AND INTERIM (PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST)**

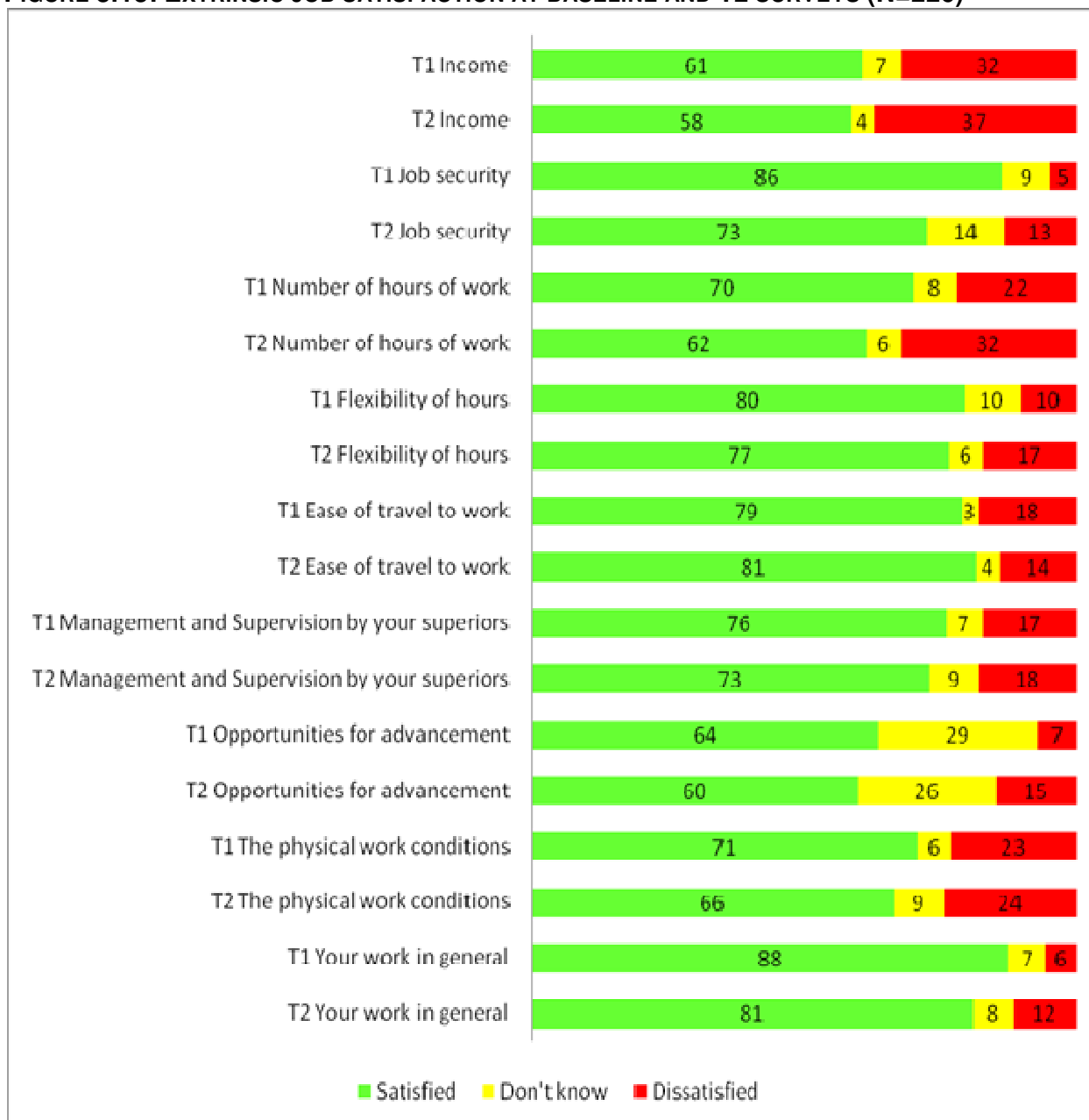
Paired samples	N	Mean 1	SD	Mean 2	SD	Mean Difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Effect size
Time 2 vs. Time 1	226	31.96	5.25	32.15	4.80	0.20	0.61	0.542	0.04	Negligible

### 3.2.5.1 Extrinsic job satisfaction for individual outcome statements

Responses for each scale item were re-coded into three mutually exclusive categories: dissatisfied=1 (very dissatisfied, dissatisfied), don't know=2, and satisfied (satisfied, very satisfied) =3. Figure 3.13 (below) shows that most respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with many aspects of their job. There were small decreases in levels of satisfaction on a number of items between baseline and interim surveys, including job security, number of hours of work and respondent's work in general. Statistically significant changes in satisfaction between baseline and T2 were found for the above three items as well as opportunities for advancement.

