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Undertaking an audit & evaluation of PQ in 6 London local authorities

**Skills for Care project
Final report (31 May 2010)**

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Part one

1. Executive summary

- The PQ awards are greatly valued by social workers who believe that they are more skilled, confident and reflective practitioners as a result of undertaking PQ study. Overall the majority of respondents felt that post qualifying training in their organisations was important or essential 47.5% of social workers believed that post qualifying training for social workers is very important and 18.7% stated that it is absolutely essential
- 73.7% of social workers believe that there has been a direct impact upon their work with service users as a result of undertaking a post qualifying award. There was a particular focus on the importance of being able to reflect on practice and reaffirm the importance of social work values when working in multi-disciplinary settings.
- Currently most local authorities do not have a career grade for advanced social work practitioners. The majority of responses indicated that the PQ framework is not embedded within a social work career pathway or linked with career development.
- Recruitment and retention of social workers are key issues for employers. Promoting, supporting and recognising the value of PQ learning is a valuable strategy. Social workers in the survey placed a great deal of importance on their professional development and career advancement.
- There is an important link between the PQ awards and practice learning. 62% of those undertaking a PQ award had supervised a student. At a time when we need to ensure that high quality statutory placements are available the PQ awards have an important role to play in ensuring best practice standards are maintained.
- Local authorities who have a dedicated lead for practice learning and the post qualifying awards are in a stronger position to contribute to the wider workforce agenda which includes the development of the InLaws framework and for children's services implementing the One Children's Workforce Tool.
- It is beneficial to provide opportunities for PQ and PL leads to collaborate and share information about PQ developments. The Pan London Social Work Education Network facilitated by Skills for Care is valued as an information exchange and a forum to share good practice and network with colleagues. Skills for Care London have developed a range of support materials for the post qualifying framework that provides useful guidance for PQ leads new to this role.

- Sharing learning and knowledge is an important benefit of post qualifying education. PQ award holders are a valuable resource able to contribute to, and promote, best practice. There are a number of PQ Champions in London and employers may wish to consider identifying PQ award holders within their own organisation who would like to share their knowledge and skills more widely.
- PQ award holders have been involved in the development of policy within their organisation, writing for professional publications, running workshops, presenting at conferences and shared their learning with students to embed good practice within their organisations.

2. Introduction

This report was commissioned from independent consultants Shirley Ayres Consulting by London Skills for Care using Social Work Development Partnership funding. The research was piloting undertaking an audit and evaluation of the post qualifying (PQ) awards across a selection of local authorities (LAs) in North Central (NC) and South West (SW) London to explore the challenges and issues for social workers in undertaking a post qualifying award. The research came out of a request from LAs in both sub regions for more data on the take up and evidence of the impact of social workers undertaking PQ.

The focus of the project working with this small sample of 6 local authorities in the NC and SW London regions was to:

- Ascertain from their social workers what PQ they have undertaken (since the introduction of the new PQ framework)
- To find out whether any of them have been a practice educator
- To find out whether their post qualifying learning has contributed to practice learning in any way and if so, how / if not, why not?
- To identify effective practice that is likely to be transferable

The audit was undertaken between April and May 2010 and provides a snapshot of the information held about social workers who have completed a post qualifying module or award, the perspectives of Post Qualifying (PQ) and Practice Learning (PL) Leads and the experiences of social workers to identify the impact that completion of a PQ course had on their practice.

3. Methodology

Working alongside the existing sub regional staff and networks, the post qualifying and practice learning leads were informed of the purpose of the project.

Due to the short time scales and the number of local authorities, practice teachers and social workers to be contacted, the methodology focused on desk research, developing a framework for data collection and analysis and the use of online surveys.

There were a number of stages to the project:

- Attendance at relevant meetings
- Collecting Data about social workers who could participate in the survey
- Online survey of PQ Leads to determine their views and experiences of the post qualifying framework. (Additional PQ/PL Leads were added to the original list provided)
- Online survey of social workers to explore their experiences of undertaking a post qualifying module or award.

4. Meetings

The project consultant attended six meetings to gain an overview of the issues and perspectives about the post qualifying awards. The start meeting with the London PQ/PL coordinator and the sub regional PQ/PL co-ordinators; the SW London PQ/PL sub regional Conference in Sutton, NC London PL and PQ sub regional group, SW London PL and PQ sub regional group and the Project Review Meeting. Additional PQ/PL contact details were provided at the meetings. There were a number of Leads new to the post which had implications for both data collection and their knowledge of the post qualifying framework.

5. Data collection

The PQ Leads in each local authority were requested to provide the following information regarding Contact names and email addresses held within their local authority relating to social workers who:

- Are undertaking a post qualifying award

- Have completed a post qualifying award
- Have completed practice educator training (either accredited or non accredited).
-

In addition details of:

- The universities with whom the local authorities work to provide post qualifying programmes including the practice educator training at all three levels
- The local authority policy regarding support for post qualifying training and CPD.

The intention was to capture the contact details of social workers with their email addresses, local authority, the PQ award being undertaken/completed the university, whether a practice educator, and the date completed.

It has not been possible to provide an accurate statistical summary because the information available was so variable. Many local authorities have no data relating to the period before the revised PQ framework was introduced in 2005. The PQ Award includes the three levels at Specialist/Higher Specialist/Advanced, the Practice Teacher Award and the Approved Social Worker/AMHP Award. The Practice Educator includes Practice Teacher/Practice Assessor/Work Based Supervisor. The status of non-accredited practice educator programmes provided by universities but which carries no formal accreditation or assessment remains unclear.

Following the introduction of the revised PQ framework, no one organisation holds the data for all social workers undertaking a post qualifying award. Students now register directly with a university. The universities report to the General Social Council annually on the numbers registered and completing post qualifying awards.

There are shortcomings in the information available about social workers undertaking a post qualifying award. There does not appear to be any systematic recording by local authorities of social workers who have undertaken or completed a post qualifying award. Generally the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS) is not being used to record this data. This has wider implications because the use of the NMDS underpins the development of the Integrated Local Area Workforce Strategy (InLAWS).. Only one respondent confirmed that they were using NMDS to collect and store information about social workers undertaking a post qualifying award.

Information was received from the following local authorities:

Barnet – 84 entries

Camden – 16 entries containing names and PQ module only

Enfield – 51 entries

Haringey – 64 entries of which 30 are names only

Islington – 88 entries names only

Richmond – 41 entries which included both names and module entries and 18 names

In summary this provided:

344 entries

189 entries providing data requested, 19 entries name and module only

136 entries name only

Data cleansing removed 43 duplicate records leaving 301 unique names.

Some local authorities were unable to provide a mailing list or requested that the social workers should not be approached directly to complete the survey. A generic link was provided to the survey and the PQ Leads/Practice Assessors in those authorities forwarded the email on our behalf. In our experience sending an email to a named person encourages a greater response rate. There were only 5 responses from the generic mailings. Having up to data is essential to systematically evaluate how the PQ awards have contributed to developing and supporting best practice in social work.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The information collected through the meetings and the survey data was analysed to inform the following conclusions and recommendations.

6.1 Awareness of the PQ framework

In order to take full advantage of the PQ awards employers and social workers need to be aware how the PQ awards are structured, the different awards and modules available. The majority of respondents found out about the post qualifying awards through their employers so it is important that employers are kept updated with relevant and timely information.

50% of PQ Leads are reasonably aware of all the post qualifying programmes available in London.

A number of local authorities have worked collaboratively with a university to develop a customised post qualifying module or programme.

Skills for Care London have developed a range of support materials for the post qualifying framework. These include: the PQ Bulletin, the PQ Programme Directory, Developing the Business Case for Post-Qualifying Awards in Social Work, the PQ Employers Guide to the PQ Framework and more recently the development of some PQ case studies.

