



CREATE

Canterbury Research and Theses Environment

Canterbury Christ Church University's repository of research outputs

<http://create.canterbury.ac.uk>

Copyright © and Moral Rights for this thesis are retained by the author and/or other copyright owners. A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge. This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the copyright holder/s. The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given e.g. Franklin, P. (2014) An evaluation of the role of flexible methods of programme delivery in social work education in widening access to professional qualification. Ed.D. thesis, Canterbury Christ Church University.

Contact: create.library@canterbury.ac.uk



**An Evaluation of the Role of Flexible Methods of Programme
Delivery in Social Work Education in Widening Access to
Professional Qualification**

by

Pauline Franklin

Canterbury Christ Church University

**Thesis submitted
for the Degree of Doctor of Education**

2014

Abstract

This research evaluates the role of flexible methods of delivering social work education in widening access to professional qualification. It examines:

- The personal profiles of applicants on flexible/part-time social work programmes and compares these with those of full-time students
- Whether opportunities for flexible study increase the diversity of applicants to pre-registration Masters level programmes
- The kinds of flexibility that increase the diversity of applicants to pre-registration social work programmes

The research method is informed by reflexivity, incorporating all aspects of knowledge and experience providing depth to interpretation of data.

Data on 162 social work students registered on a postgraduate pre-registration programme was collected over four years and examined using a sequential exploratory research design. Data was collected from three main sources: HEI cohort statistics, questionnaires and individual interviews with eight selected students.

Findings suggest: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students enter social work education through social care for career progression in the absence of alternative employment; knowledgeable and experienced practitioners study for qualifications that allow them to continue in their role; opportunity, rather than planning, facilitates access to study; and values promoted within social work education conflict with those experienced in the workplace.

Limited diversity was identified within students on the flexible route associated with age, personal situation, disability and distance from the HEI. These students represented two distinct groups, polarised in terms of experience, knowledge and aspirations. Trends and patterns were identified across and within the whole student group: BME students were multiply-disadvantaged, travelling further, earning less, and facing limited opportunity; and numbers of younger, White students were increasing. Findings indicate a need to broaden notions of flexibility in programme structure and delivery. Recommendations include using a modular approach; delivery methods that facilitate local study; and establishing a “whole-career” approach to social work education.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Mike Radford and, in particular, Esther Coren, for their support, advice and feedback. I am also most grateful for the enthusiastic and willing participation of students, without whom this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I would especially like to thank my husband, Ed Franklin, for his patience, proof-reading skills, and the endless cups of coffee provided to sustain me throughout the years involved.

Table of Contents

Index Of Tables	14
Chapter 1 Setting the Context	15
1.1 Introduction	15
1.1.1 Why I believe this research was needed	15
1.1.2 The complexity of my relationship with this research	16
1.1.3 The need for diversity	18
1.1.4 The development and focus of this research	20
1.2 The research Question	23
1.3 Background	23
1.3.1 Higher education in the UK	23
1.3.2 Access to the social work profession	25
1.3.3 Gate-keeping the social work profession	25
1.3.4 Pre-registration postgraduate study	26
1.4 Problems identified in social work education	28
1.5 Tensions in the education of social work students	29
1.6 Planning for diversity	31
1.7 The structure of this research	32
1.8 Personal orientation to the research	34
Chapter 2 Literature Review	36
2.1 The purpose of the literature review	36
2.2 Areas of literature considered	36

2.2.1 Contextualising social work education	37
2.2.2 The structure of higher education	38
2.2.3 The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ)	39
2.2.4 Funding of higher education	40
2.2.4.1 Public funding	40
2.2.4.2 Student fees	42
2.2.4.3 Bursary	43
2.2.5 Widening participation in higher education	47
2.2.6 Perceived barriers to postgraduate education	49
2.2.7 Social work education	51
2.2.7.1 What is social work?	52
2.2.7.2 Teaching social work	55
2.2.7.3 Adult learning and social work education	56
2.2.7.4 Desirable qualities in Social Workers - The Munro Review of Child Protection: final report	58
2.3 The systematic review process	63
2.3.1 Systematic review method	63
2.4 Developing social work education programmes	64
2.4.1 Methods of delivering social work education	67
2.4.1.2 Distance and technology enhanced learning	68
2.4.1.3 Using technology in teaching	73
2.4.2 Collaboration	77

2.4.3 Practice placement – field learning	79
2.4.4 The loneliness of social work education	81
2.5 Who wants to be a Social Worker?	85
2.5.1 What is known about social work students	86
2.5.2 Suitability	90
2.6 Why students choose a social work career	92
2.6.1 Motivation to be a Social Worker	93
2.6.2 Why study at postgraduate level?	104
2.6.3 Using the literature review to develop key concepts for exploration	108
Chapter 3 Methodology	112
3.1 Rationale for the method	111
3.1.1 Frameworks informing the research design	111
3.1.2 Theoretical framework	111
3.2 Ethical considerations	117
3.2.1 The ethical approval process	117
3.2.2 Ethical issues relating to the impact on students	119
3.2.3 Reflection, sensitivity and Reflexivity	120
3.2.4 Strategic steps	122
3.3 Research method	123
3.3.1 Grounded theory	123
3.3.2 The setting	125
3.3.2.1 Demography of the area	126

3.3.3 Participants	127
3.3.3.1 Programme selection process	127
3.4 Data collection	128
3.4.1. Documentary information	128
3.4.2 Method triangulation	129
3.4.3 Main data collection	130
3.4.3.1 Phase one - questionnaire	130
3.4.3.2 Questionnaire design	132
3.4.3.3 Questions asked	133
3.4.4 Phase two - interview	135
3.4.4.1 The interviews	136
3.4.4.2 Social desirability	138
3.4.5 Field notes, observations and reflection	139
3.5 Data analysis	141
3.5.1 Analysis of documentary evidence	141
3.5.2 Analysis of the questionnaire	141
3.5.3 Analysis of the interviews	142
3.5.4 Limitations	142
Chapter 4 Data Findings	146
4.1 Documentary evidence	147
4.1.1 Student location	148
4.1.2 Student numbers	148

4.1.3 Documentary data on the profile of students registered on the programme	149
4.1.3.1 Gender	149
4.1.3.2 Age	150
4.1.3.3 Ethnicity	150
4.1.3.4 Education	151
4.2 Questionnaire findings	153
4.2.1 Personal characteristics and circumstances	154
4.2.1.1 Gender of students	154
4.2.1.2. Age of students	154
4.2.1.3 Student status	156
4.2.1.4 Ethnicity	156
4.2.1.5 Disability	156
4.2.1.6 Personal situation	156
4.2.1.7 Location of students	157
4.2.1.8 Reason for choosing route of study	158
4.2.2 Reasons for studying social work	158
4.2.3 Education history	163
4.2.3.1 Time since last study	163
4.2.3.2 Highest level of previous study on entry	164
4.2.3.3 Maths and English	164
4.2.3.4 Location of previous study	165

4.2.3.5 Method of previous study	165
4.3.1 Work experience	166
4.3.2 Previous employment status	166
4.3.3 Previous social work-related experience	167
4.3.4 Length of Experience and ethnicity	169
4.3.5 Employment grade on entry to social work education	169
4.3.6 Previous salary	169
Chapter 5 Interview Findings	171
5.1 Introduction	171
5.2 Answers to the interview questions	172
5.2.1 Individual factors	172
5.2.1.2 Why this programme?	172
5.2.1.3 Programme structure	173
5.2.2 Finance, family and social work study	176
5.2.3 Reasons for studying social work	178
5.2.4 Future aspirations	180
5.2.5 Previous education	181
5.2.6 Previous employment	182
5.3 Themes	183
5.3.1 Opportunity	183
5.3.2 Timing	185
5.3.3 Challenge/resistance	186

5.3.3.1 Personal challenge	186
5.3.3.2 Challenge of becoming a Social Worker	187
5.3.3.3 The challenge within social work education	189
5.3.4 Changing expectation/perception of social work	190
5.3.5 Flexibility	191
Chapter 6 Data Analysis	196
6.1 Aims of this chapter	193
6.1.1 The context of the findings	193
6.2 Analysis of findings in relation to the research questions	194
6.2.1 How do the personal profiles of applicants on flexible/part-time social work programmes compare with those of full-time students?	194
6.2.1.1 Age	194
6.2.1.2 Personal situation of students	194
6.2.1.3 Disability	195
6.2.1.4 Distance from the HEI	195
6.2.2 Exploring diversity within and across the student group	196
6.2.2.1 Gender	196
6.2.2.2 Ethnicity	197
6.2.2.3 Age	198
6.2.2.4 Education history	199
6.2.2.5 Relevant previous experience	200
6.2.2.6 Salary	201

6.2.2.7 Reasons for studying social work at this time	203
6.2.2.8 Influential factors	205
6.2.2.9 Future aspirations	206
6.3 How far, if at all, do opportunities for flexible study increase the diversity of applicants to preregistration master's level programmes?	207
6.4 What kinds of flexibility in programme delivery increase the diversity of applicants to preregistration social work programmes?	208
Chapter 7 Discussion	214
7.1 The contemporary context of social work education	211
7.2 Diversity within postgraduate education	212
7.3 Benefits of flexibility in postgraduate social work education	212
7.4 Limitations of postgraduate social work education	214
7.4.1 Rapid promotion	214
7.4.2 Perpetuated gaps in the workforce	215
7.4.3 Social work qualification determined by administration of higher education	
7.5 Ownership of social work education	217
7.6 What are we educating for?	217
7.7 The impact of postgraduate study - reinforcing structural inequality	218
7.7.1 Ethnic diversity	219
7.8 Recruitment black-spots - flexibility in location	220
7.9 Social work education - a means-to-an-end and an end in itself	222
7.10 Developing a flexible framework for social work education	223
7.11 Understanding the relationship between social care and social work	225

7.12 Flexibility in attitude - academics perceptions	226
7.13 Flexible teaching - a modular approach	228
7.14 Taking education to the community	229
7.15 Communities of practice	230
References	235
Appendices	264
Appendix 1 Literature Databases	264
Appendix 2 Data Extraction forms	264
Appendix 3 Inclusion/Exclusion criteria	267
Appendix 4 Statement on disclosure/suitability from MASW Handbook	271
Appendix 5 Information for participants	272
Appendix 6 Information For Participants	272
Appendix 7 Interview Schedule	286
Appendix 8 Screen shot of coding in QDA Miner Lite	288
Appendix 9 Glossary of Terms	291

Index of Tables

Table 1 Types of social work education programmes.....	27
Table 2 Desirable qualities and attributes.....	59
Table 3 Desirable characteristics.....	61
Table 4 Number of students on different routes 2010-2013.....	148
Table 5 Cohort Gender 2010-2013.....	149
Table 6 Student Age on 31st August of given year.....	150
Table 7 Student Ethnicity.....	151
Table 8 Highest Qualification on Entry.....	152

Index of Figures

Figure 1 Concepts Mind map.....	109
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework.....	112
Figure 2 Personal Orientation to the Research.....	114
Figure 3 Diagrammatic representation of the research process.....	116
Figure 4 Age of students.....	155
Figure 5 Reasons for wanting to become a Social Worker.....	159
Figure 6 Career progression as motivation for study.....	161
Figure 7 Factors influencing postgraduate study.....	162
Figure 8 Location of HEIs offering postgraduate education.....	221
Figure 9 The PCF - an underutilised framework.....	223
Figure 10 The relationship between social care and social work.....	226

Chapter One

Setting the Context

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Why I believe this research was needed

This research arises from my interest in social work and the role that social work education plays in ensuring not just that qualified practitioners have the right knowledge but also that the “right” people become Social Workers. It coincides with a growing demand from policy makers (Croisdale-Appleby 2014) for social work to become a postgraduate profession with the suggestion that entry-level education be delivered at postgraduate level. It is my contention that such a proposition fails to consider that setting such a condition has wider implications and while the explicit selection criteria will be academic ability, other less obvious, but equally significant factors will be involved. I believe that whilst skills and knowledge can be taught and existing strengths promoted and developed, the effectiveness of practitioners and the contribution they make to the social work profession is influenced by a myriad of factors. These include individual characteristics, personal attributes and experience. This view arises from many years of contact with Social Workers in a range of different capacities - as a carer, the family member of a service user, a qualified Social Worker engaged in practice and as an educator in both higher education and work based learning. Through these positions I have witnessed good and bad practice arising for many reasons, some related to external factors but in other cases it was because the person concerned

lacked either what I perceived as the required qualities to work in that particular setting, or the experience necessary to be able to relate to a particular situation. In my view, this results in a disconnect between the Social Worker's understanding of the situation and the life world of the service user concerned. My perception of this has prompted a desire to promote and support access to social work for those who have the potential to become effective practitioners able to respond to identified need. At the same time, I must recognise that I am both immersed and enmeshed in social work and social work education as a product of a previous social work education system and a regulator in the current system.

1.1.2 The complexity of my relationship with this research

The nature of my relationship with this research, both in terms of my personal background and my involvement in the department within which this study took place, cannot be underestimated and needs to be contextualised at this early point and revisited at key sections of presenting my work. Although previously, research called for "objectivity" and the need for the researcher to distance themselves from the data and the analysis in order to arrive at an authentic, unbiased conclusion, more recent approaches have acknowledged the role of researcher involvement and "the self" in iterative and interpretive studies (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Studies located in the employing organisation, referred to as practitioner enquiry (Green, 2014) or endogenous, "Insider" research (Sikes and Potts, 2008; Trowler, 2011) have acknowledged strengths. These include; better access to naturalistic data and greater cultural literacy (Trowler, 2011), "social situatedness" and shared understanding (Costley et al, 2010). However they also pose some challenges, for example questions related to anonymity, transparency and power (Trowler, 2011) taking things for granted (Mercer, 2007) and risk of assumption based on previous knowledge (Greene, 2014) . From this perspective, while acknowledging that there may be conflicts that need to be planned for and addressed at the relevant point,

e.g. in considering the ethical dimension, I perceive that my close and multifaceted relationship with social work, social work education and the students, adds a richness and depth that would otherwise have been absent. While the level of objectivity is reduced, sensitivity (Glaser and Strauss, 2008) is greatly enhanced. Sensitivity - insight, recognising and responding to relevant factors - required the use of reflexivity (Finlay and Gough, 2003; Shaw, 2010; Band-Winterstein et al, 2014) tuning in to what is being said, or not said, observing and noticing events and situations as they occur and adapting or responding to situations to explore further. This promoted a focus on the intersubjective realm (Shaw, 2010) that acknowledges relationship and connectivity through explicit evaluation.

While these are not skills that all researchers automatically possess, they are those that my experience and training as a Social Worker have particularly prepared me to use. As Dey wrote:

There is a difference between an open mind and an empty head. To analyse data we need to use accumulated knowledge, not dispense with it.

Dey (1993 pg. 63)

Mercer (2007) sees a need for insider-researchers to explore and make explicit their position. For me, the important issue was not *whether* to use my accumulated knowledge, but *how* to use it. Key factors that I identified as strengths were my familiarity with the subject, the settings and also the students. While my relationship with the students might pose some ethical dilemmas (addressed in a later chapter), it also created a situation where they knew me and felt more able to be open and honest about their feelings. Similarly, my contact with others, social

work practitioners, social work academics and social work researchers, from not just my institution but nationally and internationally, gave access to a rich source of data. My thinking, analysis and interpretation were greatly enriched by gaining access to, and reflecting on, their comments, observations and experience. At all times I adhered to the three steps advocated by Glaser and Strauss (2008); firstly comparing knowledge and experience to the data I collected, secondly by focusing on defined concepts identified by the literature review and thirdly by remembering that it was not my perception that was important, but what I observed or heard. In many respects, these steps form the basis of a good social work assessment and were skills that I had been rehearsing for a number of years.

Acknowledging and reflecting on experience, both background and obtained whilst involved in this research, not only made me more sensitive to emerging concepts, but also helped me to see and examine relationships between these. Although my interest in the provision of social work education arises from personal factors, my private concerns and attention to the subject is also reflected in wider public debates currently occurring, both in the UK and more widely on how to recruit and educate people who will become, and importantly, remain, good Social Workers. Some personal qualities, which might be termed “wisdom” - emotional, social and interpersonal intelligence, are less likely to be cultivated in academic contexts but may be qualities that come with age and experience.

1.1.3 The need for diversity

Local authorities in England are unable to fill Social Worker vacancies due to “lack of newly qualified Social Workers with “real life” experience” (Policy Exchange 2013). Despite large numbers of students enrolling on social work programmes, around 6,000 entrants a year since 2005, the supply of Social Workers is not anticipated to equal demand until 2022. At the same time, many newly qualified Social Workers, over 1 in 4 (27%) in 2011, remain without employment. This has

led to questions of whether social work education is recruiting and training the right people (Munro 2010, SWRB 2012, Policy Exchange 2013, Narey 2014). This reflects my question as to who the “right people” are and how they can be supported to access social work education. This is being interpreted by some (TCSW, 2012; Narey, 2014) to mean that pre-registration education, i.e. that which leads to entry to the social work profession, should only be accessible to those who have demonstrated high levels of academic achievement, gauged either by the number of points determined by the central university admissions system (UCAS), or by the grade of degree the undergraduate achieved.

The College of Social Work (TCSW), the professional body for social work within England, requires Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to recruit those:

...most likely to become confident, effective and safe practitioners, eligible for registration with HPC (sic) as a Social Worker and who are able to uphold a positive image of the social work profession. This includes recognising the importance of building a diverse group of professionals who are reflective of the communities and localities they will be serving.

(TCSW, 2011, pg. 5)

If the requirement of diversity is to be met, consideration needs to be given to how the structure of programme delivery constrains and supports access to different individuals and groups. Examining and evaluating student groups based on entry criteria, particularly with a focus on academic background provides limited understanding of how they will address the above requirement. It also presumes that all individuals, irrespective of background and with a similar intellectual ability, have an equal opportunity to gain access to the required education.

Holmstrom (2013) argues the need to consider moral character when assessing applicants for social work education, but suggests that whilst a tension exists the dimensions of character and academic ability are not polarised but complementary. Other studies (Cheetham and Chivers, 2005) indicate the need to consider all aspects of the individual when considering their potential effectiveness as a professional. Recommendations informing recruitment strategies for social work are in a state of flux, the focus alternating between personal qualities, and intellectual performance of applicants. The recent emphasis on academic qualifications is perceived by some (Holmstrom, 2013) as a reaction to studies that suggest the previous preference, "experience", could not be relied upon as a predictor of later success (Holmstrom and Taylor, 2008).

1.1.4 The development and focus of this research

This research is a case study (Hancock and Algozzine, 2006; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2014) that examines and analyses the profiles of postgraduate pre-registration social work students at one higher education institute in the south east of England.