In 2008-09, satisfaction decreased for the number of hours worked, flexibility of hours, opportunities for advancement and management and supervision. In addition, the proportion of NQSWs dissatisfied with their income was slightly higher than the proportion satisfied in 2008-09. This was not found in 2009-10.

**FIGURE 3.13: EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT BASELINE AND T2 SURVEYS (N=226)**



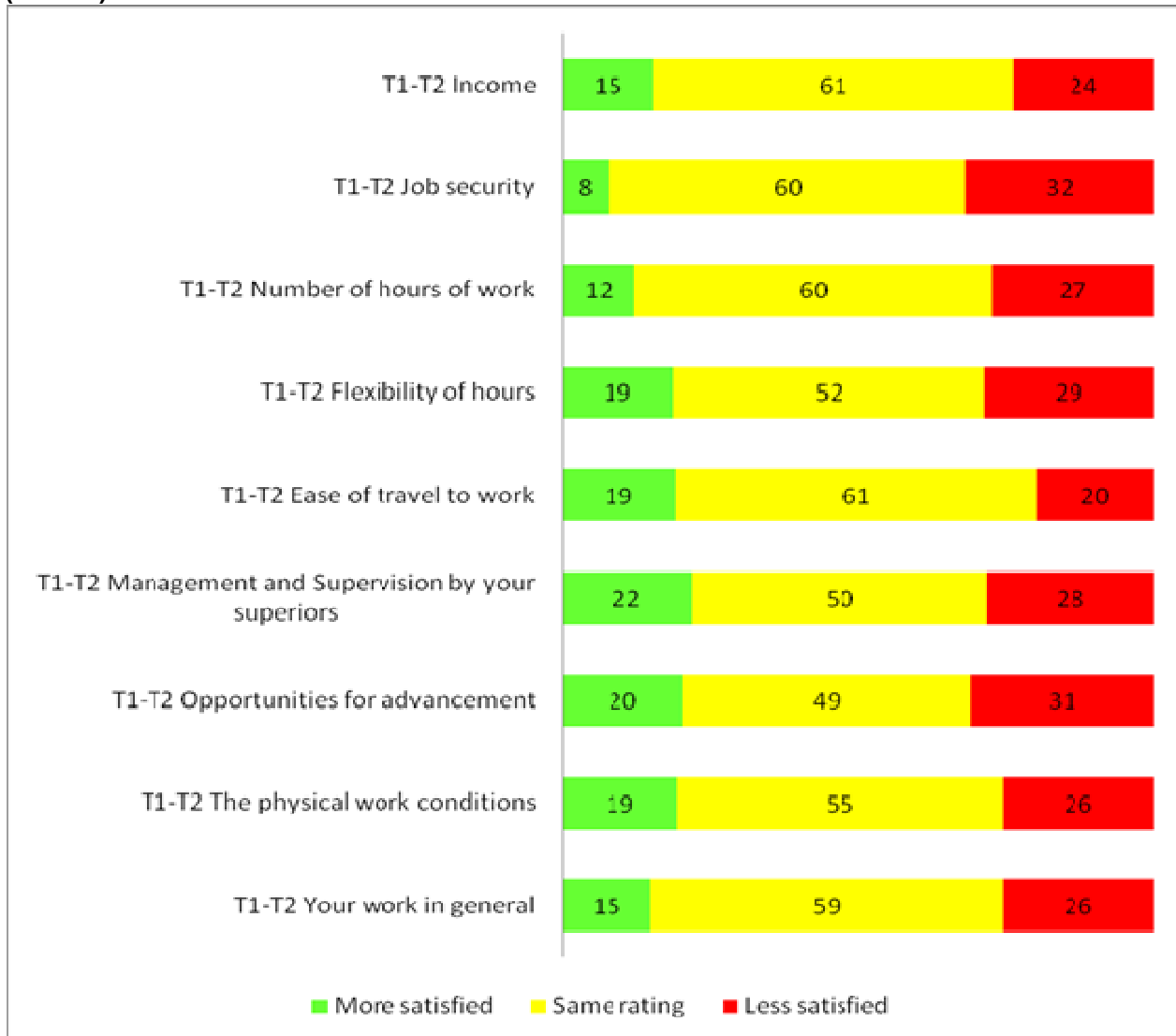
### 3.2.5.2 Changes in individual extrinsic job satisfaction scores