It is beneficial to provide opportunities for PQ and PL leads to collaborate and share information about new PQ developments. The Pan London Social Work Education Network facilitated by Skills for Care brings together local authorities, the private and voluntary sector and HEIs. It is valued as an information exchange and a forum to share good practice and network with colleagues.

Recommendation:

A tool kit is made available to all PQ and PL lead staff which includes all of the publications detailed above and information about the Access to Libraries Scheme and the Practice Learning Resource (CD Rom/USB). It would also be helpful to have an updated briefing paper which lists the range of online resources available including the Skills for Care London and national websites, the CWDC website, the Social Work Reform Board and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

6.2 Baseline data about social workers undertaking a PQ award

Employers and social workers have made a substantial investment in the PQ awards. It is a matter of concern that this investment cannot be more systematically evaluated because the baseline data is not available. When records are not available or maintained it is more difficult to evaluate the longer term impact of the PQ awards, to share good practice and to undertake audits within a local authority and across the region.

Recommendation:

That an audit is undertaken of why and how local authorities are using the NMDS system and what other databases they use. We have included the spreadsheets used to collate the data for this project in the appendices and they could be used as templates for local authorities without existing systems.

6.3 The PQ awards and links to career progression

Most local authorities do not have a career grade for advanced social work practitioners. The majority of respondents indicated that their organisations were not using PQ as a tool for career progression. Social workers in the survey placed a great importance on their professional development and career advancement. A small number of local authorities have addressed this issue and have a framework for career progression that includes the post qualifying awards in social work.

It has to be acknowledged that creating such career progression frameworks is a complex issue which requires discussion and agreement with interested parties including the trade unions. Formalising a career grade would require all staff to have equal access to continuing professional development opportunities to demonstrate their competence at an advanced practice level.

Two local authorities provided their policies regarding the support available for post qualifying training and continuing professional development. The Islington Learning Agreement for staff undertaking the PQ Specialist Award specifies conditions of funding, support for the learner, workload relief, and the responsibilities of the student, the manager and the local authority. The Haringey Post Qualifying Awards in Social Work Policy details eligibility criteria, how to apply, funding, how PQ awards are recognised in Haringey and post course evaluation.

Recommendation:

Career progression and advancement is an area for development. Further work is required to support local authorities in providing career pathways and developing a strategic approach to recruitment and retention of staff. Local authorities who do have a framework for career progression, which links with the post qualifying awards, could be promoted as exemplars of good practice.

6.4 Perceived difficulties with the current PQ system

The importance of a commitment from senior managers and ring fenced funding were perceived difficulties along with access to information. Some PQ leads commented that they find the PQ framework complex and having a system with full awards and modules is confusing. Local authorities who have a dedicated lead for practice learning and the post qualifying awards are in a stronger position to contribute to the wider workforce agenda.

PQ Leads identified a number of practical steps which would support them in promoting the PQ awards in their local authority. This includes gathering evidence to present to managers and practitioners about the value of undertaking PQ study and its impact on practice and the organisation. They would like stronger links to be made with the HEIs to integrate learning and practice in the workplace. One major challenge is releasing staff to attend courses and consideration has to be given to the difficulties that arise from prolonged absences from the workplace.

Recommendation:

Information about the PQ resources available to support PQ leads in discussing the value of the PQ awards with managers to be circulated regularly. Each local authority to have a named PQ lead and the contact list to be updated and circulated by Skills for Care. This will ensure that PQ leads are able to access colleagues from other authorities and to receive relevant information about resources and networks both on and off line.

6.5 The benefits and impact of undertaking a PQ award

For social workers:

Social workers had a range of motivations for undertaking a post qualifying award. These included career advancement and professional development, gaining a nationally recognised award and developing research skills. Social workers felt that undertaking a PQ award had improved, enhanced and updated their knowledge and skills. The importance of being able to reflect on, and in, practice was recognised along with meeting other social workers, sharing experiences and new information.

“Undertaking a PQ award was intellectually stimulating, enabled me to meet professionals from other local authorities, share best practice and experiences and get up to date with current research findings.”

However a number of respondents indicated that after completing a PQ programme there had been no change to their job, training or career prospects which possibly reflects the lack of a career framework.

Tuition fees and study leave were the most cited areas of support from employers. However there was little workload relief. If staff are not given the time to reflect and absorb their learning this does have implications about the value of the investment made in the post qualifying awards in the longer term.

For employers:

The majority of employers believe that ensuring that social workers have up to date knowledge about relevant policy and legislation is very important. Social workers believe that this issue is addressed through undertaking a PQ award which provides more skilled, confident and reflective social workers who have up to date knowledge about relevant policy and legislation.

“Application of learning in order to increase efficacy of the organisation. Managing change model was implemented within my department and the outcome was significant improvement in performance noted by OFSTED inspection”

“Through post qualifying programmes, my organisation has been able to offer more placements to social work students and this has led to some students remaining as permanent employees. It has also provided my organisation with a workforce keen to develop their professional skills through knowledge gained from the post qualifying programme”

“Improved knowledge, skills understanding of current policies and procedures and ability to offer an improved service to clients”

“I have revisited my competencies, enhanced my knowledge and have developed an understanding of how to manage the learning of the student in placement”

For people who use services:

A significant majority of respondents agreed that undertaking a PQ award had led to a direct impact on service users. There was a particular focus on the importance of being able to reflect on practice and reaffirm the importance of social work values when working in inter-professional settings. 73.7% of social workers believed that there had been a direct impact upon service users as a result of them undertaking a post qualifying award.

“I have more in-depth knowledge of social work and able to apply it my everyday job. Service users have more confidence in my assessment”

“I am more reflective in practice, and therefore there are better outcomes when decisions have to be made”

“I believe that I am able to reflect on my practice better and it help me to think through some of the most difficult decisions in relation to my work with the clients”

“Advocate more within hospital setting, reframed my social work values”

6.6 Opportunities to share good practice

Sharing learning and knowledge is an important benefit of post qualifying education. The responses to the question about disseminating the research from post qualifying studies suggest that organisations would benefit from thinking strategically about how post qualifying award holders can share their knowledge and skills across the organisation. There are a number of ways in which social workers can share the learning, research projects and dissertations completed as part of a post qualifying award.

Six social workers indicated that they would like to share good practice and this will be followed up by Skills for Care.

Recommendation:

Employers to be supported to consider ways of disseminating practitioner research through contributing to the development of policy, writing articles for professional publications, presenting at internal workshops and external conferences.

6.7 The links between the PQ Awards & Practice Learning

Practice educators have an important role in developing and supporting the next generation of social workers. The Enabling Others module in the PQ awards prepares social workers for the supervision and assessment of social work students. 61.8% of social workers had supervised a student as part of their post qualifying award. The majority of practice educators are supported through university partners providing on-going training and support.

The new practice educator framework provides a progressive structure for the skills and knowledge required to assess students at a number of different levels. Clarification is required about how the new framework will be embedded with the current structures.

Recommendation:

There needs to be a coherent and consistent pathway which offers practice educators real incentives to improve and enhance their skills and knowledge and continue to provide student placements.

6.8 Key messages for the Social Work Reform Board

There were a number of messages that PQ Leads and social workers would like to share with the Social Work Reform Board about the post qualifying awards.

Local authorities without a dedicated PQ Lead are struggling whilst also addressing the issue of locum social workers.

The reorganisation in relation to the personalisation agenda is creating additional demands whilst creating a degree of uncertainty about the future role of social workers.

There is a need for the post qualifying awards to be linked with career progression and a continued profession registration.

“It is important for LA to attach progression into PQ Training and for this to be recognised via reduction of case loads”

“Greater clarity of structure of PQ and closer links to advancement within the profession. Vital if we are to keep social workers engaged and taking on greater complexity and progressing professionally”

“For all to have access to PQ awards and modules for improved practice and knowledge and understanding about the changes in social work. Good for reflective practice”

There are benefits in having a clear and straightforward framework that is easy to understand and move through.