As part of my role as the Programme Director for a postgraduate pre-registration social work education programme in 2010, I was required to apply for the programme to be revalidated by the institution and the professional body responsible at the time for approving such programmes, the General Social Care Council. Based on my interest in the subject and my observations and evaluations of the programme over the years I had been involved with it, I perceived a need for a more flexible approach to delivering the programme to be introduced. This view was based on situations I had encountered where seemingly excellent prospective students had declined places as they were unable to commit to the required study time. I was also aware of other students who had struggled or left the programme as they were unable to reconcile the programme delivery requirements with their personal circumstances. Additionally, my annual programme review reports (APRRs)

consistently indicated limited diversity in terms of ethnicity and gender. Revalidation of the programme provided the opportunity to revise the method of delivering the programme and allowed the introduction of a more flexible route in which students, while studying alongside their full-time peers, could elect to study fewer modules each year and extend the duration of their registration on the programme.

Having gained approval for the programme, I then wanted to explore the impact of the approach to programme delivery on the profile of students and use this information to consider the relationship between mode of pre-registration programme delivery and characteristics of those entering the profession. Having established this as the key area of interest, I used a sequential exploratory design (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003) to identify, explore and examine specific personal and professional characteristics and attributes of students registered on the programme. The personal characteristics relate to previous experience, individual circumstances and specific reasons for studying social work. Trends and patterns were identified. While the primary aim was to examine the profiles of students on different routes - a full-time programme and a more flexible part-time programme - a secondary level of exploration developed to consider similarities and compare differences in profile across the whole registered student group, and also within subsections of the group. This information is used to explore the barriers that are experienced by different individuals or groups in their quest to qualify as a Social Worker and evaluated with regards to the needs identified within the work force. Factors that led to and facilitated the study of social work were identified.

Having analysed and interpreted findings in relation to this case study, I have drawn conclusions to the relationship between student profile and different dimensions of programme delivery. These are then used to suggest how the

structure of pre-registration programmes can be developed to promote greater access to social work education for individuals with the attributes, skills and values needed to be effective practitioners and able to address the needs identified in the workforce. While the focus is on study at pre-registration postgraduate level, by considering the profile of these students, aspects that constrain diversity viewed as potentially beneficial to the profession are identified and proposals presented for more effective approaches to structuring, delivering and teaching social work. Whilst this is a narrow and limited study, it seeks to clarify questions that might be addressed in a larger scale research project. The findings are used to make recommendations on the ways programmes can be structured and delivered to widen access to professional qualification through social work education.

1.2 The research question.

The research question was:

What is the role of flexible methods of programme delivery in social work education in widening access to professional qualifications?

Having considered literature, key concepts were identified relating to aspects of student characteristics, types of diversity and notions of flexibility. My initial perception of flexibility, associated with mode of study, part or full-time attendance, broadened to more holistic notions of flexibility of programme delivery that were, or could be, applicable to both routes or indeed to alternative creative approaches. Consequently the aims of the research were:

1. Examination of the personal profiles of applicants on different routes of a social work programme
2. Exploration of how far, if at all, opportunities for flexible study increase the diversity of applicants to pre-registration Masters level programmes

3. Identification of kinds of flexibility in programme delivery that increase the diversity of applicants to pre-registration social work programmes

1.3 Background

1.3.1 Higher education in the UK

This research relates to a number of existing discussions currently associated with higher education. These include stated aims by political parties from all ideological sides, to widen participation with respect to higher education for all sections of society (TLRP 2008, Dept BIS 2011, 2012). In their 2010 statement, the coalition Government referred to the need to increase social mobility and attract a higher proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds into higher education (Cabinet Office, 2010). The Office for Fair Access (OFFA), an independent, non-departmental public body which reports to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Minister of State for Universities and Science, undertakes to “promote and safeguard fair access to higher education for lower income and other under-represented groups” (OFFA, 2013). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) believes that education will not only challenge inequality, at an individual and community level, but will also lead to wider socio-economic benefits. It aims to:

Promote and provide the opportunity of successful participation in higher education to everyone who can benefit from it.

(HEFCE, 2013)

However, it is important to consider what the aims of widening participation policy are. Recent explanations of “widening participation” see this as promoting access for all young people to some form of education/training, probably a first degree, beyond school-leaving age. The beneficiaries of this action are the student, through

greater opportunity; the employer, through access to a better supply of skilled staff; and wider society, through the production of more self-sufficient citizenship. One recent study (Narey 2014) has specifically criticised the impact of the widening participation agenda on social work and believes that financial incentives provided to both HEIs and students has led to the qualification of those who do not have the required level of skill or intellect. These contrasting perspectives highlight the tension that exists when considering education leading to any professional qualification. For the various participants involved, the purpose of education is different - for the individual, it may be personal and/or professional development; for policy makers, enabling citizens to contribute to society by entering the workforce or responding to an identified social need; and for employers, training people to do jobs in the way they want them done. These different demands contain inherent conflicts. These conflicts around the purpose and focus of higher education are not new (Trow, 1973) and present recurring debates. Education is viewed as taking different forms and serving different purposes (Brennan, 2004). While universal education can create opportunity, support inclusion and promote social justice, education can also be selective, promoting specific skills for an elite mass, or exclusive, preparing a select minority to maintain the status of a powerful and dominant ruling class. These different dimensions reflect the aspirations of the different participants involved in social work education. Inclusive, universal education reflects the ethos of the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW)'s (2002) definition of social work, which includes the statement:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being.

(IFSW, 2002)

Northedge (2003, pg 17) acknowledged the potentially liberating power of education, seeing learning as “acquiring the capacity to participate in the discourses of an unfamiliar knowledge community”. The role of teaching is to support participation in this activity.

While debates continue on the role and purpose of education, parallel deliberations have taken place on how best to finance this (TLRP, 2008; Browne, 2010; Universities UK, 2013). These issues have been key themes in recent government legislation, policy and other initiatives (HEPI, 2013). These will be discussed in more depth in a later chapter.

1.3.2 Access to the social work profession

This research is informed by recent studies (Social Work Task Force, 2009/2010; Munroe, 2011) which highlighted the need to examine and evaluate the characteristics of qualified Social Workers in order to ascertain the attributes of effective Social Workers. The profile of the qualified practitioner is however determined by that of pre-qualification students. Social work in the UK is now a recognised and regulated profession, with specific standards regarding capability and suitability (GSCC, 2005; HCPC, 2012; TCSW, 2012). "Social Worker" is a protected title, its use restricted to those with an approved qualification (HCPC, 2012). Recent changes to social work education have introduced an additional level of accreditation, endorsement by The College of Social Work (TCSW, 2012). This research, exploring relationships between the profile of students and programme structure is, therefore, located at the gateway to the profession.

1.3.3 Gate-keeping the social work profession

As increasing numbers of students enter higher education, nationally and internationally, the tension between the professional gate-keeping role inherent in some entry requirements and the explicit social justice dimension of widening

participation policies has increasingly been explored (Dillon, 2007; Ross, 2010). In social work there is little evidence to suggest this has been considered in any depth and my research seeks to specifically address this. The nature of programme design, structure, content and delivery, can both create and deny access, yet no research has considered the impact of this on the profile of practitioners.

Social Workers, at entry, student and qualified level, are required to comply with strict conditions regarding "suitability" (GSCC 2007, HCPC 2012, TCSW 2012) and demonstrate not just professional competence, but also personal attributes considered necessary for practice as a professional Social Worker. Social work programmes invest a significant amount of time and staff resources in recruitment and selection of students and yet investment is potentially ineffective if programme structure prevents suitable applicants from being considered.

Research on this earliest stage of the recruitment process is lacking, although a number of studies have explored the relationship between the recruitment process and successful programme completion (Pelech et al, 1999; Holmstrom and Taylor, 2008). A number of reasons explain this research focus: business related, including financial viability of the programme and the generation of income from fees; ranking and marketability through published results¹; and professional related - suitability of applicants for the profession, desirable personal characteristics and commitment to professional codes of practice (Curren, 2008; Dillon, 2011).

1.3.4 Pre-registration postgraduate study

The relationship between programme provision and student profile are central to this research. In February 2014 there were 150 postgraduate level pre-registration

¹ <https://unistats.direct.gov.uk/>

social work programmes in England² suggesting a high level of accessibility with education provided at a large number of HEIs in England. However, numbers are deceiving as different exit awards, postgraduate diploma or Masters, and revalidated versions of existing programmes are in many cases recorded as separate programmes. In reality there is limited choice for prospective students. This is significant given that some reports equate the low status of Social Workers to the small number of students qualifying at specific elite universities (Clifton, 2012). Opportunities to attend these elite Russell Group universities³ are constrained by entry requirements, location and the fact that few such HEIs offer postgraduate social work education.

Table 1 - Types of social work education programmes

Programme description	Number of programmes
Part-time	6
Full-time (including 5 step-up programmes)	47
Work-based (including 1 step-up programme)	19
Part-time in service (only through employer partnership)	1
Russell Group universities	9
Total no. of HEIs delivering social work education	54

This illustrates the importance of considering the relationship between accessibility of programmes and student profile.

² <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/education/programmes/register/index.asp?EducationProviderID=all&StudyLevel=Postgraduate&ModeOfStudyID=all&IntakeStatus=Open&professionID=18&Submit.x=31&Submit.y=16&Submit=Submit#educationSearchResults>

³ <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/>

Despite this only one type of programme delivery has been evaluated (CWDC, 2009; DoE, 2013). Studies examined employment-based routes to social work qualification; "Grow Your Own" (GYO) programmes i.e. where students are already employed and supported financially by employers, and "Step-up to Social Work" programmes, where "high calibre" (DoE 2013 pg. 10) students were recruited by employers. No comparative research analyses profiles of students applying independently to study social work. This is a significant gap in research.

Recent research (SWTF, 2009; Moriarty et al, 2010; Munro, 2011.) established a need to encourage "a reliable supply of confident, high quality, adaptable professionals into the workforce" (SWTF, 2009 p 2). Additionally, there is an increasing demand to improve the calibre of entrants to social work education programmes, raising the minimum educational requirement and proposing that practitioners become qualified at postgraduate level (SWTF, 2009; Munro, 2010/2011; Clifton, 2012; Croisdale-Appleby 2014). Despite this, there is no evidence of increased preference by employers for Social Workers educated at postgraduate level. The identified national shortage of Social Workers with the skills and qualities sought by employers (Hussein et al, 2011; Policy Exchange, 2013) has resulted in an acknowledged need to attract experienced individuals from fields related to social work (Curtis, 2011).

1.4 Problems identified in social work education

Following a number of recent serious case reviews, the quality and skills demonstrated by Social Workers in practice has been evaluated and, in many cases, found wanting (SWTF, 2009; Munro, 2011; Curtis, 2011 Searle and Patent 2013). A need has been identified to encourage experienced people to remain in the profession, and to ensure that those practicing have the skills and education needed to equip them to work in the most challenging situations. The relationship between recruitment and retention cannot be underestimated. If qualified people

are unable or unwilling to undertake the work required, they will move to alternative roles or leave the profession altogether.

Recruitment is not just about numbers. Skills, knowledge, attributes, qualities and personal characteristics of applicants must be considered. While knowledge and skills can be taught and learnt, this is not true of some attributes, and personal characteristics such as gender or ethnicity. As there is a demand for Social Workers who reflect the diversity evident in the UK, in terms of gender, ethnicity, social background and spirituality (Gilligan and Furness, 2006; TCSW, 2012) social work programmes leading to qualification must ensure they are accessible by all individuals and sections of the community. Research suggests (GSCC, 2009; Dillon, 2011; Bernard et al, 2013) that some groups, e.g. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME), experience multiple disadvantages and are poorly represented amongst registered practitioners and enrolled students. My research focuses on this need for greater understanding of factors that facilitate access to social work and barriers that hinder access. Additionally, and just as importantly, if practitioners are to be retained once qualified, there needs to be a match between students' expectations and aspirations and the reality of social work practice in the location in which they hope to work.

1.5 Tensions in the education of social work students

There is a tension in social work education. Education, in general, is perceived as a personal journey of self-development and exploration, developing critical questioning and awareness (Furlong 2013). However, for social work, debates continue on whether the purpose of qualifying social work education is to prepare students to work in specific settings or to promote development of a wide range of transferable skills, knowledge and understanding (Lymbery, 2009; Welbourne, 2011; Manthorpe et al, 2012).

Social work education is increasingly presented by some (SWTF, 2009; Leece and Leece, 2011; Lynbery, 2012) as the acquisition of particular knowledge and a set of skills determined by employers - training for the work-place and the established welfare system.

However, as Eraut (1994) wrote:

The skills of acquiring and evaluating information about new ideas and new forms of practice are probably more important than the retention in memory of increasingly obsolete blocks of propositional knowledge.

(Eraut, 1994, pg. 113)

The importance of ensuring a good supply of high-quality Social Workers is acknowledged by politicians and researchers (DoH, 2012, Munro 2011) and the need to recruit “high-calibre students with the right skills, knowledge and aptitude from all sectors of the community” has been identified (DoH, 2012 pg 7). Key knowledge guides and curriculum outlines have been developed to provide frameworks of what constitutes required knowledge (TCSW, 2013). The challenge is delivering social work education that provides this knowledge yet also promotes open-mindedness and “not-knowing”, critical questioning (White & Stancombe, 2003; Taylor & White, 2006; White et al, 2006, Balen and White 2007). Consideration of skills and knowledge required by Social Workers concluded that differentiation was required between competence and creativity (Fook et al 2007). While proficiency in practice requires knowledge of theory and research to provide evidence for practice decisions, of equal, if not greater, importance is the ability to make intuitive connections and apply artistic, creative thinking. The qualities are more related to personal attributes than taught skills. It is this notion that lies at the heart of my research.

There is a paradox in social work education. On the one hand, preparing students to engage and be employed within the current structure and design of welfare services; yet, on the other, promoting skills and critical thinking that will challenge and contest those same systems. Martínez-Brawley and Zorita, (1997) perceived the social work profession as located at the boundary between conformity and conflict and questioned whether social work proposes one or many “truths”. A need was seen for social work education, particularly in western English-speaking countries, to provide an example by developing a curriculum of imaginative exploration, promoting the ability to work creatively with uncertainty:

Social work must exemplify the real world’s struggle with what is not normative, or fixed, or predetermined.

(Martinez-Brawley and Zorita, 1997 pg.539)

1.6 Planning for diversity

Curriculum guidelines for social work education, nationally and internationally (TCSW, 2013; CSWE, 2008; IFSW, 2012), require programmes to provide a learning context that reflects and promotes understanding of diversity, including age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, etc. However, Anastas (2010) sees an “illusion of inclusion”, anti-oppressive practice and values included in subject content but not reflected in structuring of the institution. My research explores the connexion between structure and inclusion.

The relationship between socio-economic status and education, particularly higher education, is a key factor addressing discrimination and oppression (Bourdieu, 1996; Costello, 2005; Anastas, 2010) reflecting the central value of social work - social justice. For social work education to be true to this, creating a workforce that genuinely reflects society, accessibility must be explored.

Social work needs to reflect the diverse perspectives of vulnerable and excluded people (Stevens and Tanner, 2006, Baldwin and Sadd, 2006) and it is important that education of Social Workers is informed by recipients of social work intervention (Department of Health, 2002, TCSW, 2013).

People who use services and carers also identify a need for Social Workers to understand the reality of the lives of those they work with (Stevens and Tanner, 2006) - disadvantage, exclusion, restricted access to education, financial hardship, inequality of opportunity, etc. However, social work education cannot truly be seen to be promoting equality and social justice if the structure of social work education disadvantages and excludes suitable people.

1.7 The structure of this research

My research is a case study in which I used Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990) to guide my approach. I examined the relationship between programme structure and characteristics of student Social Workers on two different routes of study at one HEI. Having set the scene in this introduction, Chapter Two provides a robust and systematic review of literature to contextualise the delivery and structure of postgraduate education, specifically in the UK, but also in relation to international perspectives. Current debates on approaches to teaching social work are identified and examined. Literature is explored to find out what is already known about social work students; the individual and personal characteristics, backgrounds and personal attributes; and reasons why people choose to study social work. Additionally, to establish a benchmark against which to gauge the multifaceted attributes and qualities considered desirable, the findings of The Munro Review (2011) are considered. Munro presented a strategy for improving the quality of social work practice. This included identifying skills and qualities considered necessary for Social Workers - intellectual ability, individual characteristics and personal qualities, and a need for a mechanism to evidence

these at each career stage. My research considers the earliest stage of Munro's strategy, as it is only by promoting access for those with desirable qualities that subsequent stages will be effective.

The literature review is used to identify the key concepts to be explored and suggest potential relationships between individual factors through creation of a mind map (figure 1). Key concepts for exploration included; characteristics of students, including background experience, and individual circumstances; internal and external factors motivating students to become Social Workers; and structure, methods and location of study.

Chapter Three explains how the method used in the study arose, informed by the development of a conceptual framework (figure 2) to explore relationships between the questions and concepts identified. The rationale for the method used is presented, as is my orientation to the study (figure 3). Details of the sequential exploratory research design (Creswell, 1999; Creswell, et al 2003; Ivankova, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) are provided and illustrated diagrammatically (figure 4). This chapter presents and describes the location of the case study, participants involved and the three main sources used to collect the qualitative and quantitative data over the four-year period. Data sources included cohort statistics collected by the HEI, questionnaires sent to students and interviews with individual students. A thorough exploration of ethical concerns, particularly in the context of my personal relationship to the subject and the students, provides the mechanism for articulating the strategy used to address potential conflicts.

In Chapter Four, the findings from the first two sources of data - cohort statistics and questionnaires - are presented, whilst Chapter Five presents findings from the individual interviews. These findings are subsequently analysed in Chapter Six. Themes and patterns emerging are explored and used to answer the research

questions and consider the relationship between programme design, diversity and methods of providing social work education that is accessible for those with qualities perceived desirable (Anastas, 2010; Munro, 2011).

In my concluding discussion, Chapter Seven, I explore emerging ideas and present the implications for social work education. I consider the relationship between training in social care, and education for social work, identifying ways in which competing and conflicting agendas contribute to barriers, fear and exclusion. Drawing on the findings, analysed in the context of the extensive literature review, limitations are identified in current approaches to the provision of social work education. Conflicts are identified in relation to administration, ownership and purpose of education. Recommendations are made for greater cohesion between social care and social work education, differentiation between *knowing*, *doing* and *being* in social work (Lefevre 2013) and introduction of greater flexibility, including use of a modular, rather than whole-programme, approach to programme structure. I argue that adoption of delivery methods that facilitate local study and establish an integrated “whole-career” approach to social work education, rather than simply educating for qualification and registered status, not only widens participation but also responds to the needs of students, local communities and the social work profession.

1.8 Personal orientation to the research

In concluding this introduction, incorporating reflexivity as a key dimension of this research, it is important to return to the issue of my relationship to the subject and orientation to the study. My own path through education, whilst continuous, has been less than straight-forward. My interest in society, welfare provision and education, arises from personal life experience and a multitude of various and unplanned roles undertaken. I am a qualified and registered Social Worker.

Since 2001, I have been involved in social work education. My roles extended beyond my work with postgraduate students: I taught and was a personal and placement tutor to undergraduate students; I was the admissions lead for all pre-registration social work education programmes within the HEI; and I held external examiner positions on undergraduate and postgraduate social work education programmes. This resulted in a high level of contact with students and others involved with social work education. My analysis and subsequent discussion of the issues involved is influenced, not just by the specific data collected, but also by the complexity of my interaction with the subject.