The proportions of NQSWs who increased and decreased their extrinsic job satisfaction on specific items are shown in Figure 3.14 (below). For at least half the NQSWs there had been no change in the various aspects of extrinsic job satisfaction (Figure 3.13). About one in five were more satisfied with management and supervision by their superiors, and opportunities for advancement. At the same time, it is noticeable that about a third of respondents had become less satisfied with their job security, opportunities for advancement and flexibility of hours. One quarter were also less satisfied with their income, physical working conditions and their work in general.

In 2008-09, there had been no change in the various aspects of extrinsic job satisfaction for at least half the NQSWs. As in 2009-10, 20 per cent were more satisfied with management and

supervision by superiors, but a third or more had become less satisfied with their income, number of hours of work and opportunities for advancement between baseline and T2 surveys.

**FIGURE 3.14: CHANGES IN T1 VS. T2 EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION RATINGS: PROPORTIONS OF NQSWs (N=226)**



### 3.2.5.3 What predicts extrinsic job satisfaction at T2?

At T2, an analysis based on 492 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. High extrinsic job satisfaction was also predicted by higher role clarity scores. Lower extrinsic job satisfaction, on the other hand, was associated with higher role conflict scores and having high stress levels (Table 3.15). This is another strong model, accounting for nearly half (49 per cent) of the variance. These same predictors were significant at baseline, but also included being in the oldest age group (41 and over) and being educated in the UK.

In 2008-09, the strongest association with high extrinsic job satisfaction at T2 was high intrinsic

job satisfaction and with a feeling of positive public respect for social work. Again, lower extrinsic job satisfaction was associated with higher role conflict. The 2008-09 model accounted for half of the variance.

**TABLE 3.15: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF EXTRINSIC JOB SATISFACTION AT T2 (LINEAR REGRESSION) (N=492)**

	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
(Constant)	15.131	2.165		6.990	.000	10.878	19.385
Satisfaction with public respect for social work	.795	.168	.165	4.742	.000	.465	1.124
Role clarity	.092	.036	.112	2.574	.010	.022	.161
Role conflict	-.063	.018	-.132	-3.615	.000	-.098	-.029
Intrinsic job satisfaction	.627	.060	.431	10.410	.000	.509	.746
GHQ stress	-.263	.057	-.181	-4.605	.000	-.375	-.151
<i>Adjusted R square=0.488</i>							

### 3.2.5.4 Public respect for social work

As part of the extrinsic job satisfaction scale, respondents were asked to report their level of satisfaction with the public's respect for social work as a profession. However, reliability analysis revealed that it did not correlate well with other items in the scale; while job satisfaction was generally high, satisfaction with public respect for social work was low. Consequently, as in previous reports this item is presented as a standalone measure of intrinsic interest.

Results show that (see Table 3.16 below) the proportion of respondents dissatisfied increased from 57 per cent to 62 per cent between baseline and end of the programme in 2009-10.

This was similar to the findings in 2008-09 where the proportion of respondents dissatisfied increased from 65 to 67 per cent between baseline and the end of the programme. The difference is small and does not suggest that recent attempts to promote the image of social work have made an impact on the perceptions on NQSWs.

**TABLE 3.16: SATISFACTION WITH PUBLIC RESPECT FOR SOCIAL WORK AT BASELINE AND INTERIM SURVEYS**

	Time 1 & T3MR		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Very dissatisfied	113	18.4	86	17.0
Dissatisfied	242	39.4	227	44.8
Don't know	111	18.1	91	17.9
Satisfied	137	22.3	95	18.7
Very satisfied	11	1.8	8	1.6
Total	614	100.0	507	100.0

### 3.2.6 Stress

Stress was measured by means of the General Health Questionnaire (12 item version)<sup>45</sup>. GHQ responses can be analysed to give a mean rating that 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.