“Our social workers have reported that the PQ Awards in the current framework involve too much written work. Also, it becomes difficult to release staff to do the awards because of the time commitment involved”.

“It would be useful to have the awards running twice a year rather than having to wait for one specific joining time. This may increase the intake and would be helpful for those undertaking the awards at that time in relation to support and discussion.”

“They are too complicated and confusing and seem to bear little relation to real life practice”

7. Conclusions

The evidence base for the benefits of undertaking a PQ award is limited and dated and does not capture the impact of the revised PQ framework which was introduced in 2005. There is a policy-implementation gap; attitudes and approaches towards supporting social workers in undertaking post qualifying awards are highly variable. There is no robust strategy linked with career progression for optimising the use of the post qualifying framework. Stronger partnerships between employers, HEIs, service users and social workers themselves have the potential to raise the standing of the profession, give current social work students the best chances to learn, and ensure quality training of social workers of the future. This includes developing placement provision, capacity and shared ownership in supporting and promoting the PQ awards.

The Social Work Reform Board have recommended the creation of a more coherent and effective national framework for the continuing professional development of social workers, along with mechanisms to encourage a shift in culture which raises expectations of an entitlement to ongoing learning and development. This project confirms the importance of progressing this recommendation for the future development of a skilled, knowledgeable and highly motivated social work profession.

Shirley Ayres Consulting, 31st May 2010

Shirley Ayres
Graham Scotchbrook
Lucy O'Neill

Part two

8. PQ leads survey results

A total of 28 people were sent the survey. 10 responded giving a response rate of 35%. 3 of the 10 did not complete the full survey.

Question 1: Information about respondents

Responses were received from the following authorities:

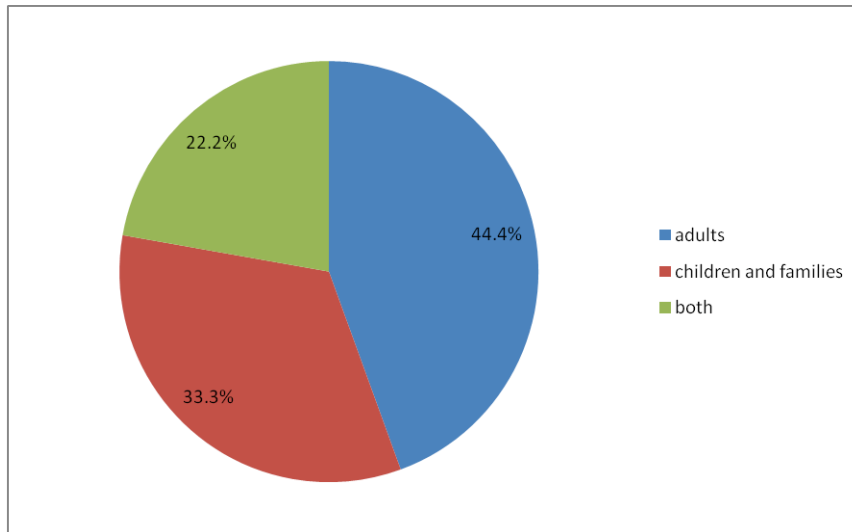
- Enfield
- Haringey
- Islington
- Richmond
- Tower Hamlets
- Wandsworth (Adult Services)

Question 2: What is your official job title?

The job titles were as follows:

- Acting Learning and Development manager
- Organisational Development Manager- Health & Adult Social Care
- Development and Training Officer
- Head of Practice Learning
- Training coordinator- Specialist children services
- Principal Learning & Development Officer
- Learning & Development Lead for Social Work Education
- Organisational Development Manager

Question 3: Which service user group/s are you responsible for?



Question 4: Are Social Workers supported by your organisation to undertake Post Qualifying education and training?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
At specialist level	100%	5
At higher specialist level	100%	5
At advanced award level	80%	4
Are they given financial support?	100%	5
Are they given time off work?	100%	5

NB. Only 50% of the people that answered the survey responded to this question

Question 5: Do you feel that you are fully informed about all of the post qualifying programmes available in London?

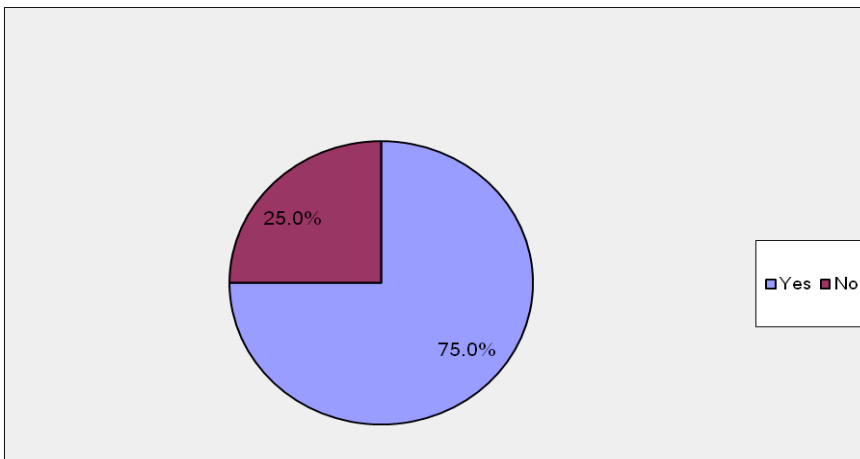
Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
I've not investigated them	0%	0
I know a little about them	0%	0
I'm reasonably aware of them	50%	4
I try to keep up with them	25%	2
I'm thoroughly familiar with them	25%	2

Question 6: Are you aware of/have used the following post qualifying information resources?

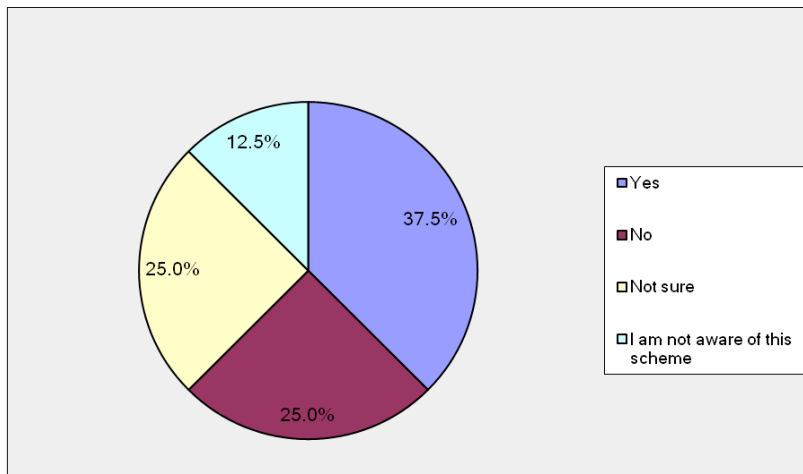
Answer options	Not aware of	Aware of	Have used to promote PQ
London PQ Bulletin	1	4	0
London PQ Directory	2	2	1
London PQ Case Studies	4	1	0
London Employers Guide to Post Qualifying Framework	2	2	1
Other reason (please specify)			

NB. Only 50% of the people that answered the survey responded to this question

Question 7: Have you worked collaboratively with a university to develop a customised post qualifying module or programme for your local authority?



Question 8: Do you use the Access to Libraries scheme in your local authority?