Chapter Two

Literature review

2.1 The purpose of the literature review

The aim of this chapter is to present the findings of relevant literature. While early advocates of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) warn against engaging with literature at an early stage of the research process, Dunne (2011) argues that engaging with literature early is appropriate when a clear rationale is provided. My rationale for conducting the review prior to substantive data collection was that it; ensured that the study was original and not replicating previous work, clarified gaps in existing studies, elucidated previous and current relationships with the subject and helped contextualise the research. Information gained was used to examine concepts and ideas emerging from my insider role – prior reading, knowledge of processes etc. – and also to inform the development of specific areas for consideration and further concepts for analysis.

This review focuses on a number of different areas relevant to the subject which contextualise social work education, structure and delivery of programmes and individual factors that influence access by students.

2.2 Areas of literature considered

Literature was examined in four core aspects of social work education. These areas were selected as they led to greater understanding of what is already known about the structure and delivery of postgraduate social work education in the United

Kingdom; the personal attributes of those who train to become Social Workers; and reasons why they have chosen to study a programme leading to qualified status.

The four literature review areas considered were:

- The context of social work education
- What methods are being used to deliver programmes leading to qualification as a Social Worker
- Who wants to become a Social Worker
- Motivation - why they have chosen this career

2.2.1 Contextualising social work education

Literature for this section primarily draws on policy and guidance documents that inform and set the requirements for education in the specific area within which this research took place. In some cases this is policy, legislation and guidance that relates only to England; in other cases it relates more widely to the United Kingdom. Literature informing the delivery of higher education, postgraduate education and social work education, was identified by consulting the relevant government and professional registration websites to locate relevant policies and requirements. Further literature on the ideas, concepts and tensions arising from these policy documents was identified by a process of forward and backward “snowballing” (Webster and Watson, 2002), and by searching relevant databases using key search terms (see appendix 3). As I had been involved in social work education for almost ten years, the use of personal knowledge and contacts is acknowledged as this also played a role in indicating relevant areas to access information and literature, with eminent experts in the field recommending literature.

2.2.2 The structure of higher education

In order to understand the factors impacting on postgraduate social work education, it is first necessary to contextualise it within the UK education system. As a postgraduate qualification, the MA Social Work is located within the higher education framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland (QAA 2011).

HEIs are independent, self-governing bodies who are actively engaged in teaching. They are also, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the type of institution, involved in research. HEIs are conferred with the power to award qualifications - Degree Awarding Powers (DAP) by The Privy Council, part of UK central government (QAA 2014), which also holds the responsibility for granting use of the title "university".

While older universities within the UK (pre-1992) operate under conditions established by a Royal Charter which sets out their overall constitution, the majority of more recently-established universities (post-1992) are governed by legislation under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992 and Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act, 1992 which enables the Privy Council to determine competence to grant awards. The Further and Higher Education Act, 1992, Section 76, states that powers to make awards can be granted in relation to two categories of degrees (QAA 2011). The two different types of postgraduate programmes are commonly referred to as "taught" degrees and "research" degrees. Being granted with the power to award taught degrees allows UK HEIs to award bachelors' degrees with honours and other taught higher education qualifications up to levels 6/7 of The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ) (QAA 2008). As a level 7 taught programme, the Master of Arts in Social Work falls within this category. The fact that it is a taught, rather than a research, postgraduate subject has both direct and indirect implications relating to financing and status, as discussed in the following section.

2.2.3 The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England (FHEQ)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is an independent body, a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, who hold the responsibility for safeguarding quality and standards in universities and colleges within the UK. Within this role, the QAA publishes the FHEQ which applies to all academic awards (except honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by UK HEIs. Together with associated guidance for implementation, it provides the standard which ensures that all institutions maintain a consistent and high standard of teaching. It ensures that awards made conform to internationally comparable standards, particularly with regard to the European context. A key demand of the FHEQ is that awards should be made in relation to pre-defined and specified performance outcomes and achievements (QAA 2009).

Despite this system of quality assurance, a number of issues arise that can lead to similar awards made by different HEIs being conferred with different status (Chevalier and Conlon, 2003; Croxford and Raffe, 2014). Many HEIs are affiliated to particular groups, some associated with involvement in research, (Russell Group), while others are associated more with policy initiatives and think-tanks (Sutton Trust), or consist of former polytechnics and colleges (Million+). Those associated with research, particularly The Russell Group, the most long-standing and established institutions, are often represented as holding the greatest prestige. This not only attracts students, but also attracts further research funding that serves to maintain status and reinforce position by providing increased access to the best resources. There are 24 Russell Group universities, 20 of which are in England. Of these, only nine offer postgraduate pre-registration social work education. The reason for this apparent lack of interest is unclear. One explanation could be that, as pre-registration social work education is practice, rather than research, based, institutions are not interested in providing them. An alternative possibility could be

that they have been considered and have not been able to recruit sufficient students to make them financially viable.

2.2.4 Funding of higher education

There are two essential resource streams through which HEIs derive the finance needed to run programmes and conduct research - public funding and student fees.

2.2.4.1 Public funding

The Further and Higher Education Act, 1992⁴ established the HEFCE, which provides the largest single source of public funding for higher education. Charged with a number of roles and responsibilities regarding activities carried out by HEIs, including redistributing the allocated budget as determined by the Government of the time (HEFCE 2010), their stated aims are to:

- increase the opportunities for students from all types of backgrounds to benefit from higher education
- maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and research
- encourage universities and colleges to work with business and the community
- support diversity
- encourage efficiency in the use of public funding
- provide predictability in funding from year-to-year so that institutions may budget and plan effectively

(HEFCE, 2010)

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents>

To achieve this, HEFCE use statistical data provided by HEIs on programmes they teach and numbers of students attending. Although, as independent bodies, HEIs can receive funding from many different sectors, for the majority, HEFCE funding is a significant factor in ensuring financial viability. From an economic perspective, therefore, HEIs are under pressure to provide programmes that attract students able to pay for their study. This fiscal demand is potentially in conflict with the historic ethos of university education - to provide an environment for exploring, creating and promoting knowledge (Bridges, 1999; Kolb and Kolb, 2005; Caspersza and Olarua, 2013). The accountability of HEIs to HEFCE and, ultimately, to Parliament, on the use of funds received, can compromise the ethos of education and constrain subjects or areas of study supported. While HEFCE are empowered to finance teaching and research, funding is only applied to prescribed programmes of study and approved research. Areas considered appropriate for funding, and consequentially becoming HEFCE responsibility, are determined by government policy. Such policies can have a significant impact on who can, or cannot, access higher education and what they are able to study. HEFCE's Widening Participation policy (HEFCE, 2013) offers financial inducements to HEIs to encourage recruitment of students from non-traditional backgrounds, e.g. particular socio-economic backgrounds, disabled people, having lower grades, etc. While the impact of this is more significant at undergraduate level, it does impact on postgraduate students as it can influence who has access to this level of study, and qualifications people hold. Research suggests that not all qualifications are valued equally (Bolton, 2012; Narey, 2014), nor have grades achieved by students been consistent over time. The number of people staying on at school, or continuing in education, has increased dramatically since the 1960s, as has the level and grade of qualification increased (Bolton, 2012). At the same time, overall participation in higher education has dramatically increased from 19.3% in 1990 to 33% in 2000. This suggests that today's mature students are more likely to hold a lower grade of qualification

and/or to have followed a non-traditional path through education. The route to higher education is, therefore, complex.

My study into postgraduate social work education sits within the context of this complexity and indicates that type and timing of previous education may impact on access to social work education.

2.2.4.2 Student fees

The cost of participating in education is a significant barrier. As applicants for postgraduate education will be doing so as part of progression through the higher education system, some understanding of the funding and consequential financial implications of continued study are required. Entry requirements for postgraduate social work programmes mean applicants will have completed some period of previous study. Their situation at the point of application may therefore be influenced by historical financial arrangements for undergraduate education.

There have been a number of significant changes to the financing of undergraduate higher education over the last 25 years. The 1998 Teaching and Higher Education Act saw the introduction of up-front tuition fees of £1,000 per year and the previously available non-repayable maintenance grants replaced by loans. While the majority of students paid fees upfront, means-testing was available, with those assessed as being from low-income families determined eligible for remission of fees (Ainley, 1994; DfES, 2003; Harrison, 2011).

A further amendment to legislation occurred following the Higher Education Act, 2004⁵ resulting in a change that almost doubled the cost of higher education at undergraduate level for the majority of students. Undergraduate degrees became subject to a variable fee, set by the HEI, of up to £3000. In most cases fees set

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/8/contents>

applied to all students, irrespective of background or financial circumstances, and remission of fees for students from low-income backgrounds was abolished. The exception to this is the award by individual HEIs of grants to selected students. For all students, payment of the fee was deferred until after graduation and was supported by a government-subsidised student loan system⁶ (Wyness, 2010). Additional support was available to those assessed as from low-income families in the form of increased maintenance grants. The impact of the 2006 changes was that the majority of students completed their studies carrying a significant debt. In many cases this amounted to almost double the original loan (Hubble, 2010). Such a situation is likely to have a considerable influence on whether graduating students want, or are able to, undertake a further period of study which may not only result in them being unable to repay the debt for some time, but will also reduce their ability to pay fees for a subsequent programme. Despite these changes in the funding of undergraduate study, some financial support remains for all students that will mitigate, to a greater or lesser extent, the cost of engaging in education. No similar arrangements exist for postgraduate study. All students are liable to fees for study and there is no access to a government, or otherwise-funded, student loan scheme. The personal circumstances of the student, access to independent funding, personal support systems and individual responsibilities are likely to be key factors in facilitating or preventing access.

2.2.4.3 Bursary

A small number of approved health and social care programmes have attracted some financial support through a government-sponsored bursary since the 1980s. Approved programmes are those leading to professional qualification and registered status for professions perceived as needing to increase recruitment and supplement a depleted workforce.

⁶ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-for-the-new-parliament/value-for-money-in-public-services/funding-higher-education/>

In 2003 a bursary was introduced for social work students, as it was considered there was a need for increased numbers of Social Workers to be educated to degree level (DoH, 2012). Despite the positive aims of this bursary supporting access, concerns have been expressed that some HEIs promoted this in order to increase revenue, recruiting students without the required skills and academic ability, or from particular backgrounds that attracted additional funding (Narey, 2014). However, such criticism implies academic ability is the primary requirement and dismisses any benefit to be made to social work by recruiting those from diverse backgrounds or with a particular set of skills. If social work education is to attract those with desirable skills and experience, greater understanding is needed of who students are and how this relates to practice requirements.

Recent research (Browne Report, 2010) questioned the need for a universal bursary focused on attracting large numbers of students and instead called for a more targeted approach that encourages specific applicants. The Social Work Task Force (SWTF), presenting its final report in 2009, suggested the need was no longer to attract new people into social work, but rather to encourage more people to remain in the profession once qualified. Reporting in 2012, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety stated there were approximately 3500 registered Social Workers, of whom 38% were under 40 years of age. Vacancy rates at that time were around 2.1%. Given this, it was considered that, rather than focus on numbers of people recruited to social work, attention should be given to quality of applicants (DoH, 2013). In 2012, responding to the findings of the Munro Review (2011), the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force, and following a detailed consultation with social work educators and employers, changes were made to bursary arrangements for social work students. The stated aims of the changes were to:

- improve the overall quality of social work graduates
- maintain a sufficient supply of high-quality new entrants to the profession and support widening participation
- recognise the need to maximise value for money and target expenditure on high-quality candidates

(DoH, 2012 pg. 7)

The changes resulted in a significant reduction in financial support; funding was limited and only available to selected students. If a targeted approach is to be effective, we must first understand the relationship between *who* is applying for social work, *why*, and *what* individuals can potentially contribute to the profession.

Commenting on the changes, Care and Support Minister, Norman Lamb said:

The new bursary arrangements will mean that the Government will continue to support higher-quality students who have more intention of working as a Social Worker.

(DoH, 2012)

In acknowledging the importance of retention rates within social work, the report does recognise the impact of post-qualification factors arising within the workplace; e.g. work conditions, stress and lack of resources, which do not relate to pre-registration education. However, other key factors have not been explored. If programmes recruit people with skills and personal qualities needed to withstand these undoubted pressures - resilience, problems solving skills and a commitment

to practice - they will be more likely to remain in the profession. Such a position adopts a broader view of quality than academic achievement alone and seeks to respond to the wider concerns expressed by the Government (DoH, 2012): firstly, on attrition rates for pre-registration study; secondly, that not all social work students take up employment in social work or a related practice area once qualified; and finally, that too many Social Workers, both experienced and newly-qualified, do not meet the performance needs of employers.

Clifton (2012) equates an apparent low standard of qualified Social Workers with numbers electing to study the award at a Russell Group university - just 6%. This is also presented as evidence of the perceived low status of the profession. This study, however, fails to recognise the limited number of Russell Group HEIs offering social work; the impact of the location of such institutions; or that motivating factors for studying social work may be linked to personal factors, not just career progression. Skills needed by effective Social Workers are often gained through engagement with welfare services as a recipient, through personal life experience and trauma. These factors are identified as restricting access to higher education, particularly at Russell Group universities (Milburn, 2012).

This view raises a number of issues and conflicts that resonate with the previously referred to debates on what education is, its purpose, and who it is for. While successive governments have stated their aim to widen access to education in all subjects, the changes to social work education potentially limit, rather than widen participation. This could lead to claims that it is an elitist profession and a return to the historical view of Social Workers as White, middle-class females from advantaged backgrounds, bestowing advice on those from poor families (Young and Ashton, 1967; Walkowitz, 1999; Skehill, 2008; Pierson 2011).

2.2.5 Widening participation in higher education

The aim of promoting greater access to higher education is a key initiative in recent government policy, with a number of approaches being developed to promote participation (DoE, 2012; BIS, 2013). Recent years have seen the introduction of a range of measures intended to facilitate access to higher education for non-traditional learners (Hillage, Uden, Aldridge, Eccles, 2000), particularly with regard to undergraduate study (Allan and Storen, 2005). Significantly less attention has been given to supporting students to continue education to postgraduate level or to reducing barriers facing those considering this (Higher Education Commission 2012). This has led to what Alan Milburn, Chair of the Government's Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, believes is "a real time-bomb in terms of social mobility" (Higher Education Commission, 2012 pg 12). This has significant implications for individuals seeking to become Social Workers and for the shape of social work, if moves to make postgraduate study the only means of gaining entry to the profession come to fruition.

The growing and continued interest in researching entry to higher education at undergraduate level in the United Kingdom (HEFCE, 2008; Fuller, 2001/2007; HESA, 2012; HEPI, 2012) is relevant to understanding the postgraduate situation, as it is success at undergraduate level that provides entry to further study. Research exploring the relationship between age, gender (Thompson and Bekhradnia, 2010; William-White, 2012), achievement (Cassidy, 2012) and social class (Archer et al, 2003; Gorard et al, 2006), all suggest increasing diversity in the student profile. A number of national and local programmes such as Aimhigher, run by HEFCE, with support from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), Realising Opportunities, and The Sutton Trust, have focused on encouraging young people from under-represented groups, particularly those from lower socio-economic groups (National Statistics Socio-economic Classification groups 4-8); those living in

areas of relative deprivation; and those from disadvantaged backgrounds where participation in higher education was low (Moore et al, 2013).

These initiatives sought to motivate participation in higher education at undergraduate level by addressing factors considered to create barriers. Central to this were two factors - the influence of family and individual aspirations (Rudd, 2011). Although it could be suggested that widening diversity at undergraduate level may lead to a similar picture at postgraduate level, the situation is unclear as there remains little research in this area. This is despite the growing call within some sectors of employment for a workforce educated to that level. Some studies do conclude that widening participation at undergraduate level has not resulted in a similar postgraduate change, with students from poorer social-economic, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds remaining under-represented (HEFCE, 2013). Additionally, differential distribution of students by background has also been identified with progress to postgraduate students being dependent on a number of factors including gender, ethnicity and where the first degree was studied (Burke 2012). In recent work, Burke (2014) concluded that working class and BME students tended to be found in post-1992 institutions, less likely to have research-active staff. Postgraduate study was exclusive and competitive; non-traditional students had a sense of “not fitting in: that they feel not good enough, and were impostors” (Burke, 2014). HEFCE (2013) suggested that mature students progressing to postgraduate study were more likely to remain with the same institution and to have choice of subject limited by location and entry qualification. These factors are likely to have a profound impact on social work education, given recent recommendations. Such a situation can only be alleviated by providing adaptive postgraduate education that responds to students’ needs.

The long term trend has seen an increase in the number of postgraduate students (Sastry, 2004; Artess et al, 2008; HEFCE, 2013), particularly for taught programmes

(HEFCE, 2014). In 2011/12, 94,825 students entered postgraduate study, compared to only 48,840 in 2002/3 (HEFCE, 2014). Despite this, more recent studies show a decrease in postgraduate student numbers, with the greatest decline being found in part-time students. Although HESA statistics provide details of the number of students entering postgraduate programmes, and HEFCE (2014) provide some data on age, status (home/international) and access to funding, unlike undergraduate students, data on who these students are, is scant.

While there is limited research examining profiles of those who enter postgraduate education in general (Wakeling 2010), this is particularly the case in relation to pre-registration, postgraduate study. Pre-registration study, generally *taught* as opposed to *research* programmes, is that which, on successful completion, enables the student to register with a designated professional body as having *qualified status* and allows them to be employed in associated roles. There is limited evidence of the same level of support for, and commitment to, postgraduate study as for undergraduate level.

2.2.6 Perceived barriers to postgraduate education

Over the last 30 years, there has been an unprecedented increase in the numbers of students registering for postgraduate study (Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010). This increase has occurred both nationally, across the UK and internationally. In 2010, four times the number of postgraduate students were engaged in programmes of study compared to those studying in 1990 (Wakeling, 2009/2010). A significant amount of this increase was attributed to the development of taught programmes, including programmes such as the MA Social Work. However, while numbers of students involved in postgraduate study have increased, access to this level of study is not equitable and can be restricted by a number of factors.

Wakeling (2010/2012) examined the relationship between personal situation and access to postgraduate education, exploring the social class background of UK postgraduate students. He concluded that inequality existed in relation to postgraduate education; this associated with differential prior attainment and structuring patterns of postgraduate participation:

Postgraduate education is affected by social class background above other factors, such inequality will obstruct attempts to ensure the UK becomes a meritocracy.

(Wakeling, 2009 pg 9)

Referring to the limited financial support available for postgraduate study, Wakeling perceived that access to higher degrees (postgraduate master's and doctoral programmes) would be put "out of reach" of graduates from disadvantaged backgrounds, with inequalities arising from socio-economic background preventing individuals accessing higher (postgraduate) degrees.