The stress ratings of NQSWs who responded to the three-month review but not the T1 survey were combined to create the baseline sample in the following analyses. The following analyses are based on 226 respondents who answered the 12 questions on stress at baseline and T2 and for whom we had demographic information.

The overall proportion of NQSWs above the stress threshold at the end of the programme was 36 per cent, compared with 31 per cent at baseline (see Table 3.17 below). This difference was statistically significant, but actually somewhat less so than for Year One, where the proportion had increased from one third to 43 per cent by the end of the programme. Although the T2 figures for both years of the NQSW programme are high, they are comparable to other surveys of children's social workers, which were discussed in the Year 1 report.

**TABLE 3.17: STRESS THRESHOLDS AT TIME 1 AND T2 SURVEYS: MATCHED SAMPLES (N=226)**

	Time 1		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Below threshold	156	69.0	145	64.2
Above threshold	70	31.0	81	35.8
Total	226	100.0	226	100.0
Chi-square	$\chi^2(1, N=226)= 10.716, p= .001$			

<sup>45</sup> 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. It was developed by Goldberg in the 1970s and since then has been used extensively in different settings. The scale asks whether the respondent has experienced a particular symptom or behaviour recently. Each item is rated on a four-point scale (less than usual, no more than usual, rather more than usual, or much more than usual). The GHQ-12 gives a total score of 36 (using Likert scoring: 0-1-2-3) or 12 (using bi-modal scoring: 0-0-1-1). The GHQ-12 is a brief, simple, easy to complete survey of mental health, and its application in research settings and different cultures as a screening tool is well documented. For additional information, see Golderberg D and Williams P (1988). *A user's guide to the General Health questionnaire*. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.

## 4 Retention/intention to leave

### 4.1 Likelihood of looking for a new job

Respondents were asked how likely they were to be actively looking for a new job in the coming year. Forty four per cent of respondents at T2 stated that it was 'fairly likely' or 'very likely' that they would be looking for a new job in a year's time, compared to thirty five per cent of baseline respondents (see Table 4.1 below). This compares to 47 per cent of social workers at T2 and 32 per cent of social workers at baseline in 2008-09.

Those respondents reporting that they would be actively seeking a new job were then asked if this would be for another job in children's social work, a job in another area of social work or a job outside social work altogether (see Table 4.2 below). There were no differences between the number of respondents reporting that that they would be staying in social work (children's social work or otherwise), as opposed to leaving the profession altogether between baseline and T2. Comparable figures are not available for 2008-09.

**TABLE 4.1: LIKELINESS OF LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB AT BASELINE AND INTERIM SURVEYS**

	Time 1		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Not at all likely	126	20.5	80	15.8
Not very likely	271	44.1	203	40.0
Fairly likely	154	25.1	145	28.6
Very likely	63	10.3	79	15.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**TABLE 4.2: DESTINATION FOR THOSE 'LIKELY' TO LEAVE JOB AT BASELINE AND INTERIM SURVEYS**

	Time 1		Time 2	
	N	%	N	%
Another job in children's social work	133	61.3	133	59.4
A job in another area of social work	54	24.9	59	26.3
A job outside social work altogether	22	10.1	22	9.8
Missing	8	3.7	10	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100.0</b>

At T2 in 2009-10, differences emerged between NQSWs in terms of likelihood of leaving their posts in a year's time. Respondents aged 31-40, males, those receiving their qualification outside the UK, and respondents working for an employer in London were all more likely report an intention to leave compared with baseline respondents (see Table 4.3 below). These differences were statistically significant.

In comparison, there were no differences in terms of background characteristics at T2 in 2008-09.

**TABLE 4.3: LIKELINESS OF LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB AND DESTINATION AT BASELINE AND INTERIM SURVEYS BY BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS**

		Time 1 'Likely to leave'		Time 2 'Likely to leave'	
		N	Row %	Count	Row %
Age group	21-30	108	35.3	96	39.7
	31-40	54	37.0	72	<b>52.9*</b>
	41+	55	34.0	56	43.4
Gender	Male	41	41.4	47	<b>55.3*</b>
	Female	176	34.2	177	41.9
Ethnic group	White	167	32.8	181	43.3
	Black/Minority Ethnic	50	<b>47.6*</b>	43	48.3
Degree level	Undergraduate	151	36.6	150	45.7
	Postgraduate	66	32.8	74	41.3
UK degree?	Yes	16	39.0	26	<b>63.4*</b>
	No	201	35.1	198	42.5
Employer type	Unitary authority	20	27.8	30	48.4
	County authority	124	36.7	114	41.8
	Metropolitan authority	36	35.3	31	36.5
	London Borough	31	39.2	44	<b>58.7*</b>
	Voluntary/Other	6	26.1	5	41.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>217</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>44.2</b>