Question 9: How is information about social workers undertaking a post qualifying award currently collected and stored in your local authority?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Through the National Minimum Data Set (NMDS)	12.5%	1
Held on HR records	0%	0
On a spreadsheet	37.5%	3
Another database	12.5%	1
Other (please specify)	37.5%	3

Comments:

- I keep my own record also
- A written table
- This is to be developed it will be on HR records

Question 10: Do you have a framework for career progression that includes the Post Qualifying awards in Social Work?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
No, we don't	37.5%	3
We're working towards it	37.5%	3
Yes, we do	12.5%	1
No but we are interested in finding out how other local authorities are developing / have developed a framework	12.5%	1

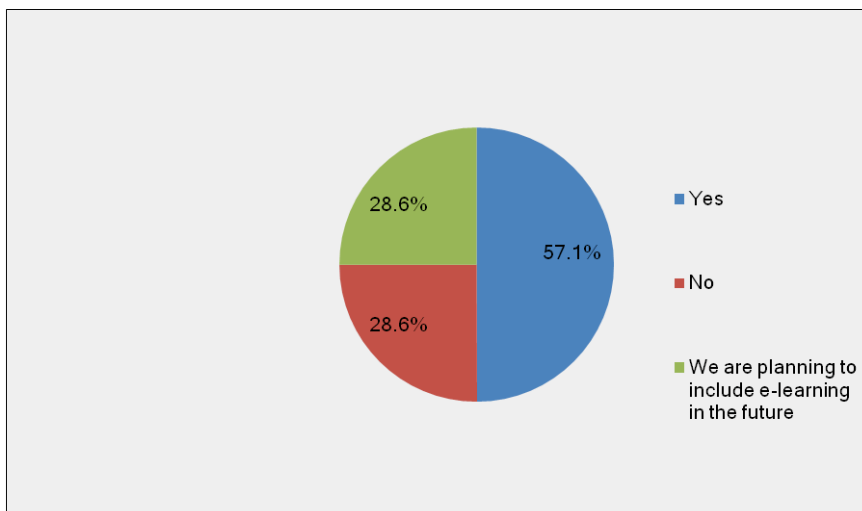
Question 11: Does your local authority have a career grade for advanced social work practitioners/consultant social workers?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Yes	37.5%	3
No	37.5%	3
We are exploring this development	12.5%	1
No but we are interested in finding out how other local authorities are developing / have developed a framework	12.5%	1

Question 12: How important are the following issues as priorities for your organisation?

Answer options	Not a priority	Something we're aiming for	Important	Very important
Ensuring that social workers have up to date knowledge about relevant policy/legislation	0	0	1	6
Providing support for practice assessors	0	2	3	2
Flexible short course training	0	1	3	3
Delivery of training via elearning	2	2	3	0
Blended learning opportunities	1	2	3	1
Continuous staff development	0	0	0	7
Post qualifying training to retain staff	0	1	2	4
Recruitment of staff with a post qualifying award	2	5	0	0
The use of evidence based practice	0	1	2	4
Familiarity of staff with research methods	0	2	5	0

Question 13: Is e-learning a part of your organisation's learning and development strategy?



Question 14: How are practice educators supported in your organisation?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
We provide individual supervision	42.9%	3
We provide a local support group	57.1%	4
We are part of a sub-regional support group	14.3%	1
Our university partner provides ongoing training and support	100%	7
None of the above	14.3%	1

NB. Only 7 people answered this question

Question 15: In October 2009 Skills for Care, CWDC and the GSCC published a summary of the research findings about increasing the quantity and quality of statutory placements. On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important) which of the following applies to your local authority?

We were unable to analyse/weight the responses from this question due to a technical problem relating to the way in which the data was captured.

Question 16: What further support do you believe that PQ Leads need to develop the post qualifying awards?

- We do not have a PQ lead at present; a business case has been submitted to create a FT post.
- Pan London Forum with all borough leads and HEIs
- Evidence to present to managers and practitioners of the value of undertaking PQ study and its impact on practice and the organisation
- The PQ Awards need to have stronger links to practice in the workplace and consideration needs to be given to the difficulties that arise from prolonged absences from the workplace, because of the ongoing work commitments of the Social Workers.
- Ring fenced funding
- Commitment from senior managers
- Access to information

Question 17: What is the most important message would you like to give the Social Work Reform Board about the post qualifying awards?

- We are struggling with this, we do not have a lead, we have many locum SW and undergoing a reorganisation in relation to the personalisation agenda
- Needs to be tied into career progression and continued profession registration
- Having a clear and straightforward framework that is easy to understand and move through
- Our social workers have reported that the PQ Awards in the current framework involve too much written work. Also, it becomes difficult to release staff to do the awards because of the time commitment involved.
- That the awards need to be fit for purpose
- There needs to be better dissemination of information

Question 18: Any other comments that you would like to make about the post qualifying framework?

- In Learning and Development we are committed to PQ and are working hard on very limited resources to remedy the problem.
- I don't believe the system requires a root and branch overhaul, just amending. This constant restructuring is less than useful as we seem to change the system every time it beds down. Fit for purpose and stability please!
- Having done the PQ 1 to 6 myself, I think this award was more grounded in practice and worked well as it was delivered in-house.
- I would like to see the new College of Social work involved and PQ linked to career pathways to force increased ownership and support from employers.

9. Social Workers views on the PQ Awards survey results

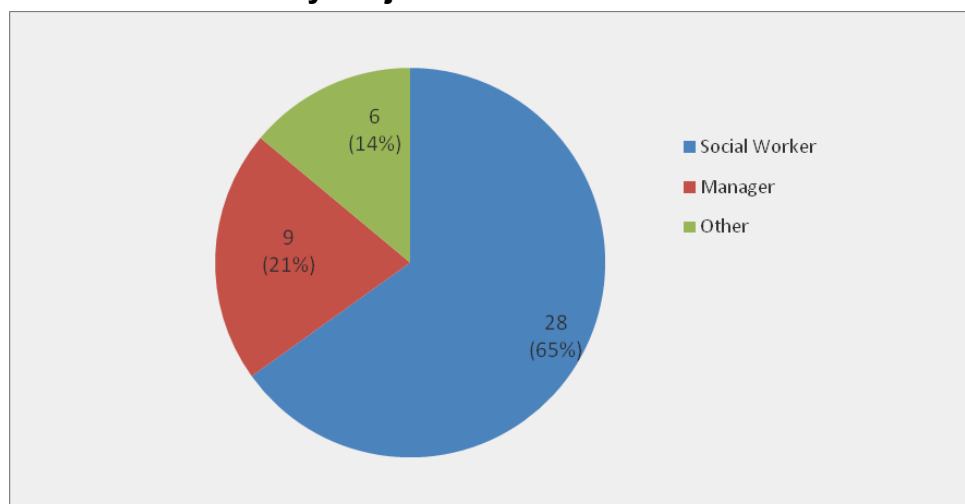
A total of 301 social workers were sent the survey directly, a generic link was sent to 8 PQ Leads for onward distribution. 43 responded giving a response rate of 14%.