The previously discussed changes in funding of higher education in the UK are perceived by some researchers to pose a significant threat to the future of postgraduate education. (Wakeling, 2010/2012; Milburn, 2012; Frostick and Gault, 2013). These writers observe that the unregulated market, in which institutions can set ever-increasing fees for master's level degrees; lack of central funding; and limited public financial support, will make postgraduate education accessible only to students from "comfortably-off families" (Wakeling, 2009). As discussed previously, the impact of market forces on HEIs has resulted in all programmes needing to be cost-effective. As HEIs operate within the realms of business, students, i.e. customers, need to be able to pay for the service and fees need to cover costs, if not make a profit. In this market, not all customers are required to

pay the same price. Greater income can be gained from programmes attracting international students, whose fees are considerably higher (Oxford Economics, 2013). This is reflected in the fact that international students largely account for the increase in postgraduate numbers (Frostick and Gault, 2013).

In addition to these societal pressures on entry to postgraduate social work education, additional, more individual, pressures exist. The preferred experienced, educated and academically qualified people are often in positions which already provide a reasonable financial income. Accordingly, they may not be in a position to relinquish this to take on the demands of a two-year full-time master's programme, unless supported financially by their employers.

Aforementioned changes to funding of higher education; increasing marketisation of education, emphasis on potential student as customer, and the introduction of Key Information Sets (KIS) is perceived by a number of social work academics, (Gibbs, 1994; Gibbs and Macy, 2000; Kropf, 2000; Barlow and Coleman, 2003) and practice teachers (Hartman and Wills, 1991) to present a particular tension for social work education. For these writers, the quality of a programme cannot be judged by customer satisfaction, but only by how able the individual is to meet the challenges they will inevitably face in practice.

2.2.7 Social work education

My research is located in the complexity of the constantly changing world of social work practice. Social work practice, and consequently education, is influenced by globalization: changing demographics, e.g. an increasingly aging population; government policies and agendas; internationalisation; professional imperatives; and the growth of technology. Social work education needs to acknowledge and respond to changing demands; identifying, enabling and preparing students to respond to a wide and ever-changing range of social problems. To understand how

to provide effective social work education, it is essential to first consider what social work *is*.

2.2.7.1 What is social work?

The prerequisite of any education programme must be to know what you are educating for and what the knowledge-base is. In social work, this presents a significant challenge, as identified by recent reports (Croisdale-Appelby, 2014; Narey, 2014). Whilst it might appear straight-forward, it is not. Unlike other professions where the nature of the work and role is clear, with well-defined roles, tasks, responsibilities and expectations, social work remains a contested profession with a number of different definitions.

The current definition adopted in the UK, states:

The social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.

(IASSW/IFSW, 2001, pg. 1)

The different dimensions of this definition require various areas of knowledge, e.g. social psychology; politics; social geography; different skill-sets; and are likely to attract people for different reasons. For governments and some employers, the main aim of social work is problem-solving and intervention; whilst for professional organisations, it may be social justice, social change and libertarian principles (BASW, 2012). Approaches to funding and recruiting social work students reflect the perspective of those with greatest power and is influenced by contemporary

social, economic and political demands. As these can vary within different societies and over time, it raises the question of whether there is a unified understanding of what social work is.

Although containing similar elements, the United States definition is different:

Social work is the professional activity of helping individuals, groups, or communities enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and creating societal conditions favourable to this goal. Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counselling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve processes. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behaviour; of social, economic, and cultural institutions; and of the interactions of all these factors.

(Payne, 2006, pg. 41)

Whilst there are parallels with the UK definition reflecting the liberal ideology underpinning both societies (Cochrane et al, 2001), there is greater emphasis on restoring social order and intervention at the individual level, compared to the UK focus on social justice and social change. Both definitions are contested in other societies.

In South America, the proposed definition states that:

Social work is a profession that falls within the realm of relations among social subjects and their relations with the State in the different socio-historical settings of the professional activity. It develops a social praxis and a set of socio-educational actions that fall upon life's material and

social reproduction from the perspective of social transformation. It is committed with democracy and the fight against social inequalities, by strengthening autonomy, participation and the safeguard of citizenship for the achievement of human rights and social justice.

(ALAIETS, 2012⁷)

This definition emphasises political and transformational action, reflecting the different relationships between government, education, welfare and wider society.

None of these definitions clarifies the practical roles or tasks undertaken by Social Workers. Commonalities are seen; emphasis on promoting rights, challenging injustice, upholding a specific value-base, and applying knowledge. The “social” as the unifying element of social work practice is exemplified by the Japanese term for “social work”, *Shakai-jigyo*, the translation of which is “social enterprise” (Payne, 2006).

In a move to unite Social Workers world-wide and establish consensus on what social work is and what Social Workers do, a move has been made to collate views of Social Workers and social work associations from all continents and develop a new, internationally adopted, definition reflecting views of all Social Workers, wherever they practice. Recently published government reports make similar demands (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014), however the drivers are different and focused on clarifying what Social Workers should *do* rather than what they *think*. This again reflects the tension in social work education between education and training.

That the definition of social work can be, and is being, reviewed, contrasts with related professions, e.g. health or education. What it means to be a teacher, and

⁷ <http://www.ts.ucr.ac.cr/html/alaeits/binarios/alaeits-documen-es-00025.pdf>

roles associated with the teaching profession, are uncontested. Teaching has clearly defined National Occupational Standards (DoE, 2012) detailing competencies, practice expectations, and required knowledge. By contrast, no clear distinction is made between the unregulated work of *social care*, and *social work*. In the UK there are no longer comparable National Occupational Standards for social work. These were replaced in 2012 by a Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). The PCF marks a shift away from an outcome, task-driven, representation of practice, associated with specific roles and tasks, This lead some (Ferguson, 2012) to conclude that social work had “lost its identity and soul”, as “meaningful aspects of direct casework have given way to low-level functional tasks” (Webb, 2006). The PCF describes standards or levels of professional practice (TCSW, 2012), a somewhat more tenuous concept. No links are made within the context of social care provision and no clarification of the interface between social care and social work. This change in emphasis further reflects the view that being a Social Worker is not so much about what Social Workers know, or always what they do, but more about the values they apply as they do it.

2.2.7.2 Teaching social work

The contested understanding of social work raises questions as regards how it can be taught and what constitutes required knowledge. Most literature on teaching in higher education focuses on academic disciplines; there is limited research and guidance on approaches to teaching for the professions (Anastas, 2010).

Approved programmes leading to qualification as a Social Worker can be at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. While the academic content is taught at different levels, no distinction is made in the assessment of practice. Students passing the academic element, but failing practice, are credited with an academic award only and are not able to register as qualified Social Workers (HCPC, 2012; TCSW, 2012). This highlights the tension in social work education between

knowing and *doing*. Much social work knowledge is “borrowed” from other disciplines (Trevithick, 2008). This leads some to propose approaches to social work education used in those professions e.g. teaching, medicine etc.

There are also growing calls for social work education to develop self-knowledge and less tangible concepts, personal values, relationships and personal needs, in addition to academic knowledge (Urdang, 2008/2010). Consequentially, understanding of who Social Workers are, and what attributes they have, is essential.

Social work requires that those involved in teaching the subject are aware of and comprehend the full range of factors that influence both teaching and the students’ relationship with learning. Anastas (2010 pg 2) refers to this as the “person-in-environment perspective” and suggests that in studying social work, a significant dimension is the general social context in which education takes place. Teaching social work involves the development of knowledge, theories that inform and shape interventions, and the development of specific skills needed by practitioners. However, it also includes the promotion of particular values considered an essential part of the Social Workers’ being. Effective teaching requires educators to understand what they are educating for. It also requires understanding of each learner, their relationship with society and the impact of culture and background on individual learning style. Acknowledging the interaction between these factors and seeing the learner as a mature, motivated and self-directed learner, ensures that learning in postgraduate study is maintained (Mentkowski and associates, 2000).

2.2.7.3 Adult learning and social work education

Stage theory of adult development (Erikson, 1963; Levinson, 1978; Field and Leicester, 2000), locates social work students in one of two stages: early adulthood

(17-45 years) and middle adulthood (40-65 years). Each stage is characterised by a different relationship to the learning process and therefore involves different tasks and challenges. Younger students, in the early-adult stage, will be preparing themselves for their chosen occupation, whilst simultaneously addressing other major developmental life tasks. Their perception of the relationship between their social work education and psychological identity development will be intrinsically linked (Anastas, 2010). Conversely, older students are more likely to be undertaking social work education to achieve greater balance between their perception of self and the needs of the society they live in (Anastas, 2010).

Belenky et al (1986) saw flaws in early research in adult learning theory, as it originated from male undergraduate populations in elite universities. Their work with females, poor women in rural societies, concluded that for many such students their relationship with education starts from an unequal, oppressed, position of "silence", which resulted in them placing little worth on their own ideas and thoughts. From this position, they conceived learning as a passive activity in which they were the recipients of the expert knowledge of others. For genuine learning to take place it is the role of educators to support students to make a transition from an externally orientated approach to education, to an internalised watching and listening process that is needed for the development of an authentic self (Anastas, 2010). A significant finding in terms of social work education in Belenky's work is the reliance of non-traditional students on procedural knowledge and a reluctance to take note of intuition and "gut reactions", believing that these deceive and are unreliable. From this perspective non-traditional learners need time to learn *to learn*, before learning about social work. Recent reports (Munro, 2010/2011) call for Social Workers to be more in-tune with their intuitions and sensitive to nuances and alternative perspectives.

2.2.7.4 Desirable qualities in Social Workers - The Munro Review of Child Protection: final report

The Munro review into the child protection system (2011) examined all aspects of social work, including social work education, to identify the factors that promoted and prevented effective practice. Although focusing on child protection, the findings relate to social work in all settings. Munro concluded that emphasis on prescriptive practice performance targets, timescales, procedure and bureaucracy, had resulted in an imbalance, compliance and consistency taking precedence over relationship-based practice and professional judgement. Amongst the recommendations made were a number focusing on different aspects of social work education. Calls were made for the whole child protection system to move from a culture of compliance to one of learning and pedagogical notions of life-long education to include greater opportunities for collaborative and inter-professional training.

Specific recommendations are made regarding recruitment into social work identifying key skills required. Significantly, Munro acknowledges the need to consider personal qualities and the importance of providing “clear, consistent criteria for entry to social work courses with a regime for testing and interviewing candidates that balances academic and personal skills” (Munro, 2011 p 97).

Required qualities and attributes are placed in three categories: knowledge; critical reflection and analysis; and intervention skills. These are summarised as follows:

Table 2 Desirable qualities and attributes

Thinking skills

Ability to make decisions and to make critical use of best evidence

High intelligence in order to achieve required level of critical reasoning

Problem-solving ability

Relationships skills

Skilled in forming and maintaining relationships

Intuitive skills derived from experience

Ability to reflect

Emotional intelligence, intuitive reasoning capacity

Skills in observation and understanding

Professional commitment

Commitment to life-long learning

Personal qualities to develop and learn

Stability - commitment to stay at the front-line of social work practice

These recommendations are not new and in many respects reflect a return to the sentiments expressed in early writing on social work education. As Reynolds (1942/1985) wrote:

Just as living involves the whole-person, so does learning, especially learning to practice an art which is intimately the person, using sensitivity and judgement in relation to adapting knowledge and skills to a real situation.

[Reynolds (1942/1985) cited in Anastas (2010) pg. 13]

Munro does not specifically refer to the personal profile of applicants or consider gender or ethnicity. However, the report does state that local services must be developed to reflect local profile of need. This raises the question of how Social Workers can understand and respond to local community and cultural issues, if there is a mismatch between the culture and background of those providing services and those in need.

Acknowledging the complex history of social work, developing from many other professions, each with a different knowledge-base and method of intervention, Munro identified the need to recognise core skills and qualities at recruitment, with expertise promoted through career-long development. This ongoing culture of learning as a practitioner is presented as part of a strategy to ensure experienced and skilled people remain in front-line practice, albeit within newly-developed senior positions. The framework proposed by Munro has subsequently been developed as the Professional Capabilities Framework [PCF] (TCSW, 2012).

While other studies focus on later stages of the strategy, my research considers the earliest phase. It is only by promoting access for those with desirable qualities that subsequent stages will be effective. The challenge for social work education is firstly to develop programmes that are accessible and, thereafter, to create a learning environment that supports students to recognise and examine their intuitive thought processes, find their voice, and experience multiple perspectives on issues to promote development of reflective judgement and decision-making.

Anastas (2010) examined the views of social work educators on desirable characteristics in students and identified the following factors:

Table 3 Desirable characteristics

Sensitive	Motivated
Flexible	Reflective
Committed	Insightful
Non-judgemental	Caring
Self-aware	Able to work individually and in groups
Thoughtful	Open to learning
Compassionate	Curious/inquisitive
Critical thinker	

Although current entry requirements set by social work professional bodies tightly define entry characteristics of those entering the profession, variation in terms of personal attributes, experience and background remain. Whilst some factors might be considered to be intrinsic, Anastas (2010) concluded that a well-developed and delivered programme could promote and enhance their formation. This reflects a growing demand for programmes to provide the opportunity for developing self-awareness, reflection and self-knowledge.

One international study (Cwikel et al, 2010) explored social work educators' response to global challenges. Findings suggest a common interest in promoting innovation related to social work values, e.g. social justice, social activism and social change. Globally, innovations in intervention are taking place to respond to the needs of "new populations", particularly ethnic minorities. Similarly, innovation is supporting disadvantaged students groups, whose access to higher education is restricted by traditional academic frameworks. These findings provide a stark contrast to the views of Narey (2014) and Croisdale-Appleby (2014), who called for a narrowing of focus with greater emphasis on specific, clearly defined points of

intervention. Indeed, Narey explicitly criticised inclusion of ideological concepts in social work education. This illustrates the conflicting paradigms of social work, social activists challenging the status quo or agents of the state maintaining social order (Briskman, 2013). Unlike other professions, the function of social work is unclear with social work education striving to prepare students for different roles requiring potentially conflicting attributes. Whilst presenting a challenge, Fabricant and Burghardt (1992) believe the two positions do not have to be opposing, but can be utilised to inform individuals who will be active agents in their workplace and profession. For this to be achieved, Social Workers will need to have the full range of skills identified by the Munro review (2011). This raises the question of which dimension of social work attracts students to the profession. The issue of motivation to study social work will be addressed in the following sections.

For the following three areas of literature, which focus on specific aspects of social work and social work education, a structured and systematic approach was used to identify relevant literature. Although not a full systematic review, steps associated with a systematic review were adopted in collecting, synthesising and evaluating literature. Given that this research is completed by one person, adopting a full systematic review would have lacked the validity achieved by the parallel review process recommended by the Cochrane Collaboration (2014) and would, therefore, not have been appropriate. Following the steps associated with this research method, however, ensured that literature obtained was robust and objective.

2.3 The systematic review process

2.3.1 Systematic review method

A systematic review of literature:

attempts to identify, appraise and synthesize all the empirical evidence that meets pre-specified eligibility criteria to answer a given research question.

(Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions⁸)

It is a structured, logical process of searching in stated locations using explicit, described methods. This approach reduces bias and is replicable in order to produce more reliable findings. For my research, steps taken to identify literature are clearly explained and guided by predetermined parameters.

Initial searches for relevant literature were conducted through Canterbury Christ Church's e-library in October 2012 and repeated in July 2013 and January 2014 to ensure that any newly-published studies were captured. In all searches, texts were only included if they were written in the English language, however no restriction was made on location of the study. For the first two searches, specific subject relevant databases were chosen. In the final search changes to the e-library system allowed an open search of all databases. Given the specific nature of the search terms, even this final search, despite its wider focus, produced a limited number of results.

⁸ <http://handbook.cochrane.org/>

For each area of interest, relevant literature was identified by exploring specific electronic bibliographical databases related to social work and education (appendix 1), applying pre-determined search terms. Boolean operators were used to locate potentially relevant articles. Articles identified were reviewed and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to determine which articles to analyse in greater depth. Reviews were initially undertaken by reading the abstract, excluding those not meeting the inclusion criteria. Remaining articles were read in full and any subsequently identified as not meeting the criteria also excluded. A limited number of articles specifically addressed the question of who wants to be a Social Worker. Similarly, there is little literature examining the profiles of applicants for social work education programmes. To identify as much relevant literature as possible, forward “snowballing” was used to locate peer-reviewed articles that had cited texts identified through the database search. Data was extracted using a form (appendix 2) adapted from Cronin et al (2008).

2.4 Developing social work education programmes

Pre-registration social work education is the only gateway to practice as a Social Worker. The nature of its design; structure, content and delivery, can both create and deny access. Unlike most master’s level programmes in the UK, postgraduate social work education combines academic study at level 7 and a period of pre-qualification assessed practice. For this reason, while other postgraduate programmes at a similar level are generally completed in one year of full-time study, postgraduate social work requires two years (18 months for postgraduate diploma) to provide sufficient time to undertake the period of assessed practice. Although the period of assessed practice can vary between countries, this is an international requirement for all programmes leading to qualification. Postgraduate social work education therefore carries a significantly higher time commitment for students and, associated with this, higher financial and personal demands.

To fully understand who becomes a Social Worker, we must explore and examine different methods of delivering programmes of study in order to consider the accessibility of programmes, identifying facilitating factors and barriers for different groups and individuals within society. Although much is written about many aspects of social work education: what students need to know and achieve (Munro, 2010; Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014); typology (Danto, 2008); cultural theoretical trajectory (Williams and Parrott, 2012); impact of globalisation (Singh et al, 2011); and curriculum (Lymbery, 2009); there is scant research on how this can best be structured, or what constitutes an effective teaching style for developing knowledge and understanding of the different and varied dimensions.

A further, though less prevalent area of study related to social work education, is the relationship between the impact of market demands in higher education, changing government funding arrangements, the need for HEIs to meet target numbers of students, at the same time reducing cost of delivery, and a shift in the relationship between educators and students, the latter being consumers and customers of the education product (Maidment, 2005; Manthorpe et al, 2010). The structuring and management of programmes is not always determined by pedagogical concerns, but by cost-effectiveness in running the department. Simultaneously, today's consumer of education holds a dual, or even multiple identity, as student, worker, parent, carer or breadwinner.

In a small-scale study funded by the HEA, collating the views of social work academics, Wilson and Campbell (2012) refer to social work education being driven by many agendas, including the need to develop practical skills and undertake tasks in a manner determined by employers. The notion of replicating the actions and ideas of others, i.e. training, contrasts with concepts of education as development of critical self-reflection and critical action (Barnett, 1997). Similar concerns about the conflicts between training and intellectual education are

expressed by other writers (Preston-Shoot, 2000; Manthorpe et al, 2011). Constraints are perceived in social work education in terms of flexibility and creativity with a conflict existing between preparing Social Workers as an instrument of change, challenging systems that maintain inequality, and preparing Social Workers able to “fit in”, ready to work as practitioners within such systems. Unlike many disciplines, and some professions, where knowledge that underpins actions is concrete, and can be specifically taught, social work education not only requires the acquisition of a sound knowledge-base related to theoretical concepts, it is also about developing awareness of, and ability to engage with, unique individuals, groups and communities in their diverse and continually evolving social contexts. This complexity has led some researchers to call for greater experiential education. Through this, students become embedded in diverse global and local traditions and philosophies, to understand and engage with the complex and varied social factors that impact on the lives of individuals and communities (Panos et al, 2004; Singh et al, 2011). The required curriculum content is extensive (TCSW, 2012; Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appelby, 2014) and consequentially requires a high level of academic input. This presents many challenges, as such resource-intense programmes of study are expensive to run. In the current climate of economic pressures and reducing fiscal support to HEIs this generates a need for the development of alternative, more creative methods of managing all aspects of programmes, from recruitment to delivery and providing student support.