\* Pearson chi-square test,  $p < .05$

## 4.2 What predicts intention to leave at T2?

Factors predicting the likelihood of looking for a new job at T2 were investigated by creating two new 'likelihood of leaving' groupings: 'not likely' versus 'likely' by combining the original answer categories.

The likelihood<sup>46</sup> of actively looking for a new job increased with higher stress levels (see Table 4.4 below). This was also found in the baseline. Female respondents were much less likely than male respondents to indicate intention to leave. This was not found in the baseline. Another strong predictor of intention to remain in post was (that is, 'not likely' to leave) was *extrinsic* job satisfaction; this had also been a strong predictor in the baseline as well. The model accounted for approximately 40 per cent of the variance, which indicates a strong predictive model of intention to leave.

In 2008-09, the regression model for T2 showed that respondents with higher extrinsic job satisfaction are less likely to leave, whereas those with higher stress are more likely to leave. Both of these predictors were also found in 2009-10. The 2008-09 model accounted for 56 per cent of the variance, which was higher than the 2009-10 model.

**TABLE 4.4: SIGNIFICANT PREDICTORS OF LIKELIHOOD OF LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB AT T2 (BINARY LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS) (N=504)**

<sup>46</sup> The likelihood or 'odds' of actively looking for a new job in the coming was calculated using binary logistic regression, which predicts of the probability of occurrence of an event by fitting data to a logic function logistic curve. Like linear regression analysis, it makes use of several predictor variables that may be either numerical or categorical.



	<b>B</b>	<b>S.E.</b>	<b>Wald</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>	<b>95 % CI Lower</b>	<b>95% CI Upper</b>
Female (Male)	-.621	.305	4.135	1	.042	.537	.295	.978
Extrinsic job satisfaction	-.178	.035	26.418	1	<.001	.837	.782	.896
GHQ stress	.169	.041	17.482	1	<.001	1.185	1.094	1.283
Constant	7.397	1.929	14.708	1	<.001	1631.461		
<i>Nagelkerke R Square= .394</i>								

Note: Only variables at  $p < .10$  level listed. Reference categories denoted by (parentheses).