Question 1: Information about respondents

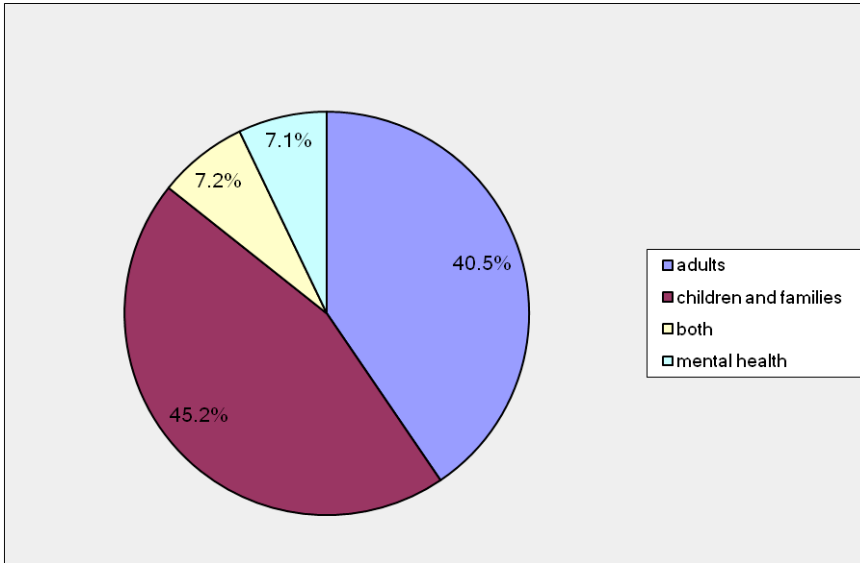
The breakdown of responses by local authority and organisations was as follows:

Local authority / organisation	Response count
Barnet	6
Camden	1
Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust	1
Centre 404	1
Enfield	8
Haringey	1
Islington	18
Richmond	5
Wandsworth	2

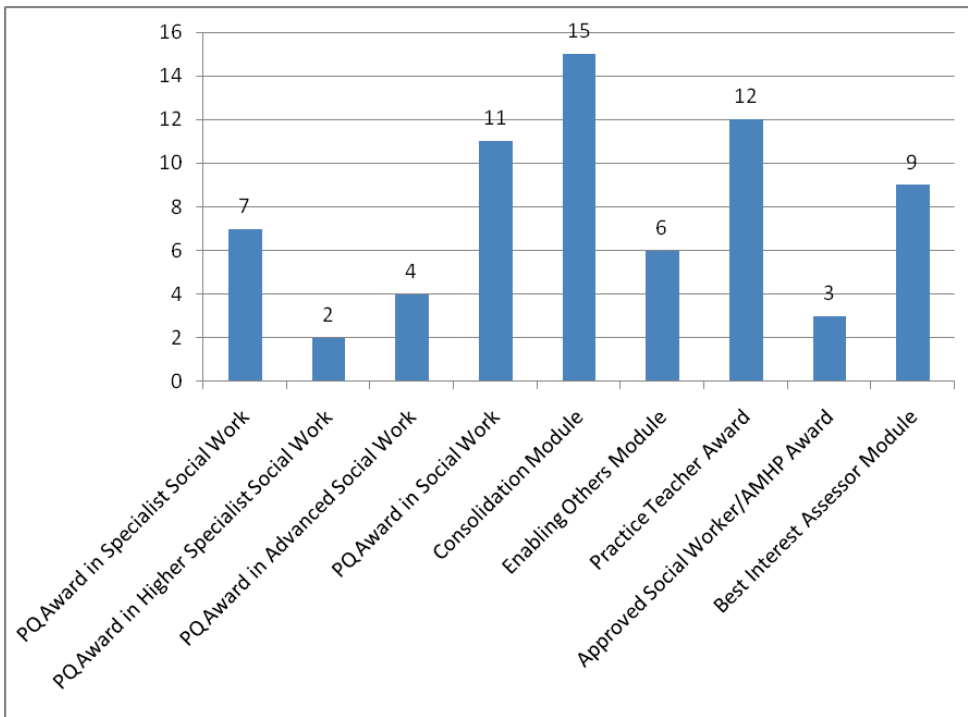
Question 2: What is your job title?



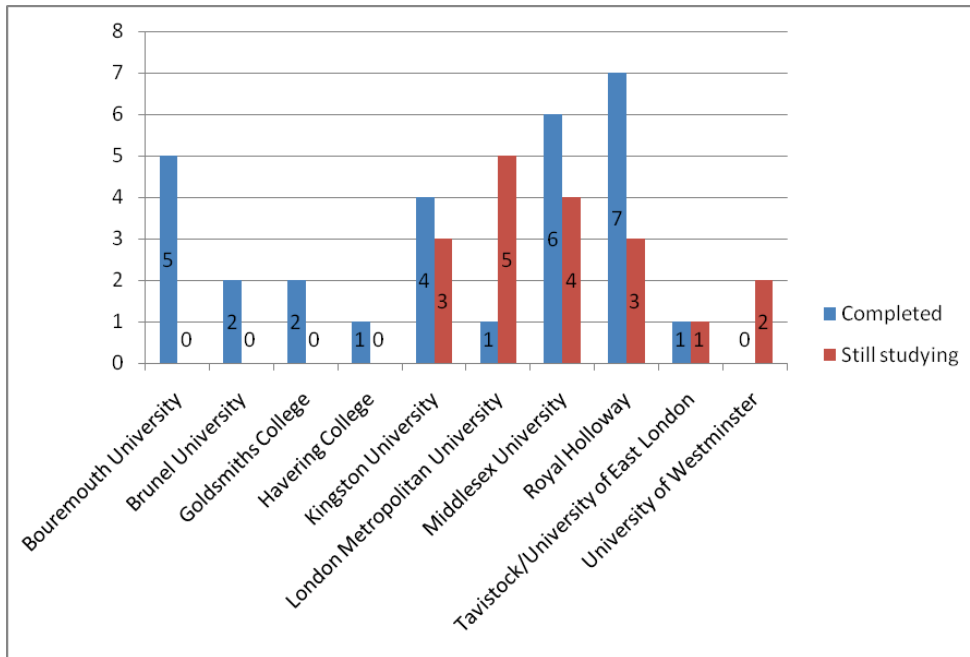
Question 3: Which service user group/s are you responsible for?



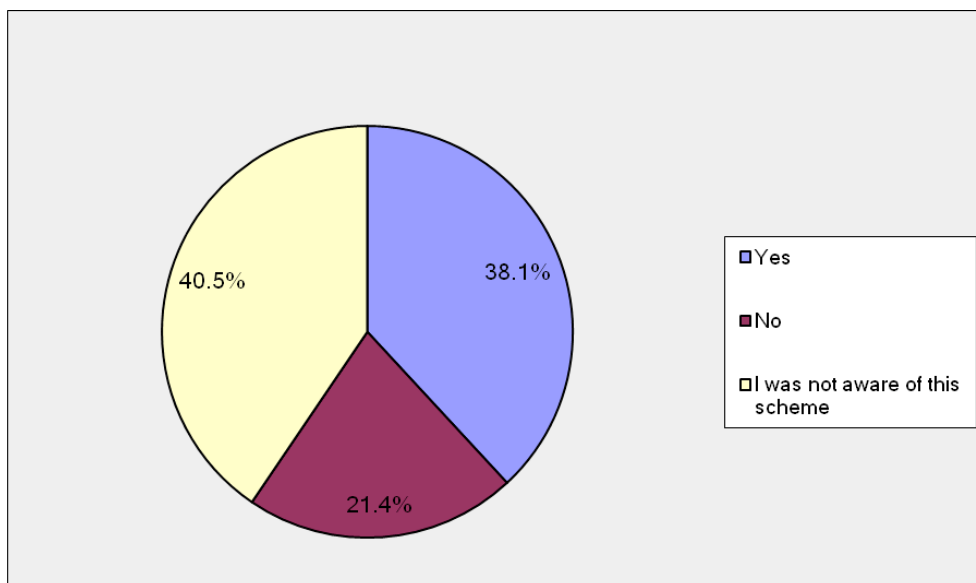
Question 4: Which level of post qualifying award have you studied for?



Question 5: Where did you study for your post qualifying award?



Question 6: Did you use the Access to Libraries scheme to support your studies?



Question 7: How many years have you been qualified as a social worker?

Responses to this question can be found in the Demographics section.

Question 8: Did you complete a practice educator module either as part of your post-qualifying award or as a standalone module?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Practice Educator module completed as part of my post qualifying award	36.8%	7
Practice Educator Award completed separately and accredited	42.1%	8
Practice Educator Award completed separately and not accredited	21.1%	4

NB. 24 people did not answer to this question

Question 9: Did you supervise a student as part of this award?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Yes I supervised a student	51.8%	15
Yes I supervised more than one student	10.3%	3
No I did not supervise a student	37.9%	11

NB. 14 people did not answer to this question

Question 10: How did you find out about the post qualifying awards?