While many aspects of the social work education curriculum appear global, e.g. knowledge of human development, sociology, psychology, etc, Social Workers will only be effective practitioners if practice techniques are informed by local values of the specific social setting. Apparently universal concepts, e.g. confidentiality, the self and human development, hold different meanings within diverse global communities (Singh, 2011). Given this complexity, methods and approaches used

to develop students' understanding are as important as the content of the programme.

2.4.1 Methods of delivering social work education

Using the principles of a systematic review, ten databases were searched using the following search terms in various combinations:

- Social work education
- Social work
- Pre-registration
- Qualifying
- Structure
- Methods
- Design
- Education
- Teaching
- Organisation
- Routes
- Approach
- Part-time
- Full-time
- Distance learning

Reviewing literature on programme-delivery posed some difficulties due to inconsistencies in the use of terminology. Phrases referring to methods of delivery such as "distance learning", "open learning", "e-learning", "technology enhanced learning" and "blended learning" are used interchangeably. Similarly, relevant new terms were identified:

- Synchronous
- Asynchronous

Using terms associated with particular modes of study: part-time, full-time, etc, led to the discovering of other terms associated with methods of delivery unfamiliar to me, having only worked in an insular UK setting, e.g. “offshore”. To address this, new terms recognised were included. Twenty-two potential studies were identified. These were reviewed using the set inclusion/exclusion criteria (appendix 3a). After applying these, 14 articles remained, providing insight into delivery of social work education.

Literature identified referred to a number of different types of programme: part-time, full-time, and offshore. Students on all routes can receive teaching through a variety of methods. However, literature focuses on a limited number of factors. These factors include exploration of distance learning, including synchronous, i.e. “live” or “in time” communication, and asynchronous, “time delayed” communication, as a teaching method, use of technology and web-based learning, incorporation of a practice, (field) element, and collaboration, i.e. the relationship between individuals and/or agencies involved in the education.

2.4.1.2 Distance and technology enhanced learning

Prior to considering use of distance learning in social work education, it is first necessary to clarify what this is. A relatively new concept, there is no widely accepted definition of what constitutes “distance education” (DE) (DeNeui and Dodge, 2006), also referred to as “open learning” (Adams, 1997; Cornwell, 1998). DE is alternatively described as programmes with a majority of online content supplemented by traditional formats (Harasim, 2000), or those that are fully computer-based. In the latter definition those with any face-to-face component are

considered “blended” or “hybrid” learning (Swenson and Evans, 2003). Additionally, distance learning can include teaching where the teacher is remotely located from the student, with synchronous, i.e. “live” lectures, delivered to students remotely via teleconference (Pardasani et al, 2012).

Activities employed in DE teaching are varied and can include traditional learning mechanisms such as case studies and presentations, and newer technologies such as discussions through virtual learning environments (VLE’s), e.g. WebCT, Blackboard and Moodle, conference telephone discussions, etc.

Whatever the definition used, research suggests distance education promotes flexibility and facilitates access to students who would otherwise be excluded by personal circumstances, time constraints, family responsibilities and residence in geographically remote areas (Madoc-Jones & Parrott, 2005; Anderson & Friedemann, 2010). In the UK there are limited numbers of programmes offering distance learning opportunities and a need for greater UK-based research has been identified to inform development (Horwath & Shardlow, 2000; Collins, 2008).

Advances in technology, greater accessibility of the internet and increased use of all forms of multimedia facilitates greater opportunity for programme designers to extend the site of learning from the classroom to a geographically remote setting, learning at a distance. Some researchers identify benefits of online and distance learning as a means of widening participation and providing social work education to those in rural and remote areas (Crowell and McCarragher, 2007; Liu, 2012; Maple et al, 2012).

While use of technology to deliver entire programmes is a relatively recent feature of social work education, the use of multimedia technology is not new and the incorporation of images, audio, and video into curriculum content by social work educators predates the development of the worldwide web (Ballantyne, 2008). However, despite wide ranging use of multimedia in social work education, there is

little evidence that this has been grounded in sound pedagogical principles. There is limited literature linking its use to theoretical frameworks, concepts, and findings from the wider learning technology literature. Multimedia technology, of all types, is seen purely as a tool for learning; it is not seen, in itself, as a method. For the use of technology to be effective, Ballatyne (2008) argues a more considered approach is needed. Planning, underpinning the nature of the interaction and learning experience produced with pedagogical theory, is considered essential.

Social work education involves the promotion of different skills and knowledge, each requiring different types of learning experience. In terms of multimedia to support the educational process, different techniques support different types of learning. Five principal forms of media have been identified: narrative, interactive, communicative, adaptive and productive media. In designing programme delivery, educational content needs to be grounded in a cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer & Moreno, 2003; Mayer, 2005).

In the UK, a recurring theme in literature is the observed resistance of many social work educators to the use of distance and technology enhanced learning techniques (TELT) (Waldman and Rafferty, 2008; Ayala, 2009; Moore, 2009; Young and Delves, 2009; Cooner-Singh, 2011; Westwood, 2014). In 1997, Adams perceived resistance to the use of these linked to a mismatch between philosophical values in social work and innovative developments in learning methods; in the former, a focus on direct contact and interpersonal relationships, in the latter, less face-to-face and reduced emphasis on the quality of the relationship between student and educator. Despite emphasis on social change in definitions of social work, there is little evidence that social work academics reflect this in their approach to teaching. This perspective is supported by other writers who proposed alternative reasons for the reticence to embrace TELT. Collins (2008) stated that, in the UK, distance learning in social work education at qualifying level tended to be placed on the periphery and rejected by “mainstream” lecturers who

perceived the new style of education as a threat. This threat relates to job security, fears that increased use of technology will reduce the need for HEIs to employ social work academics, and professional identity as accepted wisdom on how to teach social work is challenged. This view could be taken further. As many social work academics are no longer practitioners and are using past experience to inform their teaching this may reflect a disconnect between academics' understanding of social work and practice in today's society.

Fears and reluctance to embrace other, emerging, forms of technology, e.g. wirelessly connected Internet computers, into teaching have been identified (Moore, 2008; Cooner-Singh, 2010). Cooner-Singh (2010) states that academics can struggle to keep up-to-date with technological developments that are part of everyday life and social work. Lack of knowledge with regard to many aspects of using technology, e.g. privacy, confidentiality and boundary setting in the use of social media, leads some social work academics to express concerns that use of such tools contravenes aspects of social work practice and are consequently to be avoided. Cooner-Singh calls for exploration, understanding and creativity to ensure developments adhere to social work's ethos and principles.

Similar fears are lessening elsewhere. Using technology to deliver social work education is increasingly prevalent in other countries (Crowell & McCarragher, 2007) because it is seen as having the potential to reach a more diverse student audience, responds to student needs, is financially efficient, and is underpinned by principles of modern learning pedagogy. A particular benefit of incorporating use of technology into teaching is that it can provide a means through which students can learn about cultural diversity and/or more excluded or harder-to-reach populations by interacting with individuals and communities who would otherwise have been excluded by virtue of distance (Berger et al, 2009; Cooner-Singh 2011; Brydon and Liddell, 2012). While issues of distance are an accepted aspect of programme development in large countries, e.g. USA and Australia, they have not

featured significantly in the UK, where, being a relatively small country, it has not been considered a barrier to participation. However, this is negligent. It assumes equal opportunity and ability to travel and ignores the costs involved in doing so.

In addition to increasing accessibility, TELT is suggested to provide pedagogical benefits. The use of simulation and virtual shadowing can increase learning potential in an ethically safe way, supporting an internationalised curriculum which promotes intercultural competence and develops students' understanding of their own and other cultural perspectives (Clifford and Joseph, 2005). In exploring the challenges and benefits of offshore education, i.e. that provided by an awarding institution to students located in a different country, a key factor acknowledged was the assumptions made by academics about international students (Brydon and Liddell, 2012). Programmes were developed with lack of understanding of the impact of previous, culturally specific, learning styles and the resultant mismatch between student expectations and teaching approach. Brydon and Liddell argue that academics need to become more aware and appreciative of the context of international students' previous experience. This notion of local relevance and cultural understanding is applicable even when applied to the smaller distances involved within the UK and suggests the need to address this in the structuring and delivery of programmes.

The numbers of social work education programmes incorporating blended and/or online learning are greatest in countries with large rural areas (Crowell & McCarragher, 2007; Berger et al, 2009; Maple et al, 2012; Pack, 2012; Pardasani et al, 2012). While, given the choice, students prefer to enrol on campus-based programmes, for a significant number, personal circumstances mean distance learning is the only option available (Pardasani et al, 2012), with limited access, scheduling or lack of transportation the primary reasons for the choosing this method of study. Despite a lack of UK-based data, early research indicates similar findings (Collins, 2008).

2.4.1.3 Using technology in teaching

Online technology is used within postgraduate programs to deliver individual, specific modules on social work research methods (Faul et al, 2004; Banks and Faul, 2007; Gibbs and Stirling, 2010; Webber et al, 2010), social work practice and clinical skills (Clay-Siebert & Spaulding-Givens, 2006; Cummings, Foels & Chaffin, 2012), culturally specific modules (Ives & Aitken, 2008) or to deliver complete programmes (Wilke & Vinton, 2006). While in most cases overall programme structure is determined and set by the delivering HEI, students selecting the programme as a pre-set package, in one innovative interprofessional programme at Charles Darwin University, Australia, a “flexi-mode” of study has been introduced that enables students to select how they wish to study component modules, from fully online, in the classroom or by combining elements of both methods (blended) (Pack, 2012). In this programme in which students from an undergraduate social work programme and an undergraduate Humanitarian Studies programme collaborate, additional benefits are seen in the sharing of experience through direct contact and online discussion. A key feature is use of online forums as a means of enabling practitioners and partner agencies to suggest “real life” research projects which are taken up by students. Online forums facilitate collaboration not just between student professionals, but with the world of work that students are preparing to enter. Students are also contributing to their community at an early stage of their career. The strengths identified within this study, learning through shared exploration of information and production of knowledge, resonate with earlier ideas presented by Lenning and Ebber (1999) who stated that:

Only when a college or university is a true learning organisation can it expect to create faculty learning communities and student learning communities that will result in positive outcomes.

(Lenning and Ebber, 1999 pg 5)

The key principles identified for promoting an effective learning community are features of the programme structure, student-centred, having a common goal and sense of community, designed to include preparation, planning and reflection, and with structured and planned activities taking place outside the classroom.

In their Australian study of undergraduate students, Maple et al (2012) concluded that many students studying online were more outcome focussed, and more consumer oriented, than in the past. Parallels can, however, be seen in campus-based postgraduate programmes in the UK as, following changes to higher education, the status of students as consumers is promoted, as is the concept of “value for money”. Traditional models of education can exclude many students from social work education. More creative approaches, including online methods, promote access and better reflect social work values of empowerment and social justice (Aguirre et al, 2011), however care needs to be taken in ensuring any methods used are cognisant of potential barriers to access (Maidment, 2005). Not all individuals and communities have equal access to technology, the internet or, indeed, means of transportation to campus.

Gillingham (2009) examined the use of online technology as a means of promoting communication, supplementing teaching. In examining aspects of online teaching the importance of interaction, communication and learning through doing, are highlighted. The need for programmes to structure in and construct opportunity to interact are seen as crucial. Judicious and clearly explained use of technology is required to ensure efficacy, as is consideration of the profile of students studying programme. A mature student cohort, some with time constrained by work and family commitments, others geographically distant due to placement location, is viewed as best supported by use of text-based asynchronous discussion groups where information is made available for students to access at a time that suits them. A significant factor is the development of strategies to create a “learning community online” (Wiesenberg & Stacey, 2005), including ensuring the teacher’s

online presence, considered selection of topics for discussion and frequency and tone of feedback provided to, and between, students. Gillingham concludes that key to use of online mechanisms promoting communities of learning is the role of the teacher as a facilitator, rather than disseminator, of knowledge.

This view of the academic as a digitally engaged facilitator of learning contrasts sharply with the aforementioned studies referring to the reticence of academics to use technology. However, asynchronous online discussion forums are not viewed as a replacement for synchronous face-to face contact, rather as a supplementary activity and experienced academics do not need to abandon current approaches, but add to and extend their teaching repertoire to enhance students' learning experience.

Researchers have identified a number of benefits to incorporating the use of specific aspects of technology as part of social work programme delivery. Aguirre et al (2011) studied social work students' use of web-based course management systems, WebCT, evaluating frequency of use and perceptions of the tool. This study found that the most useful features identified by the majority (over 75% in each case) of students were; course content (Powerpoint), due date reminders and electronic submission. Conclusions drawn included the changing and multifaceted skills required of social work educators, as technologists, administrators, researchers, content facilitators, designers, adviser/counsellors and assessors.

Despite limited research into use of online approaches in social work education, a number of studies argue that online courses are as effective as face-to-face courses in delivering knowledge-based content in areas as diverse as research, disease processes and gerontology (Cummings, 2013). In Wilke and Vinton's study (2006) to compare outcomes of the first online advanced standing students with their face-to-face counterparts, no significant difference was identified in academic or practice performance. Similar findings were reported by Seabury (2005) in relation

to social work practice skills, while DeNeui and Dodge (2006) report a correlation between students' frequency of online access and improved exam performance.

Criticism of distance learning methods have focused on the content and types of material provided. Where programmes were over-reliant on didactic forms of information dissemination, particular set books, a distance learning pack and assignments, learning became mechanistic and students failed to develop skills in problem-solving and critical analysis. However, similar views have been expressed about campus-based programmes, where the emphasis of the teaching was on knowledge transfer rather than facilitation of learning.

Maple et al concluded that learning from a distance, whatever the method of delivery, mirrors the barriers to communicating that Social Workers must seek to overcome, lack of contact making relationship formation challenging, initiating and maintain a dialogue with unknown individuals, communicating with inaccessible service users, etc, and promotes the development of effective skills in addressing these. Minimising use of lectures encourages students to look for their own information and solutions, replicating the investigative skills required of Social Workers. They concluded that:

Good design is not necessarily about unquestioningly following established practices but about intelligently adapting and utilising available tools in the most effective way for students and staff.

(Maple et al, 2012 pg 13)

The issue of learning at a distance has also been considered in relation to a second key area, collaboration.

2.4.2 Collaboration

An extension of distance learning, the previously mentioned offshore education, i.e. promotion of education by one HEI to students in a different country, is a growing interest of many business-minded providers stemming from reduced centrally-provided financial support for home students.

In an international study with students from six European countries, Fargion et al (2011) identified similar findings to previous researchers (Blewett et al, 2007; Boud et al, 1998) on the importance of problem-solving, task-based learning environments. It is unclear however, if the work refers to pre or post-registration students. Significantly, they also suggest further benefits derived from the programme structures, notably the essential nature of international collaboration in developing cultural competence. Other research indicates that collaboration through the use of technology is not limited to international projects. Crowell & McCarragher (2007) present a narrative of the experience of developing an innovative programme in the US. Two universities collaborated in the production of a joint postgraduate level programme incorporating distance education. Performance of students overall was comparable with students on face-to-face campus-based programmes, however, despite reservations at the start of the period of study, by completion, students, academics and practice educators all reported higher perceptions of the quality of teaching than had been anticipated. Students in Crowell & McCarragher's study identified a number strengths of the programme, including the opportunity for group learning; a sense of community and camaraderie among students; the rigour of the preparation; the expertise of the instructors; the diversity of the faculty and students; and the faculty commitment to student learning.

This study also found that the collaborative element was valued by those delivering the programme. Academics from the different HEIs appreciated the sharing of experience and the increased knowledge and practice experience that arose from

collaboration. While such an approach will undoubtedly pose challenges in the competitive business market of higher education, in terms of quality education, it offers much potential at both global and local level. This conflict reflects the struggles inherent in social welfare and social work, the contradiction between the logic of market principles in the public sector and that of public interest, prioritising needs of vulnerable individuals or socially excluded clients (Jones, 2001; Lymbery, 2001; Brydon and Liddell, 2012).

Quinney & Fowler (2012) also explored collaboration in their commentary on an online project designed to promote interaction between students and service users to facilitate “mutual learning about others’ experiences, perspectives, and opinions”. Although limited participants were involved, findings indicate that online discussions led to a high quality of social and cognitive interaction between students and service users that resulted in shared learning and the development of new ideas. Additionally, the researchers believed that topic-focused online discussions led to more balanced power relations than through face-to-face interaction. While drawbacks were determined in respects of set up time and preparation, this form of collaboration promoted students’ ability to link theory to practice in a real and reflective sense (Thompson, 2010).

One area identified as an effective, but underutilised means of supporting education and linking theory to practice is the use of video (Bates, 2005). Johnson (2012) describes how this technique was successfully used to provide service users with a voice and support students to link theory to practice. He claims that “moving pictures combine all the most important forms of symbolic representation - words, pictures, movement and sound - making it a powerful medium for conveying emotive experiences” (Johnson, 2013 pg. 5).

Bates’ (2005) research suggests that film and video can effectively supplement text to promote learning. This facilitates “reflection in action” (Schon, 1987) and the

“de-contextualising” of knowledge and experience, thus allowing the development of new, context and situation-dependent knowledge (Johnson, 2013).

2.4.3 Practice placement – field learning

One key area of concern considered in literature on social work education is the structure, location and nature of the assessed period of direct practice. Similar views and experience were reflected internationally and related to the diversity of setting, both in established sites of social work education and countries where this is a more recent development (Cummings et al, 2012; Liu et al, 2012; Maple et al, 2012). Identified challenges were the quality and availability of placements, limited access to suitability qualified practice educators, and conflict arising from the procedural approach prevalent in many practice settings. The centrality of the practice element is referred to in all accreditation bodies for social work education, with the USA Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) referring to this as the “signature pedagogy of social work education” (CSWE, 2008).

In one of their final reports, the outgoing registration body for social work education, the GSCC, identified a need for a more considered approach to development of placements, in partnership with employees, rather than the “ad hoc” style perceived to have existed in many institutions (GSCC, 2012). This perspective, however, potentially conflicts with academics concerns about procedural practice.

Sieminski and Seden (2010) examine teaching structure and approaches that support students’ ability to link theory to practice. The study, involving a distance learning programme, does not consider the relationship between programme design and student profile, but does see barriers to learning arising from the previous employment status of students. Students with high levels of experience or managerial backgrounds were perceived to need to “unlearn” previous behaviour

patterns and roles, and seemed resistant to new ideas. The ability to engage with, question, evaluate and challenge ideas and perceptions is an essential aspect of social work education, one which is considered best addressed by the promotion of reflection and debate. Reflection promotes ability to:

transcend and engage with difference, in that different knowledge, ideas, speculations, feelings and theories can be ascertained reflectively from a range of positions.