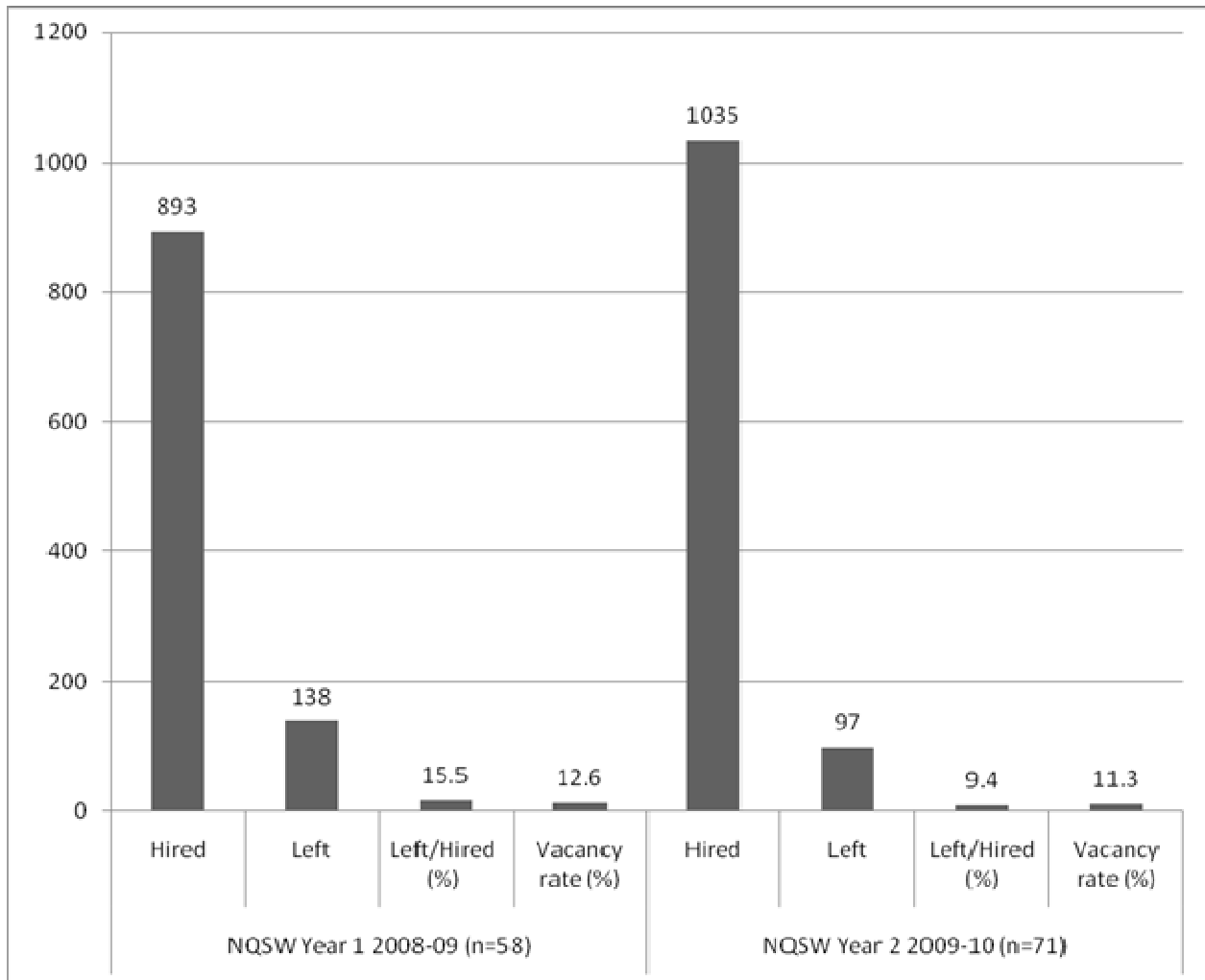
### 4.3 Recruitment and Retention Survey

All agencies participating in the first two years of the NQSW 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 (see Appendix 12).

As at the end of April 2011, a total 58 participating sites (66 per cent of all sites) responded to the Year 1 request and 71 participating sites (49 per cent of all sites) responded to the Year 2 request. The summary figures are presented in Figure 4.1. Of the 893 full time and part time NQSWs hired in Year 1, 138 left during the year (15.5 per cent). In Year 2, the comparable figures were 1,035 and 97 resulting in a much lower turnover rate of 9.4 per cent. It is noticeable that 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 in Year 1 and 11 per cent in Year 2.

**FIGURE 4.1: NUMBER OF NQSWs HIRED/LEFT DURING AND VACANCY RATES FOR SITES PARTICIPATING IN THE NQSW PROGRAMME IN 2008-09 AND 2009-10**



## 5 Summary of key outcomes for NQSWs and comparison with previous cohort (2008-09)

For ease of reference the key impacts and outcomes for NQSWs are summarised in Table 5.1

**TABLE 5.1 SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES FOR NQSWs AND COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS COHORT (2008-09)**

<b>Impact/Outcome</b>	<b>2008-09</b>	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>Source in report</b>
Overall satisfaction with programme at end	58%	68%	2.1.2.1
Receiving supervision for 90 minutes once a fortnight	50%	67%	2.1.7.1
High self-efficacy in relation to outcome statements (beginning to end of programme)	37.5%→61%	38.5%→64%	3.2.1.1
Role clarity	High: no change	High: no change	3.2.2
Role conflict	Moderate: small increase	Moderate: small increase	3.2.3
Intrinsic job satisfaction (tasks, own accomplishments, opportunities to use initiative etc.)	High: no change	High: no change	3.2.4.1
Extrinsic job satisfaction (pay, job security, hours of work etc.)	High: no change	High: no change	3.2.5
Stress (above clinical threshold)	31%→43%	31%→36%	3.2.6
Intending to leave job in next year ("likely")	32%→47%	35%→44%	4.1