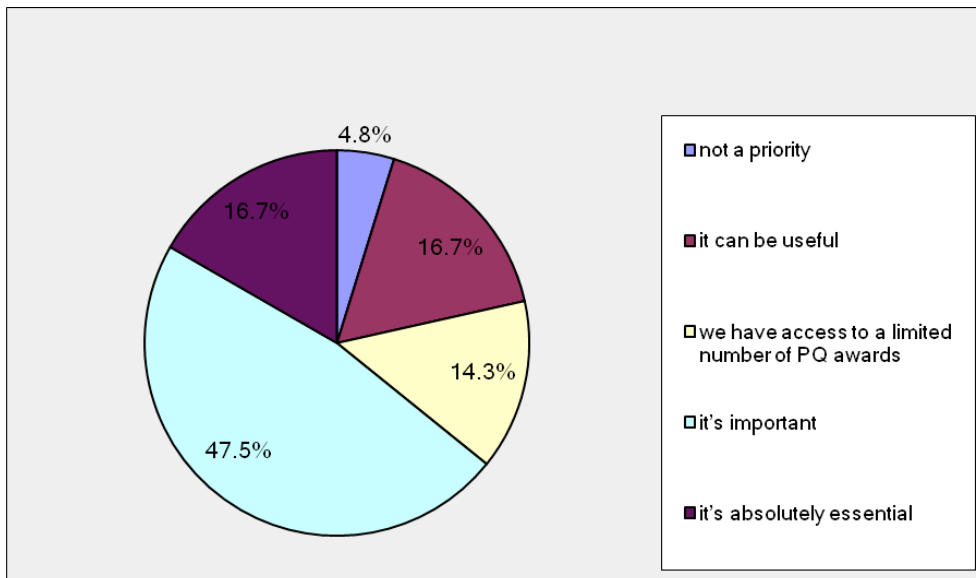
Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
From your employer	85.7%	36
From a colleague	7.1%	3
From the Internet	1.8%	1
Received a programme brochure	1.8%	1
At a conference/seminar/workshop	1.8%	1
From the Skills for Care PQ Directory	0%	0
From the GSCC (General Social Care Council)	0%	0
From a former student	0%	0
Other	1.8%	1

Question 11: What motivated you to apply for a post qualifying programme?

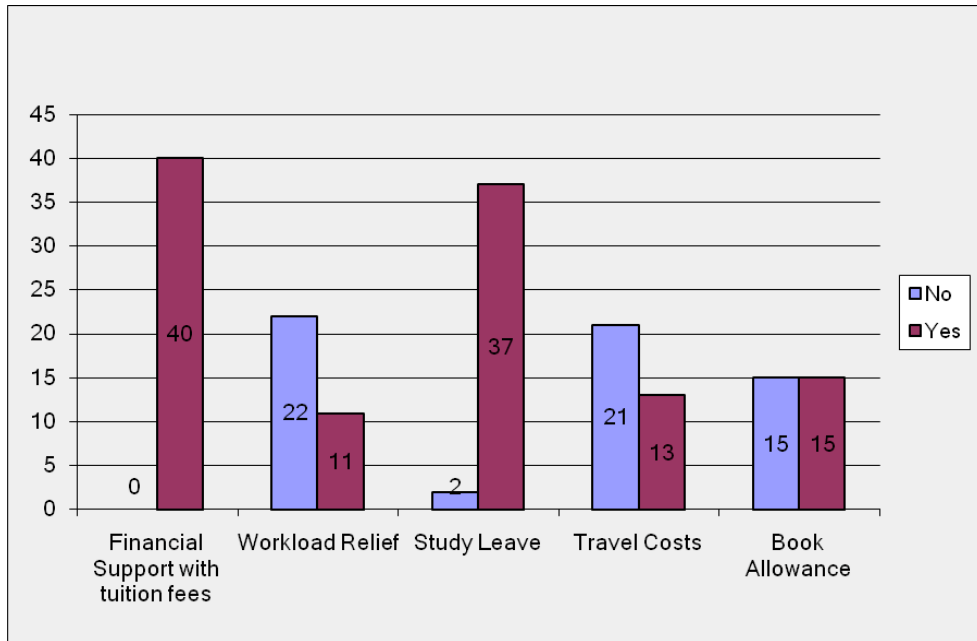
- Wanted to keep updated with new information
- Wanted to get back to university and refresh academic aspects of my work
- Professional development and increased salary
- Interested in learning and development
- Improve enhance and update my practice
- To developing professionally.
- Return to research
- Personal and professional development to allow more opportunities change in role in the future
- Wanted to develop
- Career development – not realised
- Professional development
- It was well over due. It was a government drive and it supported my professional development.
- Career development/ raised increment
- Career progression
- Desire to further my knowledge and professional calibre
- To continue my learning and development
- Career advancement
- I enjoy learning to improve my skills.
- I needed to develop in my practice
- Progression
- I wanted to work with one of the most vulnerable groups in our society
- Interested in developing skills and ongoing professional development
- I always like to update myself with new developments in my career.
- It became a necessity for me to complete the course
- Career Development
- I wanted to enhance my practice
- Build on existing skills and gain a recognised management award
- To further develop my practice

- I thought it would open the door to more post Q programmes but this has not proved to be the case.
- Further my knowledge
- Career development
- To enhance my professional development.
- Further development of my practice
- Desire to keep up with new areas and research since qualification.
- Chance to resume study and time for reflection
- Update social work knowledge and career progression
- I see it as professional development.
- I wanted to learn how to support a student
- I wanted to progress my professional competences
- I would eventually like to complete the full post qualifying awards.
- Challenge on ongoing education, support from manager
- Career progression and professional development

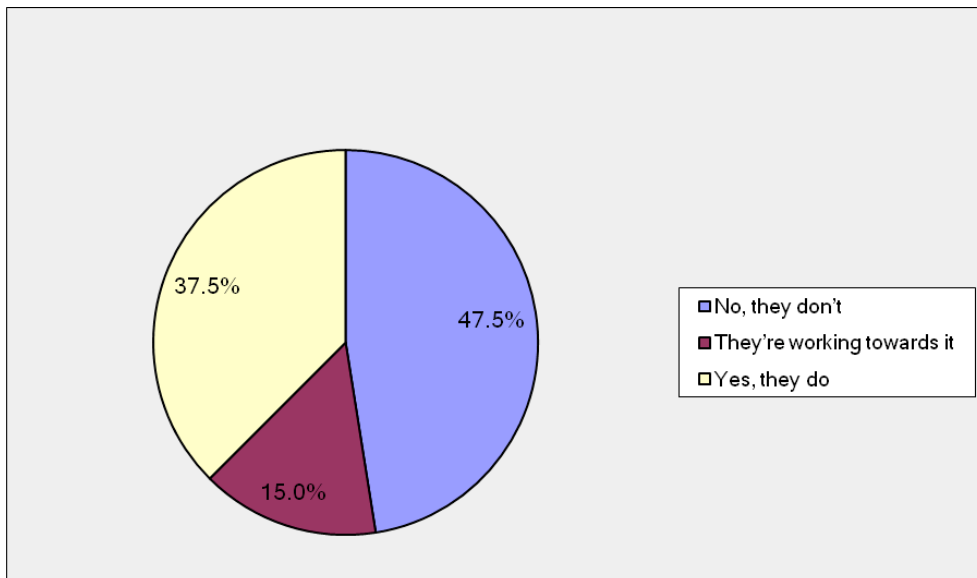
Question 12: How important is post qualifying training for social workers in your organisation?



Question 13: What support did you receive from your employer?



Question 14: Does your employer have a framework for career progression that includes the post qualifying awards in Social Work?



Question 15: What have been the major benefits FOR YOU of undertaking a post qualifying award/module?