(Osmond and Darlington, 2005 pg. 3).

For Smith et al (2009), integration of online discussion forums created opportunity for sharing of written reflections, with this being more effective than solitary or verbally shared reflection.

In both the US and UK, concerns about programme structure are most commonly associated with the timing of placement, or field learning, experience. Competing debates exist on the effectiveness of integrated placements, students splitting time between classes and field placements, or block placements, upfront teaching providing a foundation from which to explore theory and knowledge when in practice (Panos et al, 2004; Collins, 2008; Wilson and Campbell, 2012). Internationally, there is considerable variation in the duration of the placement experience. Examples of this variation include 120 days in New Zealand (Gibbs and Stirling, 2010), 170 days in two settings plus 30 days skills development in the UK (TCSW, 2012), 70 days in two different settings in Singapore (Brydon and Liddell, 2012). In the USA the situation is less clear. Students can complete multiple placements, in different settings, typically between 15 and 22 hours per week;

however, with advanced standing, a relevant degree, this can be reduced (CSWE, 2014).

2.4.4 The loneliness of social work education

One constant factor arises across all programmes nationally and internationally. The high number of placement days undertaken by social work students means that, irrespective of route of study, level of direct contact between students and academics is minimal. Consequentially, all students are likely to experience what Bates (2005) calls “the loneliness of the long-distance learner”.

Maple et al (2012) found a key factor in the development and design of programmes was recognition of barriers faced by students, particularly the need to work, either full or part-time, to fund their study. Involvement in learning was not sufficient motivation on its own to facilitate student engagement.

Based on the Teach First programme⁹, recruiting and training high-achieving graduates as teachers to work in inner-city schools, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has proposed the development of an alternative structure for social work education, Frontline¹⁰. Frontline establishes a graduate fast-track programme, run by a dedicated social enterprise, where a postgraduate diploma level qualification, enabling registration as a qualified practitioner, is gained within 12 months. A further 12-month period as part of Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) incorporating a research element and leading to a master’s award is envisaged as a second stage to the programme.

One concern expressed by many social work academics and practitioners about this proposed structure is whether, given students’ limited placement experience compared to other UK programmes, sufficient opportunity is available to promote

⁹ <http://www.teachfirst.org.uk/>

¹⁰ <http://www.thefrontline.org.uk/>

effective and continued learning. Previous research has observed that students on employment-based routes, undertaking placement within the sponsoring agency, have limited experience, narrowness in working within agency policies and practices, and few opportunities to learn from alternative, contrasting, policies and practices (Collins, 2008). Further tensions in employment-based schemes with sponsored social work students have been identified in the distinction between providing education and training (Manthorpe et al, 2010).

Incorporating many of the elements suggested to contribute to effective social work education programmes, blended learning using online and technology enhanced aspects, collaboration with practitioners, service users and other professionals, and a well-planned and supported practice learning experience, the Frontline purports to respond to three identified problems in current models of social work education: lack of high-calibre recruits; low level of prestige associated with the profession; and degree courses that offer inadequate training. Evidence presented for the effectiveness of the proposed approach is the perceived success of the Teach First scheme on which it is based. However, despite many positive outcomes identified in evaluations of Teach First, similar concerns were expressed to those around social work education: inconsistency in mentoring, difficulties in establishing collaborative arrangements with practice settings and students struggling to grasp the wider contexts of the subject (Bennett et al, 2008).

Despite the introduction of the Teach First scheme, recent reports (DoE, 2010; OFSTED, 2011) express similar concerns on quality and perceived status of teachers to those being expressed about Social Workers. This poses a challenge to the view that a scheme developed along these lines will lead to increased quality and higher status for Social Workers. Given the contested and multidimensional nature of social work education, that it is not just about the acquisition of “what works”, knowledge and problem-solving skills, but also the development of awareness, the ability to reflect critically and apply theory to practice through extended periods of

practice-related activity. This scheme seems one dimensional, concentrating on developing ability to undertake specific tasks, rather than the more conceptual processes involved in relationship-based social work. The approach is in opposition to ideas presented in much adult learning theory which emphasise the importance of experientially learning, or learning by doing (Kolb, 1984), the social context of learning, and the significance of the interaction between students, peers and teachers (Vygotsky, 1978).

The recruitment process for the Frontline scheme, targeting high achieving graduates also contravenes previous work (Manthorpe et al, 2010) which determined that a strength of previous employment-based, "Grow Your Own" routes was that they provided access to social work education for those without major academic qualifications, particularly women. While higher levels of support were required, the outcomes, in terms of success rates and continued motivation, were seen as positive. This raises questions about what type of Social Worker the Frontline scheme is seeking to develop. It is difficult to see how such an elitist scheme can lead to the development of Social Workers who can reflect and respond to diversity within society.

It is also difficult to envisage how such a condensed scheme can provide time and opportunity for students to develop the "softer" skills identified as needed by newly qualified workers, e.g. negotiating boundaries, establishing relationships with colleagues, supervisors and service users, recognising and adhering to values, maintaining personal development plans and a developing a commitment to lifelong learning (Clapton, 2012). Indeed, ideas of an intensive "quick fix" programme, undermines notions of lifelong learning advocated by the PCF. The challenge of how education can prepare students for the real world of social work practice has been raised (Munro, 2010; SWTF, 2011), with similar concerns perceived in other professions, nursing, teaching, etc (Clapton, 2012). In response, Clapton (2012) proposes the potential for delivering a transition module, either as

part of pre-registration programmes, or as stand-alone credit-bearing continual professional development (CPD). Difficulties are identified in securing academic resources; issues of funding and responsibility need to be addressed. However, given the increased pressure on HEIs to demonstrate high employability rates of graduates presented in key information sets (KIS) and maintain links with alumni, solutions to such problems are likely to be identified, particularly if addressed at a cross-discipline level.

The cost of undertaking social work education is not insignificant. Research (Moriarty et al, 2012) suggests that many students must engage in paid employment to meet an income shortfall of around £7,340 just to meet basic living expenses. Access to social work education through Frontline, with no opportunity to supplement income, would therefore be restricted to either those sponsored, and supported financially by a funding agency, or those with substantial personal financial resources. Such a position is the antithesis of social work values of empowerment, promotion of an inclusive society and challenging oppression.

2.5 Who wants to be a Social Worker?

The profile of pre-registration students indicates the characteristics of the future workforce. Examining the profile of students not only gives an indication of the types of individuals that will be the future Social Workers, it also highlights those groups and individuals who are poorly represented and excluded.

Literature related to this question was identified by searching 10 databases. A preliminary search was conducted using the following search terms:

- Social work
- Social Worker
- Social work*
- Profile
- Characteristics
- Attributes
- Education
- Training
- Who
- Status

Boolean operators were used and various combinations of the terms applied. The preliminary search resulted in three studies. Broadening the search to consider “social work” and “social work education” more generically, suggested that while there was limited work specifically addressing the question of profile, data was contained in studies considering other aspects of social work education, outcomes, success rates, etc. Informed by the preliminary search, additional search terms

were used in conjunction with the original terms to identify as many studies as possible. These were:

- Age
- Gender
- Background
- Ethnicity

All sources found containing any information about the characteristics of social work students were reviewed and subsequently filtered by the inclusion/exclusion criteria (appendix 3b). A total of twenty-one articles were found including two located during follow-up searches.

2.5.1 What is known about social work students?

Data on numbers and characteristics of those registering on pre-registration social work education programmes in the UK remains limited, despite recognition of this (Moriarty and Murray, 2007) and the recent focus reviewing and amending entry requirements for social work education (SWTF, 2010; TCSW, 2012). Although it is possible to gain some sense of numbers entering social work from the database maintained by the agency responsible for professional registration, formerly the GSCC and currently the HCPC, this does not provide data on characteristics of entrants.

For undergraduate programmes, this is partially addressed through HEIs use of the national, centrally administered university admissions process (UCAS) used by the majority of HEIs to manage applications to social work programmes. As part of their process, UCAS collects and collates data on numbers of applications,

acceptance rates, and reasons for declining places offered. It also compiles data on the profile of applicants, previous qualifications, gender, socio-economic status, locations, etc. Obtaining detailed data on postgraduate pre-registration candidates in the UK is more difficult as there is no similar central mechanism via which applications are processed. Whilst some postgraduate programmes use UCAS for managing applications, this is not routinely the case and many applications and offers are managed within the HEI. This results in limited data being held in a format that provides an overall picture of the postgraduate population and lack of a clear picture in relation to postgraduate applications to social work. Given the current emphasis on postgraduate pre-registration social work education this is a significant gap and suggests current policy regarding to support and financing lacks a robust evidence base. Where studies have been completed, these are generic and use historical data.

In 2007, Moriarty and Murray took some steps to explore the issue by considering trends in applications to identify underrepresented groups and populations.

Their study suggests that, compared to other higher education courses, social work programmes have a higher than average ratio of Black women, whilst males, and individuals from Asian backgrounds are underrepresented. Despite a sound research method and being published in 2007 limitations findings are unreliable as the study uses data collected significantly earlier, between 1997 and 2003. Given changing UK demography there is a need for more contemporary information. A later study (Hussein et al, 2008) reviews diversity and progression of social work students, but again uses data collected a number of years earlier, examining profiles of Diploma in Social Work (DipSW) students, i.e. those who studied prior to the introduction of the current degree-based social work education. Similar limitations are, therefore, seen in the currency of the data and associated findings.

Similar gaps in contemporary information are seen in other countries with a well-established history of delivering social work education. Research on the population of American social work students published in 2007 uses data collected in 2004 (CSWE, 2007b). This study found that for postgraduate programmes, 29.1% of full-time and 32.3% of part-time students came from ethnic minority groups. 83% of all students were female. No research explores sexual identity of social work students although data on this is now being collected in the USA (Anastas, 2010).

Manktelow, et al (2005) explored the personality attributes of applications for postgraduate social work on one programme in Northern Ireland. They reported that students were predominantly female (82% of applicants), mostly in their twenties, aged 22–25 years, with Catholic and Protestant religious views being presented in equal proportions. The focus on religion in this study reflects the political and ideological influences of the time. Similar findings regarding the prevalence of females engaging in social work education have been made by other studies (Furness, 2012).

Although exploring gender difference in the profile of social work students, data is presented with reference to a gender dyad, referring to numbers of males and/or females. While exploration of student sexuality raises some ethical issues, the limited reference to this in literature could be perceived as representing a particular ideological position. The limited studies that do exist explore the experience of Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) students and suggest that aspects of the programme can lead to feelings of exclusion; it does not provide any insight into numbers of LGBT students entering social work education (Fairtlough et al, 2012).

Research considers progress of students from different ethnic backgrounds on currently approved programmes (Hussein et al, 2008/2009; Bernard et al, 2011).

Others have considered types of knowledge required by practitioners (Parton, 2008; Gillingham, 2011). Despite a recognised need further exploration (Harding, Ferguson and Radey, 2005) there is limited research currently explicitly examining accessibility of approved social work education programmes for different groups, facilitating factors and barriers involved. As previously mentioned, social class is a key factor in determining access to and performance within education. Students who have experienced disadvantage during early stages of their progress through the education system, will face more and greater barriers as they progress into higher education.

Anastas (2010) suggests stereotypes associated with gender, ethnicity and age create barriers to entering higher education. Stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) results in self-fulfilling behaviour by those concerned when the matter was important to that individual and they cared about performing well. Potential students coming from backgrounds associated with lower levels of performance performed according to stereotype, e.g. maths tests for women and aptitude tests for those from Black backgrounds. For social work, although considered a vocational subject, this is likely to be significant as, unlike many other subjects considered to be more academic, all students must demonstrate a high level of proficiency in maths and hold a minimum of GCSE grade C (or equivalent).

As the call to recruit those with a high level of intelligence (Munro, 2011) is being translated into entry criteria where intelligence is judged by exam results and grade of qualification held (TCSW, 2012), the impact of stereotype threat may be to exclude some sections of the population.

A recent study by Bernard et al (2013) examined views of social work students in universities in England who saw themselves as multiply-marginalised in their education experience. Whilst not indicating whether undergraduate or

postgraduate students, the study provides some statistical information on student profiles at eight HEIs in England. They found the most common ethnic minority groups within social work education were Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani. Disabled students were found to be underrepresented. The accuracy of this figure is, however, questionable as collected through self-disclosure; students and applicants to higher education may be reluctant to provide accurate details for fear of discrimination. Bernard et al's study provided limited data on sexuality of students.

2.5.2 Suitability

While much is written about the importance of ensuring those who enter social work are suitable for the profession (SWTF, 2009/2010; Munro, 2011; TCSW, 2012), difficulties arise in defining "suitability" or "unsuitability" (Curren, 2009; Holmstrom, 2014). Some behaviours and attitudes perceived undesirable in potential Social Workers are identified in relation to application of Fitness to Practice and conduct procedures; behavioural problems, emotional problems, inter-personal problems and unsociable behaviour, yet little is written about the characteristics and personal attributes of those successfully completing pre-registration programmes.

Manktelow and Lewis (2005) used personality tests to compare profiles of students accepted onto pre-registration social work postgraduate programmes in Northern Ireland with unsuccessful applicants. Findings suggest that, of the personality traits explored - Openness, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness - the only significant difference was seen in greater openness of selected students. Their findings, however, are based on data collected some time prior to the publication of the research, between 1996 and 1999, when alternative

selection criteria and processes applied and the validity of this in relation to present student cohorts is, therefore, contested.

Furness (2012) also takes a negative stance and examines gender of those perceived to be “failing”. Males are observed to be disproportionately represented within both student and qualified Social Worker population. This same research also suggests men are also more likely to fail their programme of study. As with studies referred to previously, the evaluation was made in relation to a gender dyad and does not consider views expressed by some (Weber, 2009; Oliffe and Greaves, 2012) that gender and sexuality are contextual and socially constructed.

While for many students choosing to study at postgraduate level, a key factor in choosing the programme has been the reputation of the HEI - this has been found less significant for social work students. Manthorpe et al (2010), reflecting previously referred to HEFCE (2013) findings on the broader picture of postgraduate students, found location was the most important factor for the majority of social work applicants.

2.6 Why students choose a social work career

While considering profile of students is important, this cannot be understood without consideration of the factors that motivate individuals to study social work. Although it might be presumed that registering with a programme leading to qualified status implies students aspire to use this to work in a specific role, the contested nature of social work means greater exploration of is needed.

There are many careers that share some similarities with social work: care work, nursing, education, occupational therapy and, to some extent, politics. None, however, focus on the aspiration, as stated in all current and proposed definitions of social work, to promote social, in addition to personal, change. If this is a motivating factor, students' reasons for studying will be more ideological and contrast with the more practical aspects referred to by policy makers. Few programmes of study carry the same level of personal and professional scrutiny at application point, with programmes restricting access to those considered to have "unsuitable" characteristics or who have shown "unsuitable" behaviour. It is significant to note that, at this point, the potential student is not applying for a job; there is no guarantee of employment on successful completion of the programme. Unlike other careers that might be considered to have some similarities, e.g. the police force or probation, while some students might be employed and seconded to attend the programme, the majority of students are not, and are there of their own volition, often at considerable financial expense.

Diversity within the workforce can only be achieved by supporting this in the student group. To develop programmes that promote diversity, it is necessary to explore factors that motivate and demotivate particular individuals and groups to undertake programmes that enable successful students to become qualified practitioners.

2.6.1 Motivation to be a Social Worker

Literature related to this question was identified by searching ten databases. A preliminary search was conducted using the following search terms:

- Social work
- Social Worker
- Social work*
- Motivation
- Reasons
- Interest
- Education
- Training
- Why
- Postgraduate

Boolean operators were used and various combinations of the terms were applied.

Twenty-two articles were identified as potentially relevant during the initial search. Sources found containing any reference to the reasons why students enrolled on programmes leading to qualification as a Social Worker were further reviewed and subsequently filtered by the inclusion/exclusion criteria (appendix 3c).

After application of these criteria, only two studies remained. For this reason, the inclusion criteria were relaxed to include all studies relating to pre-registration students. Seven remained, providing some insight into the reasons why students had chosen to study social work.

Given the significance of understanding why people choose to undertake social work education, the dearth of recent information on the subject is surprising. Historically, prior to social work becoming a registered profession with a protected title, research suggested reasons for choosing social work as a career included: working with people; contributing to individuals' well-being; contributing to society; a belief they had aptitude for the work; and a desire to effect social change. In an early study Perry et al (2003) identified a number of themes related to motivation, including: childhood and family background; influence of significant others; perceptions of the value base of social work; the urge to "do something"; and to contribute to society. Despite a long-standing interest in the subject, studies evident since the 1950s (Daniel, 2005) and recent calls for a review of social work education (Lamming, 2009; SWRB, 2010/2012), a limited number of contemporary studies explore reasons why individuals choose to become Social Workers. Still fewer explore motivation of postgraduate students, those who have already followed a programme of higher education prior to choosing social work. Given the different perceptions of what social work is and, therefore, what potential Social Workers see themselves doing, this is remiss.

The relative lack of research in this area is somewhat surprising for, as Daniel (2011) says:

If we are to recruit, train and place effective Social Workers, understanding the characteristics of individuals' underlying motivations in pursuing their goals is essential to providing effective support.

(Daniel, 2011 pg. 907)

Although considerable attention has been vested on what Social Workers need to know and what skills they require, few articles explore why individuals choose to study social work in the first place. In 2005, Manktelow and Lewis expressed the view that, for those seeking qualification as a professional, motivation and personality had as much impact on how successful the individual would be as a practitioner, as academic background. The key feature was the social process by which those involved formulate their value base. While there is limited specific research, some understanding of motivation for studying social work is provided by research focusing on other aspects of social work and social work education. Despite a number of changes to social work education since Manktelow and Lewis's study, what research has been undertaken suggests that the reasons remain consistent.

Studies have explored motivation for a career in social work from a number of perspectives: personal experience and psychosocial factors; socio-demographic influences; and values orientation of students (Moriarty and Murray, 2007; Furness, 2007; Daniel, 2011).

Stevens et al (2012) conducted an extensive, mixed-method study of over 3000 social work students on both undergraduate and postgraduate pre-registration programmes. The study explored the primary reasons why students chose to study social work and identified emerging themes and patterns with respect to age, gender and ethnicity. These were located around three factors: career, altruistic or personal qualities, and the day-to-day nature of social work (Stevens et al, 2012). The robust method employed by the study, collecting data over a three year period and involving triangulation through focus groups and survey, took place over geographically diverse sites encompassing nine pre-registration programmes, four postgraduate and five undergraduate, at six different HEIs. As such, it can be

considered to give a sound representation of the motivation of social work students within the UK.