## 6 Conclusions

At this interim stage in the evaluation of the programme it is wise to be cautious in coming to definitive conclusions about the implementation of the programme and its outcomes. Most senior managers interviewed held positive views about the programme on the grounds of increased quality of applications for NQSW posts, NQSWs' improved career expectations and organisations being better able to promote the development of their staff. Team managers held the view that the programme was effective in gaining recognition for the importance of supervision and of continued learning and development. Over two thirds of NQSWs surveyed were satisfied with the support they were receiving through the NQSW programme; for those that expressed dissatisfaction the primary causes were poor management of the programme in their organisation, unsupportive managers and a perceived lack of caseload reduction. However, the proportion of NQSWs expressing overall satisfaction with the overall package of work and support from their employer at the end of year (68 per cent) was substantially higher than in the first year (58 per cent). Encouragingly the findings on outcomes, including substantial gains in NQSWs' confidence, replicated those from the previous year. Job satisfaction remained high.

Some tentative key messages from the year two evaluation are as follows:

1. There is evidence that the programme has become more embedded in those organisations, which are now in the second year of implementation. Problems in implementation remain, particularly for some, but not all, organisations which were engaged in the programme for the first time.
2. High workloads and the availability of good supervision were still problems for some NQSWs.
3. The requirement to complete a portfolio remained an issue for the majority of NQSWs, although the actual requirements had been relaxed from the previous year (and have been reduced further for the 2010-11 programme).

There was some evidence that retention improved, but this cannot necessarily be attributed to programme.

The final report will provide a more detailed picture about the way in which the response to the NQSW programme has developed over the period of implementation. This will enable key messages to be extracted with more confidence.

## **7 Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. The Outcome Statements**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3931/Appendix 1 The Outcome Statements.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3931/Appendix_1_The_Outcome_Statements.pdf)

### **Appendix 2. Group Interview Schedule – NQSW groups**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3934/Appendix 2 Group Interview Schedule NQSW groups.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3934/Appendix_2_Group_Interview_Schedule_NQSW_groups.pdf)

### **Appendix 3. Group Interview Schedule – Supervisors and Managers**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3935/Appendix 3 Group Interview Schedule Supervisors and Managers.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3935/Appendix_3_Group_Interview_Schedule_Supervisors_and_Managers.pdf)

### **Appendix 4. Telephone Interviews with Senior Managers**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3936/Appendix 4 Telephone Interviews with Senior Managers.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3936/Appendix_4_Telephone_Interviews_with_Senior_Managers.pdf)

### **Appendix 5. Personal Interview Schedule – Programme Coordinators**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3937/Appendix 5 Personal Interview Schedule Programme Coordinators.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3937/Appendix_5_Personal_Interview_Schedule_Programme_Coordinators.pdf)

### **Appendix 6. NQSW survey Time 1**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3938/Appendix 6. NSQW survey Time 1.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3938/Appendix_6_NSQW_survey_Time_1.pdf)

### **Appendix 7. NQSW survey Time 3 month review**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3940/Appendix 8. NSQW survey Time 2.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3940/Appendix_8_NSQW_survey_Time_2.pdf)

### **Appendix 8. NQSW survey Time 2**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3940/Appendix 8. NSQW survey Time 2.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3940/Appendix_8_NSQW_survey_Time_2.pdf)

### **Appendix 9. Supervisor's survey Time 2**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3941/Appendix 9. Supervisor s survey Time 2.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3941/Appendix_9_Supervisor_s_survey_Time_2.pdf)

### **Appendix 10. Programme Coordinator's survey Time 1**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3942/Appendix 10. Programme Coordinator s survey Time 1.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3942/Appendix_10_Programme_Coordinator_s_survey_Time_1.pdf)

### **Appendix 11. Programme Coordinator's survey Time 2 (insert PDF link)**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3943/Appendix 11. Programme Coordinator s survey Time 2.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3943/Appendix_11_Programme_Coordinator_s_survey_Time_2.pdf)

**Appendix 12. Recruitment and Retention survey proforma**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3944/Appendix 12 Recruitment and Retention survey proforma.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3944/Appendix_12_Recruitment_and_Retention_survey_proforma.pdf)

**Appendix 13. Additional tables**

[http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3945/Appendix 13 Additional tables for report.pdf](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/3945/Appendix_13_Additional_tables_for_report.pdf)

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