- *Want to pursue MA*
- *Personal academic development*
- *Financial and being able to reflect on practice*
- *My learning, new skills and knowledge, BIA, experience of supervising a student*
- *Chance to reflect on practice*
- *Advancing professionally. Broader knowledge base.*
- *Updating information and practice and sharing my knowledge*
- *I feel I practice more responsibly,*
- *Learning new theories and skills*
- *Development of practice and development of self*
- *I enjoyed it – good to think about issues*
- *It stretched me academically and it was also reflective in all area.*
- *Learning supervision skills*
- *Meeting other social workers, sharing experiences, new information*
- *Intellectually stimulating, meeting professionals from other local authorities and best practice and experience sharing, getting up to date with current research findings*
- *Keeping up to date and professional stimulation*
- *Putting learning into practice*
- *It has improved my practice, and it enables me to be confident.*
- *I have re visited my competencies, enhanced my knowledge and have developed an understanding of how to manage the learning of the student in placement.*
- *It enabled me to progress and did enabling and assessor course*
- *I am now able to undertake assessments under the MHA. Increase in salary*
- *Learning new skills and updating knowledge*
- *To be able to undertake higher social work qualifying awards.*
- *Increase in reflective practice*
- *Financial benefits.*

- *Enhanced my practice & financial*
- *Updating skills and knowledge: time to think and reflect upon practice*
- *No change to my job/training/career prospects*
- *Nothing*
- *None at present*
- *Further development*
- *Being able to reflect on my practise from different prospective*
- *Opportunity to supervise a student giving me the chance to explore further opportunities within my organisation.*
- *Updating knowledge of Personalisation, meeting with others in the progression, career progression opportunities*
- *I feel motivated to go into management if I would be given the opportunity Now that I have this awards*
- *I have learnt how to support a student better it has refreshed my practice*
- *Experience and knowledge of supporting a student*
- *It has identified that I have the qualities to progress to a managerial position*
- *Happier in my job*
- *Enhanced my skills*

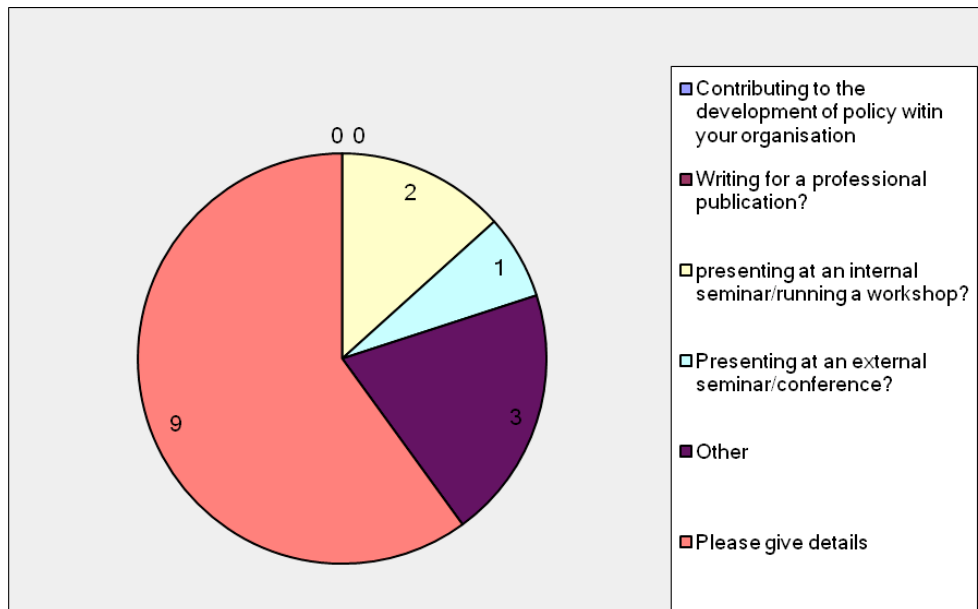
Question 16: What have been the major benefits FOR YOUR EMPLOYER of you undertaking the programme?

- *Increased motivation*
- *Not sure yet - I've only done a few modules. I am now qualified to complete best interests' assessments, but haven't done any yet. I will be able to take a student eventually, which I think will benefit my employer. Hopefully they will gain a better, more confident, more experienced social worker!*
- *Knowledge shared with team, my practice*
- *More reflective practice by myself*
- *Increased knowledge, skill and expertise.*
- *Updated practice knowledge and experience*
- *I feel more able to manage the team I am in, more able to help other members of the team*

- *A more skilled, confident and reflective worker*
- *Implementation of new ways of working*
- *Makes me better at my job*
- *I feel replenished and can offer that bit more to those I work with.*
- *Sharing learning*
- *Not sure*
- *They have a more knowledgeable me abreast with the public law outline which is very important in court work.*
- *Possible progression within the service and in acting as a support and mentor to colleagues*
- *As above*
- *Providing skilled workers*
- *Additional staff coverage that is able to undertake low level work and colleagues assist to develop the skills and knowledge of the student in placement.*
- *More Knowledge in my practice and integrating theory and research to practice*
- *To progress in my career an ensure job quality/meet legal requirements.*
- *Increase in specialist skills and knowledge*
- *Able to allocate Complex Cases to me.*
- *Having a more skilled worker*
- *Application of learning in order to increase efficacy of the organisation. Managing change model was implemented within my department and the outcome was significant improvement in performance noted by OFSTED inspection*
- *Don't know*
- *Nothing*
- *Unknown*
- *Encouraging social workers to continue in their development*
- *Through post qualifying programmes, my organisation has been able to offer more placements to social work students and this has led to some students remaining as permanent employees. It has also provided my organisation with a workforce keen to develop their professional skills through knowledge gained from the post qualifying programme.*

- *Improved knowledge, skills understanding of current policies and procedures and ability to offer an improved service to clients.*
- *I don't know. May be able to help student on social work placement.*
- *I can regularly take on students I am a more satisfied worker*
- *More confident, reflective practitioners*
- *It has helped me to be able to identify/challenge any issues when the need arise*
- *Happier in my job and more motivated*
- *I am a BIA for the Borough*

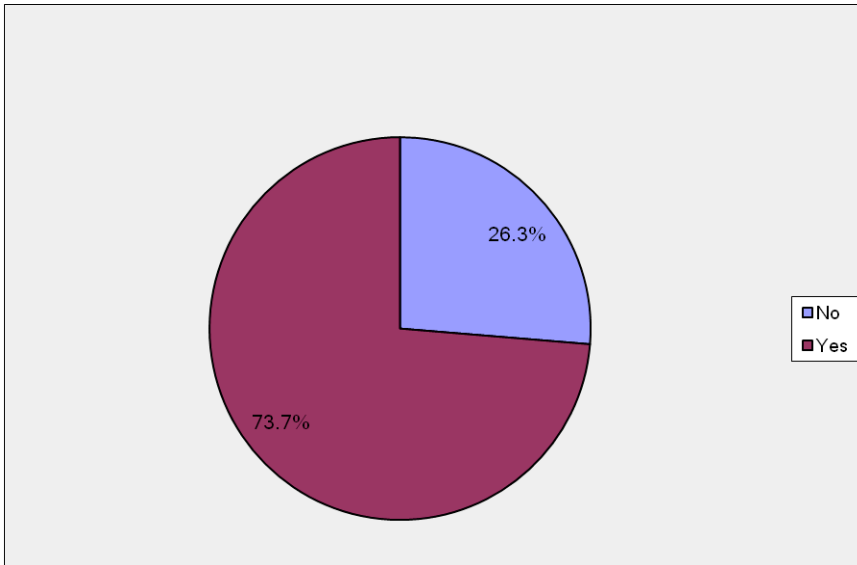
Question 17: If you undertook a research project or dissertation as part of your award have you been able to share your learning through?