The study found the most popular reason given for studying social work, 88% of students across the three years, was “helping people to improve the quality of their own lives”, while the second most popular reason, 74%, was that it was “interesting and stimulating work”. Other factors rated highly, included having a “personal ability to get on with people” (71%) and a “wish to tackle injustice and inequalities in society” (70%). Factors ranked lowest were those relating to aspirations associated with career prospects. Only 50% of those surveyed attributed motivation to “good career prospects”, while being a “well paid job” was the view of only 25% of respondents. Stevens et al concluded that students’ motivation to become Social Workers stemmed from complex interaction between altruistic, personal and career factors, although altruistic factors were found to be most prevalent. The type of altruistic interaction was qualified further, differentiating between individual altruism and social altruism - the former being most significant. One key limitation of the findings is that they do not provide any details of the response rate of students on different programmes, nor do they examine any difference between reasons given by undergraduate or postgraduate students.

These findings do, however, resonate with earlier research and perceptions that, for social work students, motivation to qualify is as much influenced by personal experience as professional or political considerations (Christie, 1998; Christie & Kruk, 1998; Parker & Merrylees, 2002; ADSS, 2005; BMRB Social Research, 2005). The consistency of these findings over time, despite changes to social work education and regulation of the profession, suggests social work is not just seen by potential practitioners as a “meaningful career”, but also as providing a way of contributing to “society’s well-being” (Furness, 2007).

Stevens' (2012) study not only identified the impact of personal circumstance and environmental factors on motivation to study social work, it also suggested that cultural influences shaped perceptions of the relationship between social work and society. The prevailing "cultural frame" promoted an internalised view of the world which was increasingly personal and individualistic. Cultural values promoted the view that individuals could and should contribute to society and support others. These values are seen as instrumental in motivating students to seek to become a Social Worker. This was particularly true for mature students with "autonomous" internal motivations, e.g. self-esteem and personal satisfaction, perceived of greater importance than external factors, such as better career rewards, irrespective of ethnicity or type of experience. Other specific motivational factors were associated with other personal characteristics of students. Variations are seen associated with age, gender, ethnicity and type of previous experience. For males, career aspirations were considered to be the greatest motivating factor. This finding supports previous research (Christie, 2006), which found that although few men qualified as Social Workers, they were over-represented at management level. Similarly, motivation of Black social work students was twice as likely to arise from career factors compared to White students. Prior related work experience also resulted in students stating career aspirations as the motivation for social work study. Interestingly, although relevant experience was identified as a motivating factor, differences were seen in terms of where this experience stemmed from. Students who gained experience through voluntary or paid work in a non-statutory setting or related field, were one-and-a-half times more likely to attribute motivation to altruistic or personal qualities. Students whose experience arose in the statutory setting, with Social Worker employers, were two-thirds more likely to give "the day-to-day nature of the work" as the motivating factor.

A small number of studies consider the relationship between the everyday work pattern and motivation to do social work (D'Aprix, 2004; Bowie et al, 2005; Daniel,

2010). Many students perceived that having social work as a career offered opportunity for flexibility in terms of work/life balance.

This suggests that the previous experience not only influences students' reasons for studying social work, but also indicates that students from different backgrounds will have different expectations of what they will study, and aspirations for their future roles. While Stevens' study focused on exploring motivation of aspiring Social Workers in the UK, similar findings come from research undertaken elsewhere.

One aim of Daniel's (2011) USA study was to identify the meaning of social work for students from minority ethnic groups and examine how this influenced their career choice. It was hoped that the findings of this study would facilitate the development of social work education with a curriculum and approach that was inclusive, able to eliminate racism and inequality. Working with 45 students, 15 of whom were enrolled in the postgraduate MSW program, Daniel used narrative analysis to examine perceptions of the relationship between life experiences and reasons for wanting to become Social Workers.

This study found that family history, e.g. substance abuse, trauma, family violence and mental illness, was the main factor motivating study of social work. This view of a complex interplay between social and psychological factors influencing students decisions to pursue a career in social work, is a recurring theme (Sellers and Hunter, 2005; Wilson and McCrystal, 2007) and links with an earlier study (DiCaccavo, 2002) suggesting two-thirds of Social Workers have been involved in providing care for family members, 50% reported problematic relationships including difficulties in bonding with parents and 42% had experienced significant childhood separation from one or both parents. More recent studies (Smith, 2012) concluded that 20% of social work students have been sexually abused or had

experienced domestic violence. The negative impact of disruption on children's education is well documented, as is the impact on academic achievement (Cairns, 2004; Berridge, 2006; DCFS, 2010; Cleaver et al, 2011). This leads to the premise that, for many aspiring social work students, acquiring academic qualifications will have presented challenges. Understanding of this and the impact on access to social work education is essential if these challenges are not to be compounded.

Daniel (2011) indicated that, compared to other subjects, study of social work was attractive to those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Socio-economic status not only influenced the decision to choose social work as a career, but also sparked an interest in developing greater knowledge of related subjects. Two-thirds of respondents in Daniel's study considered themselves to have lived in poverty as a child. For many there was, as a consequence, frequent contact with Social Workers. For these individuals, entering social work was perceived as a way of addressing social inequality, relating to the social activist paradigm. For a number of students, desire to qualify followed a period when they had held negative perceptions of the profession arising from personal life experience. The study suggested that the change in attitude had resulted from education, either during adolescence or as a young adult. These views reflect the broader aspirations of education, developing thinking, rather than that of training to undertake specific tasks.

Daniel's conclusions reflect findings of other, earlier studies (Perry, 2004; Padadaki, 2001) which similarly consider the impact of personal challenge on choosing social work as a career. These findings provide some insight into reasons why students apply for postgraduate pre-registration programmes, with undergraduate programmes providing the mechanism by which prospective students make sense of their own experience, develop a sense of purpose, clarify aspirations, and develop plans for future action.

The influence of personal values and belief systems, rather than career aspirations, supports long-standing propositions that becoming a Social Worker is seen as a vocation (Waterman, 2002), something arising from childhood experience, and an emotional decision, rather than reasoned choice related to career aspirations or ambition. A number of studies (Brown, 2002; Berings et al, 2004; Moorjani et al, 2007; Hussain et al, 2012) explore personality types associated with career choice and propose that many of those entering social work were "idealists" according to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - a significant number have the NF (iNtuitive/Feeling) temperament. This view of the reasons for studying social work supports the proposition that, for many students, the study of social work is not a means-to-an-end, but is linked with more personal, internalised values (Gerke and Berens, 2005).

This view is supported by Furness (2007), whose qualitative work with undergraduates found that the introduction of a financial incentive, a bursary, had limited impact on students' motivation to study social work. This finding was irrespective of personal characteristics such as religion, gender or age. This raises questions as to the appropriateness of current funding mechanisms. Using questionnaires completed by prospective students over a period of four years, Furness found that factors other than financial support were primary incentives in motivating students to apply for social work. The key factors influencing their choice of career were that it reflected personal views and resulted in rewards that aligned with personal values. Students perceived social work as challenging and rewarding by virtue of its nature, "work with people", and through providing the opportunity to work with like-minded people. A small number of students (4%) took this further and expressed social and political reasons for entering social work. These findings suggest links between motivations and the different dimensions of social work previously discussed. This is supported by Freund et al's (2013) study, which concluded that there were two types of students: those who

choose to study social work, aiming to bring about social change; and those motivated by the nature of practice, engaging in “clinical” social work.

A number of studies, both UK and international, conclude that it is the perception of students that qualifying as a Social Worker will lead to efficacy and greater ability to promote change at individual, community or societal level. The studies also suggest that views emphasising the role of social work in promoting social change have a cultural dimension.

Perry (2004) found that students from minority groups were more interested in working with those experiencing poverty, than White social work students; while Anastas (2010), referring to an earlier, 1996, survey of African American and Latino doctoral students, suggested that a career in social work was associated with a desire to help others and “give back” to the community. The role of culture and community are also reflected in Daniel’s (2011) view that collectivist values of mutual cooperation and support are common within some minority groups. This study suggests that, for many minority ethnic students, choosing social work as an occupation is perceived to meet a cultural obligation and provides a potential contribution to wider society. These values are often associated with personal, religious and cultural values; however, limited research has been undertaken in this area.

Daniel (2011) proposes that for minority students a motivating factor is a strong interest in social justice and promoting social change. This is linked with values and internalised psychological processes, e.g. self-expression, actualisation, autonomy. This is supported by more general theoretical explanations of motivation (Maslow, 1987). If this is the case, lower order needs of students first need to be addressed, e.g. security and safety, and education needs to be provided in a manner that does

not pose an unmanageable risk. Arrangements for supporting students also need to address this.

A significant issue identified by several studies was the role that personal values played in choosing to study social work. The significance of the fit between personal values held by Social Workers and values advocated by the profession is seen, not just as a motivating factor, but also a key aspect of the commitment needed to retain individuals once qualified (Clements et al, 2012). Both students and lecturers highlight the need for shared values and view commitment to the profession and dedication as synonymous.

Daniel (2010) observed particular values, associated with different ethnic backgrounds, attracted individuals to social work. This study suggested that people from BME backgrounds expressed specific values related to their role within society, their relationships with others and the part they played within the community. Becoming a Social Worker was a means of learning skills and knowledge that would promote this, at the same time their work would be legitimised through gaining qualified status.

However, a number of studies (Bowie et al, 2011, Bernard et al, 2013) observed that individuals from BME backgrounds faced additional challenges. The issue of barriers encountered in becoming Social Workers, real or perceived, by such students was a recurring theme. Participants in a number of studies referred to feeling concerned about supporting their families on a Social Worker's salary, and the negative view expressed by the wider community about Social Workers (Wilson and McCrystal, 2007; Clements et al, 2012). A theme emerging from these studies was that concerns about future career prospects were likely to have a negative impact on students' motivation and career aspirations. In these studies,

respondents believed that as individuals from BME groups, there was the potential they would be targets of prejudice and discrimination within the profession.

Although these findings originate in the USA, other research suggests similar concerns arise in the UK, such that while people from BME backgrounds might be motivated to become Social Workers, they may not do so due to the low wage, lack of status and fear of discrimination (Moriarty and Murray, 2007). Similar demotivating factors are expressed in relation to men entering social work. Given the barriers encountered by many BME people in the education system, the increasingly demanding academic entry requirements for social work will do little to address these issues and can only be anticipated to exacerbate the divide.

Understanding the relationship between perceptions of what social work is, students' values and motivation are key aspects in supporting success as students, but also for retaining them as qualified practitioners.

Breen and Lindsay (2002) reported that students whose motivations coincided with the aspirations of the programme studied were more successful. This was reflected in the findings of Clements' (2012) study:

To be a Social Worker you have to adopt a certain value base and it would be impossible to be a good Social Worker without adopting that. Throughout the course I've realised that you do have to adapt your identity a bit, and being a Social Worker becomes more than being just a job. I think it becomes a mind-set in general.

(Clements, 2012 pg.5)

This poses the question of which dimension of social work contained in the many definitions is the primary objective of pre-registration programmes given the limited periods of study involved.

2.6.2 Why study at postgraduate level?

As stated, much of the research on motivation for becoming a Social Worker explores the views of students across all programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate. Research does not examine any perceived or apparent differences between those following alternative routes or seeking qualification through different levels of entry. While the above review provides insight into why students have chosen to study to become a Social Worker, it does not provide any understanding of why they have chosen to do so at postgraduate level given that they could have done so at undergraduate level. Studying at undergraduate level would have provided earlier entry to the profession and would have involved less personal and financial commitment. To consider the postgraduate dimension, an additional review of literature was conducted to examine studies exploring motivation to study at postgraduate level. The rationale for this was to identify any factors that might be particularly significant with regard to social work education. A similar systematic process was conducted to identify relevant texts using Boolean operators.

Search terms used were:

- Postgraduate
- Education
- Study
- Master's
- MA
- MSc

- PgDip*
- Motivation
- Motiv*
- Reasons
- Why
- Incentives

For consistency, the same timescales were applied as in the previous searches. Articles were reviewed applying inclusion/exclusion criteria (appendix 3d). After application of these, only five studies were identified. This indicated that the dearth of studies exploring why students engage in postgraduate study is not unique to social work, but is a wider issue (Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010). Wakeling and Kyriacou examined reasons why students do, or do not, choose postgraduate study. Much of their work, however, is directed at postgraduate research programmes and contributes limited insight when seeking to understand postgraduate study where the focus is on obtaining a professional qualification. This is a significant gap. With increased emphasis on entry to social work at postgraduate level (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014), greater understanding is needed of why students engage with each level of entry. Additionally, it is important to understand what students entering at a particular level bring to the profession.

A small number of studies consider reasons for engaging with education in general and provide some insight as to why students might choose part-time routes or postgraduate study.

In their 2008 study on motivation of students entering higher education, Kember et al concluded that motivation related to a number of constructs arising both internally and externally. Environmental or situation factors created an external,

extrinsic influence with the programme studied being “a-means-to-an-end” and outcome motivated, e.g. achieving a qualification. By contrast, motivation could develop internally from within the individual psyche, e.g. personal interest in the subject being studied, intrinsic motivation. This view of motivation associated with intrinsic and extrinsic factors supports the social work specific studies reviewed. Challenging an earlier education study (Biggs, 1987) that perceived such factors as polar opposites, Kember et al see these as alternative dimensions with positions, not fixed in opposition, but providing a continuum with a number of possible positions between extremes. From such a proposition, the previous research on social work motivation suggests that a greater percentage of students would be located at the intrinsic end of the continuum.

While notions of a continuum suggest motivation is a bipolar construct, an either/or situation, some researchers (Beaty et al, 2005; Kember et al, 2008) propose a more complex relationship which contributes to greater understanding of the reasons for studying social work. Motivation at postgraduate level could be mitigated if potential benefits are diminished and degree of self-determination compromised. This could be a significant factor providing understanding of limited applications from some groups, e.g. men and high achievers, who are able to apply for more financially rewarding professions.

Kember et al introduce a third construct relevant when considering social work education - vocation. Vocational orientation is seen as having both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. In their study, vocational orientation was found to be particularly prevalent in students who applied for part-time higher education. Other orientations also associated with this group included lifelong learning for pleasure. Such an orientation could be desirable in those seeking to be Social Workers as there is a requirement to engage with continual professional development and lifelong learning within the domains of the PCF (TCSW, 2013).

Igun (2010) looked at the motivation of Nigerian students to undertake postgraduate study. While intrinsic and extrinsic values were considered, this was with regard to engagement with higher education and not in relation to a perceived accord between the specific subject and personal belief systems. Motivation arose from the status associated with the qualification achieved, rather than engaging with the programme. Robertson and Wilkinson (2006) concluded that postgraduate study was a goal-oriented venture in which value was attached to completion of a higher level award.

The question of how different levels of study are perceived, relates not only to culture and society, but also to how the programme is promoted. Views expressed by earlier writers are worthy of consideration, given recent reports on social work education (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby 2014). In an early American study Corvo et al (2003) suggested that recruitment of minority student groups to social work programmes may be compromised because of the approach used in marketing to prospective customers (students) through promotional material, e.g. bulletins, catalogues, etc. Their research suggested that the emphasis on, and availability of, “clinical concentrations”, i.e. specific individual methods of intervention, along with the more common descriptions of “clinical courses” in promotional materials and imagery, present the impression that social work education is primarily *training* in how to carry out these specific activities. Such perceptions negate key aspects of the social activist dimension referred to in definitions of social work. There are commonalities here with the views expressed by Narey (2014) and Croisdale-Appleby (2014). Similarly, it could be considered that this marketing approach underpins the recently developed “Frontline” programme, with its focus specifically on work within statutory children and families teams.

Frameworks for explaining motivations to study, explore process (intrinsic) and outcome (extrinsic) motivations (Breen and Lindsay, 2002). These are further

divided into “autonomous” and “heteronomous” goals. From this perspective it would be envisaged that those with experience of paid work in a social services setting were more likely to have instrumental motivations (“career factors” or “day-to-day nature of social work”). From this perspective, students recruited to short, intense programmes, e.g. “Frontline”, are more likely to be attracted to these as “a means-to-an-end”, seeking qualified status at the earliest possible point. The level of resilience, commitment and determination to remain in the long term held by students with such short-term motivations is questionable.

2.6.3 Using the literature review to develop key concepts for exploration

The literature review covered a number of different aspects of postgraduate social work education and provided insight into key concepts that I needed to explore to answer my research questions and gain understanding of the relationship between programme structure and the characteristics and motivation of people entering social work education at postgraduate level. Concepts were identified by reading and re-reading the data extraction forms and highlighting key words and phrases which were explored through the use of a mind map (figure 1).

Figure 1 Concepts Mindmap



Colour-coding enabled key concepts to be identified and clustered to provide the basis of the aspects of the student profile, motivation and programme structure that needed to be explored. This also informed development of the most appropriate method of answering the research questions by indicating the types of data and evidence needed; appropriate sources for collection of this evidence; and specific factors for exploration. This included dimensions of personal characteristics, factors that influence motivation to study social work, and the potential factors facilitating or impeding access to social work education.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Rationale for the method

This chapter presents the rationale behind the method used for this research. The factors that influenced the approach, and the steps taken, are explained. The ethical dimension is discussed, and the strategy adopted to address ethical guidelines, is explained.