Details of the various responses to this question were as follows:

- *All of the above*
- *I have further developed services in my organisation and presented them externally*
- *Sharing information with colleagues and doing tutorial for my students at work*
- *Having more AMHPs in their workforce. Better qualified staff.*

Question 18: Do you think that there has been any direct impact on service users as a result of you undertaking a post qualifying award?



- *As above, I can now complete different pieces of work with service users that I was previously not qualified to do. I am also involved in developing my practice, which has some benefits but is difficult to be specific about*
- *Reflecting on practice impacts on practice*
- *Knowledge of services, rights, changes to service provision. Being able to provide them with current information / legislation*
- *To use my knowledge of law and policy to influence social workers I supervise.*
- *I have been able to be more confident about the knowledge and experience that I hold and advocate for service users more effectively*
- *Better quality service, more confident and competent practice*
- *I am a better practitioner and manager and this has influence*
- *Using access to journals to develop evidence based practice*
- *Better informed, improved knowledge, better guidance/supervision to staff*
- *More knowledge about public law outline which helps in better care planning*
- *Through the difference the learning should make to my practice.*
- *The way in which I contributed to changing a policy and the LA response to Southwark judgement cases*
- *I'm confident in completing a safeguarding Alert, Mental Capacity Assessment or best Interest Assessment whenever required.*

- *my service users had benefited from better outcome and support for their families. I have been able to assess and safe guard children from risk of harm via appropriate intervention.*
- *The more you know the more able you are to do the job.*
- *I have more in-depth knowledge of social work and able to apply it my everyday job. Service users have more confidence in my assessment.*
- *I have been more aware of my responsibility to my service user.*
- *I am more reflective in practice, and therefore there are better outcomes when decisions have to be made*
- *Supervision of staff with greater emphasis on the outcome for the service user. Increased drive to secure service user feedback through evaluation and on line surveys*
- *I believe that I am able to reflect on my practice better and it help me to think through some of the most difficult decisions in relation to my work with the clients*
- *New ways of working as a result of undertaking post qualifying programme*
- *When I had a student on placement, I was able to impact my knowledge of the importance of service users in my practice; they are the focus of our work. Enabling changes when needed.*
- *All our practice has been updated as a result of having a student, I have improved in my supervision of other staff*
- *I undertake ASW duties*
- *It help me to provide a high class service for my services users*
- *Advocate more within hospital setting, reframed my social work values*
- *Knowledge of BIA is relevant in my work.*

Question 19: Have there been any changes in your career since undertaking a post qualifying award?

Local authority / organisation	Response count
Promotion	6
Changed jobs within the organisation	5
Moved to another organisation	2
Other	4

Question 20: What message would you like to give the Social Work Reform Board about the value of the post qualifying awards?

- *They're complicated to work out what credits contribute to which degrees.*
- *They are essential! Keep them up. I would like to be able to complete the award faster however, and would like the modules to be more closely spaced together. It is difficult to get back into the swing of doing academic work, then to have a 6-month gap between modules. The gaps between modules seem to be related to the university's needs rather than the employees or employers requirements.*
- *For all to have access to this for improved practice and knowledge and understanding about the changes in social work. Good for reflective practice.*
- *More widely known and acknowledged*
- *Greater clarity of structure of PQ and closer links to advancement within profession. Vital if we are to keep social workers engaged and taking on greater complexity and progressing professionally.*
- *The post qualifying awards has enabled me to be more confident in my practice and share and update my knowledge. It is important for social workers to continue to enhance and update their knowledge*
- *I feel they are worthwhile but they need to be valued and time put aside to them. I think there needs to be more support from mentors who are experienced academically and in practice. We had very little support available and some people dropped out of the course because of this*
- *PQ opportunities for adult social workers is not inspiring*
- *We must encourage employers to give workers time to study however we must support employers to achieve this*
- *Good for practice but in my experience not helpful for career development*
- *It is essential. S Workers is in need of replenishment in order to meet the demands of the job.*
- *Better support needed*
- *Encourage employers to give us some kind of remuneration and recognition*
- *Keep this up!*
- *It would be useful to have the awards running twice a year rather than having to wait for one specific joining time. This may increase the intake and would be helpful for those undertaking the awards at that time in relation to support and discussion.*

- *Very valuable and experience practitioners should be able to enhance their learning to either progress career wise or become a better practitioner or both*
- *It is very essential that every social worker undertake the post qualifying training to improve their skills and knowledge. However, I discover that most social workers are very reluctant to take on extra responsibilities of going back to university to learn new things.*
- *It is essential for social worker to keep abreast of their learning and development. The course enhances your knowledge and allows for you to address gaps in your practice as well as enables you to undertake specialist social work tasks/interests.*
- *It is important for LA to attach progression into PQ Training and for this to be recognised via reduction of case loads.*
- *To have the opportunity to learn and increase not only your knowledge but your awareness of changes both within your work practice and policy can only be good thing.*
- *It's extremely beneficial for the professionalism of Social Work to have a knowledgeable work force*
- *A social work University will be nice and a good pay after graduation*
- *Vital, especially for complex work loads*
- *It's definitely valuable learning. Employer should give more study leave so to help the student.*
- *It is essential for all workers in order to enhance their practice within social worker.*
- *It's essential for a motivated and informed work force*
- *It should be more greatly valued by your organisation*
- *They are too complicated and confusing and seem to bear little relation to real life practice*
- *It is great opportunity for social workers to continue to develop their practise and the main benefit is reflection of the work undertaken.*
- *It is very essential for development of social work as a profession.*
- *I am pleased that such programmes are there for social worker to continue to enhance their career prospect. The people that have managed to upgrade their professional development should be given the opportunity to go up the salary scale and promotion.*

- *They are very important and support staff to feel valued and enhance their practice*
- *I want it to feel valued. I have no separate roles to those who have no interest in PQ training.*
- *It is an important award for social workers to undertake*
- *Very valuable, support from other students has been the most valuable part for me. Also remembering what I did at university and why I became a social worker.*
- *Extremely valuable, particularly for retaining high achieving staff.*

Part three

10. Demographics for Social Workers views on the PQ Awards survey

The following information was gathered regarding the demographical breakdown of people who responded to the survey.

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
White	17.5%	7
White British	30%	12
White Irish	0%	0
Any other White background	7.5%	3
Mixed	0%	0
White and Black Caribbean	0%	0
White and Black African	5%	2
White and Asian	0%	0
Any other Mixed background	2.5%	1
Asian or Asian British	2.5%	1
Indian	5%	2
Pakistani	0%	0
Bangladeshi	0%	0
Any other Asian background	0%	0
Black or Black British	10%	4
Caribbean	7.5%	3
African	10%	4
Any other Black background	0%	0
Chinese or other ethnic group	0%	0
Chinese	0%	0
Any other	0%	0
I prefer not to say	2.5%	1
<i>Answered the question</i>	<i>40</i>	
<i>Skipped the question</i>	<i>3</i>	

What is your gender?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Male	28.9%	11
Female	71.1%	27
<i>Answered the question</i>	38	
<i>Skipped the question</i>	5	

To which age group do you belong?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Under 25	0%	0
25 – 35	22.5%	9
35 – 50	55%	22
50 – 60	20%	8
Over 60	2.5%	1
<i>Answered the question</i>	40	
<i>Skipped the question</i>	3	

Are you a disabled person?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Yes	2.6%	1
No	94.9%	37
Prefer not to say	2.6%	1
<i>Answered the question</i>	39	
<i>Skipped the question</i>	4	

How many years have you been qualified as a social worker?

Answer options	Response	
	Percent	Count
Less than a year	0%	0
One - Two Years	4.8%	2
Two - Five Years	26.2%	11
Five - Ten Years	31%	13
Ten - Twenty Years	28.6%	12
Over Twenty years	9.5%	4
<i>Answered the question</i>	42	
<i>Skipped the question</i>	1	