3.1.1 Frameworks informing the research design

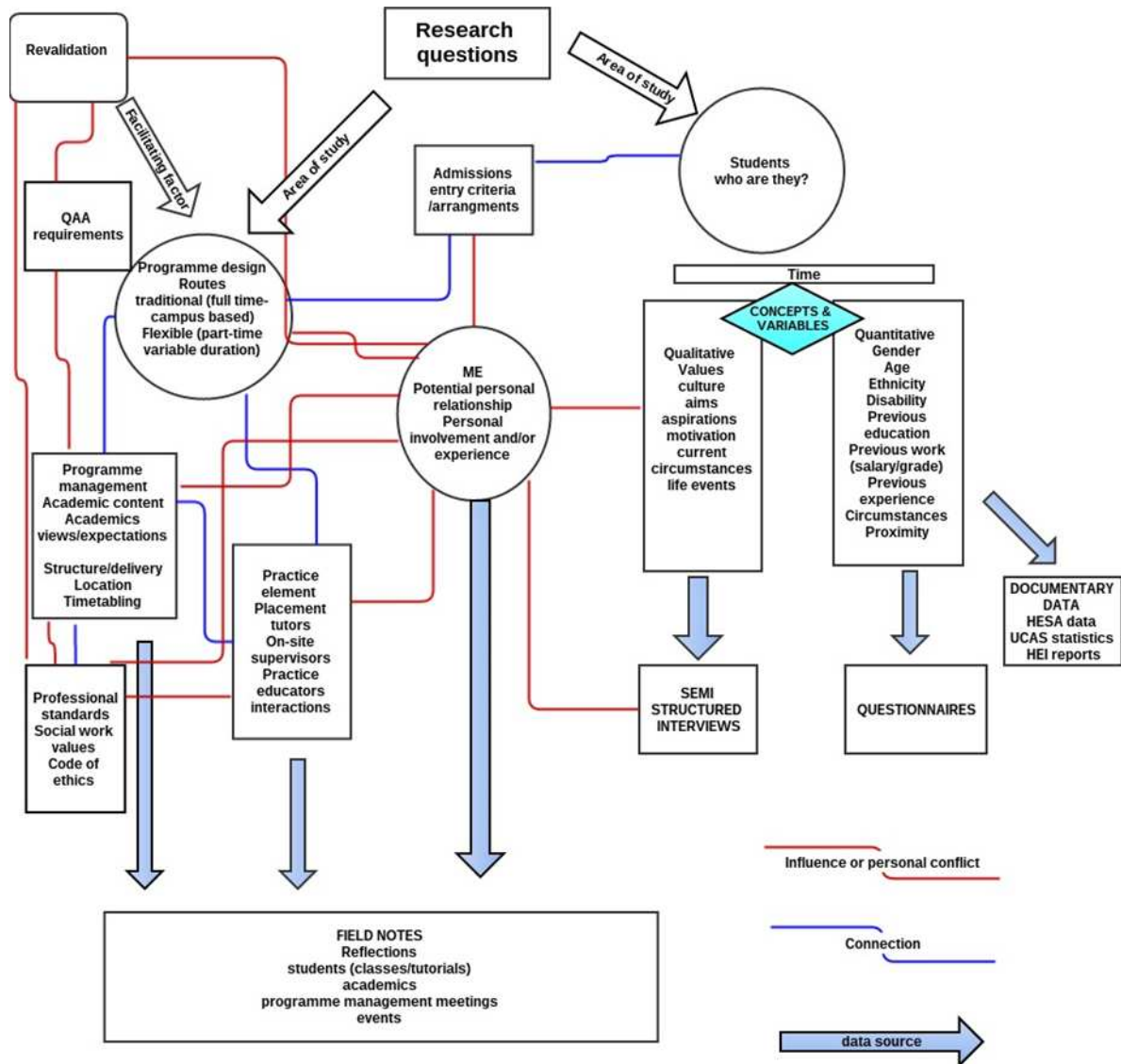
To answer the research questions, different types of data were needed: quantitative data, describing specific characteristics; and qualitative data, presenting the background and students' views. Although the subject was initiated by personal interest, the method used was influenced by pragmatic concerns. Data of sufficient breadth and depth to answer the research question required both access to a programme with different routes of study for comparison and prolonged access to students. My role as Programme Director not only addressed the latter, but also facilitated the former, when revalidation of the existing programme provided the opportunity to introduce a flexible route of study.

3.1.2 Theoretical framework

A case study approach (Yin, 1993; Mariano, 2000; Baxter and Jack, 2008) was chosen to gain detailed insight into the profiles of students in one specific setting. This approach was appropriate as the study was exploring a contemporary phenomenon in the real world context (Swanborn, 2010; Yin, 2014). A conceptual

framework was developed to identify and explore key factors to be studied; influential elements; areas of conflict; and potential sources of data.

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

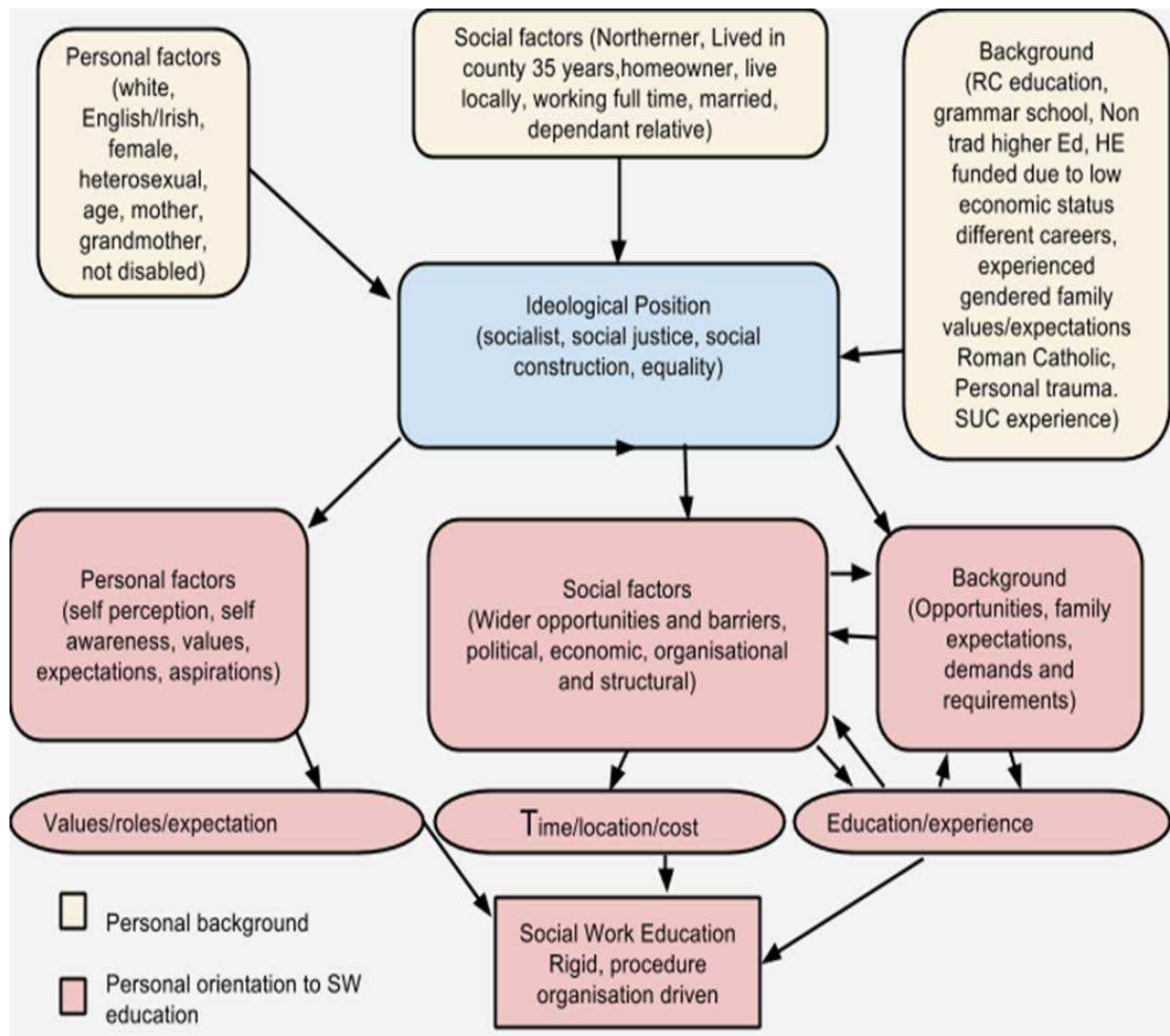


A sequential exploratory design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, et al 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) was used. This method involves collecting and analysing different types of data in consecutive phases within one study (Ivankova, Cresswell

and Stick, 2006). The rationale for this acknowledges that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods alone are sufficient to capture the trends and details of a situation (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Doyle et al, 2009). Combined, quantitative and qualitative methods are complementary, enabling greater analysis that builds on the strength of each method (Green and Caracelli, 1997). This research design supported data collection that enabled exploration of trends within and across the student group and also examination of individual students' circumstances.

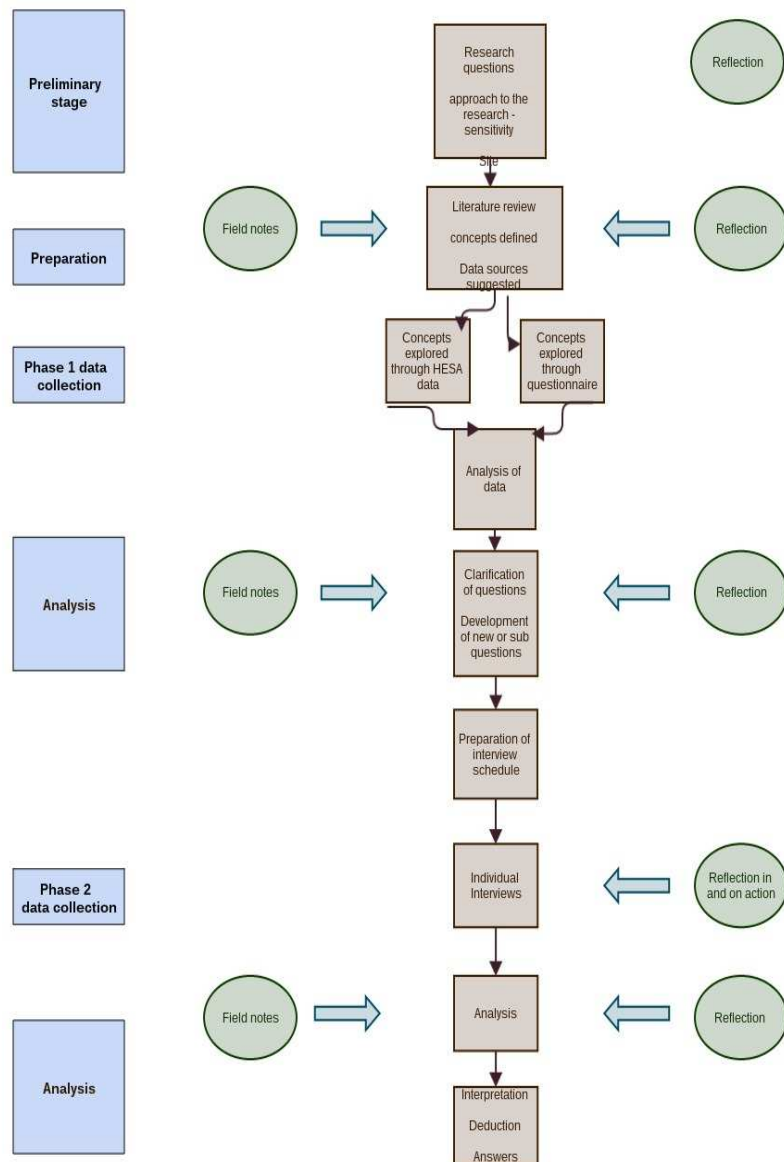
Having made explicit the complexity of my relationship to the subject as set out in the introduction, the first part of the sequential process was to explore and acknowledge the factors that could lead to bias or influence decisions and interpretations. This was done by reflecting on my background and preparing a diagrammatic representation (figure 3) that highlighted personal aspects that I would need to be aware of at each stage of the research process.

Figure 3 Personal orientation to the research



Having highlighted ways in which my work, life experience, personal and professional values and circumstances could influence the research process, points for active reflection were established at each stage. This contributed to providing answers to some research questions and suggested further areas of exploration. This approach fitted well with my personal alignment to the research and the adoption of reflexivity, as it allowed for reflection, evaluation, interpretation, exploration and adaption at each stage of the process. The research design was informed by five guiding principles (Maxwell and Loomis, 2003): purpose; conceptual framework; research questions; method; and validity. A diagrammatic representation of the research process (Morgan, 1998; Creswell et al, 2003; Ivankova, 2006), served to clarify the processes involved, but also maintaining focus.

Figure 4 Diagrammatic representation of the research process



After completing the literature review and identifying key concepts for exploration, the initial phase of data collection was fixed and focused on collecting specific answers to key questions associated with the concepts. However, the areas for exploration in the second stage were emergent and arose from the ideas, patterns and gaps arising from analysis at phase one.

3.2 Ethical considerations

3.2.1 The ethical approval process

It is acknowledged that maintaining anonymity may not be possible when conducting insider-research (Trowler, 2011). Steps normally used to provide anonymity may compromise data analysis and transparency, but are also likely to be ineffective given the identity of the researcher, and therefore their place of work, are provided. In addressing ethical issues, these tensions were recognised and care was taken that the integrity of the institution was not compromised, and dimensions of power were considered.

A number of different and complex aspects needed consideration. For me, a key question arose concerning my relationship with participants and also others who, while not identified and approved as participants, contributed data. While some writers suggest “the end justifies the means” (Bryman 2008), I used a Communitarian approach (Clifford, 2000; Denzin and Lincoln, 1989) - the ethical guidelines adopted arising from a common moral value and a negotiated and shared understanding established between myself and those concerned. Informed by this view, a starting point for addressing ethical issues was being open about my involvement in the research and ensuring transparency to colleagues and students. While this approach addressed unplanned events, a considered and structured strategy was implemented for intended interactions.

The issue of professional responsibility and accountability was significant having a dual dimension, relating both to social work and education. Both subject of study and my actions, as a registered Social Worker, were guided by the Social Work Code of Ethics (HCPC 2012) and also by education research regulations. There is an acknowledged tension for social work practitioner researchers in the dual roles of scientist and advocate for those in distress (Landau 2008).

Consideration of research ethics is intrinsically linked with the values being applied, perceptions of harm, privacy, levels of confidentiality, etc. In this research, this related not just to values associated with professional research associations such as the British Educational Research Association (BERA) or the Economic and Social Research Council (ESCR), but also to professional social work codes of practice (GSCC, 2002; BASW, 2002; HCPC, 2012). These rules regulate all aspects of Social Workers' interaction with society.

Whilst there are shared principles and values; the need to respect the individual participant, gain informed consent, and maintain confidentiality, (BSA 2004, BERA 2004, ESRC 2005), key differences exist. Additional requirements of social work research reflect the broader aspirations of the profession. As Smith (2009) writes:

Social work research is informed by a concern with practice and its impact in the field.

(Smith, 2009 p 159)

This is acknowledged by Butler (2002) and the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUC SWEC) (JUC SWEC, 2006/2008) extending ethical requirements to reflect more specific values inherent in social work practice:

The ethics of social work research must be at least compatible, if not coterminous, with the ethics of social work generally.

(Butler, 2002 pg. 241)

In addition to general ethical considerations that apply to all research, social work research takes an empowerment perspective within a framework of social justice (Smith 2009).

The development of this research was conducted within guidelines established by the CCCU ethics policy (CCCU, 2006b¹¹), and following completion of the internal ethics review checklist (CCCU 2009¹²). This raised questions regarding responsibility for ethical approval, within the Faculty of Health and Social Care re social work students, or within the Faculty of Education, re the method of education. Following consultation, ethical approval was finally given on the 31st July 2012 by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. In complying with the research framework for social work, the ethical guidelines adopted for this study also concur with the HEI Code of Conduct: Practice for Research (2006), which stresses that researchers are accountable to society, their profession and the institutions for which they work.

3.2.2 Ethical issues relating to the impact on students

This research explores the profile of students on a pre-registration programme leading to qualification as a professional Social Worker registered with the Health and Care Professions Council. Unlike students on non-professional courses, for social work students, the boundary between personal and public life is permeable and open to scrutiny. Like other professions, students on social work programmes are assessed, not just in terms of academic ability and individual skills, but also on

¹¹ <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/Research/Documents/EthicalProcedures.pdf#search=%22ethical%22>

¹² <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/ethics-review-checklist.asp>

personal attributes, behaviour inside and outside the university/workplace, and suitability to enter a profession that works with vulnerable people. Students are aware that all aspects of their life, within the university, in the assessed period of placement, and also in their current and past life-experience, could impact on their ability to pursue their chosen career. One potential ethical conflict for this research was that disclosure of information regarding aspects of personal life could lead to questions about suitability to undertake study leading to professional registration. My different roles within the HEI also presented potential dilemmas. As the Programme Director responsible for programme management and procedure, including referral to panels that could determine suitability, there was a need, firstly, to ensure that students could make informed decisions on how much, or how little, information it was safe to share; and secondly, to acknowledge that this could lead to inaccuracies in details shared, impacting on the validity of the data.

As I had a duty to raise any concerns identified, the challenge was to maintain confidentiality whilst adhering to professional responsibilities. The requirement to adhere to regulations on suitability set, initially, by the GSCC and, from 2012, the HCPC, to share any information that might be seen as a breach of the social work code of practice, raised questions regarding the limits of confidentiality with regard to this study. To address this, steps were taken that involved procedural strategies and continual reflection to maintain awareness of potential conflicts.

3.2.3 Reflection, sensitivity and reflexivity

While there were two specific and structured phases of data collection, my involvement with the programme and the students resulted in information pertinent to the research questions, arising from many interactions that were neither structured nor planned.

As an academic involved in teaching the programme, I heard self-disclosure information during lectures and was made aware of students' academic progress, values and ideas shared in marked work. As a personal and placement tutor, I was informed about personal circumstances and challenges students faced, but also heard views of others involved. There was, therefore, a complexity of role and the potential for tension arising from a differential power status between myself and the students. This complexity reflects the facts that, for social work students and qualified practitioners, the HCPC makes no distinction between work, study, home or social life, when assessing suitability. The significance of this for students is addressed by programme management strategies from the point of registration. Verbal information and advice on the implications of sharing information is provided as part of induction processes and made explicit in student handbooks (appendix 4). In the context of this research, while the power imbalance between participating student and researcher could not be completely alleviated, it was minimised by upholding the principle of autonomy and informed consent. All students were informed, both verbally and in writing, about the focus and nature of the research (appendix 5) and the parameters of my different roles were clearly defined. Reflection helped me identify how my interaction with students influenced my research and also how my research influenced my interaction with students. Where I became aware that my discussion or conversation with a student was crossing boundaries between my academic and research role, this was acknowledged, the student was made aware and the option to continue or end the conversation made explicit.

On occasions, individuals made comments I identified at the time as being particularly relevant to my research outside the interview process, as part of another aspect of my role. I was aware that no ethical approval had been given to use these comments. However, the influence on my thinking, impact on my analysis and questions I asked, needed to be acknowledged. Where this occurred, I

refer to the information being in field notes, without specifically identifying the individual or organisation concerned.

3.2.4 Strategic steps

Some of the information was that which had previously been provided to the HEI as part of the registration process - age, previous qualifications, work-experience, etc. On application, students are informed that such data enters the public domain as part of HEI monitoring procedures. As already in the public domain, no specific ethical approval was required, however, in requesting the data, the use of it in this research was made explicit.

Additionally, students were provided with comprehensive information about the purpose and scope of this research (appendix 5) and were aware that it involved the collection of further data. The purpose and potential implication of participation was made explicit and was optional. In accordance with the HEI's requirements, a written description of the process for seeking informed consent was made available (appendix 3a). Information detailing the focus, scope and aims of the research was provided at each stage (appendix 3b) and it was reiterated that participation was not required. The default position was that students had to "opt in" to phase 2. The imbalance in power was further addressed by contracting clearly with all those participating and stipulating the boundaries and parameters of the research context and relationship.

During the semi-structured interview phase, in which participants shared more sensitive information, e.g. health and life events, consideration was given to the impact of questions asked on participants. Acknowledging that personal trauma can be a motivating factor to study social work (Wilson and Mc Crystal, 2007), strategies were identified and implemented that minimised potential risks. Students were not required to disclose any information that they were reluctant or

unwilling to share and were not required to give personal and intimate details of specific events.

Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998, strategies were implemented for the secure and confidential recording and storing of all data obtained.

3.3 Research method

3.3.1 Grounded theory

This research was informed by Grounded Theory.

A grounded theory is one which is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through statistic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon.

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990 pg. 23)

This approach required that I had a clear stance on both determinism and non-determinism (Corbin and Strauss, 1990), and was open to, able to catch and responsive to the subtle interplay between students, their circumstances and their relationship with the education process. In grounded theory, analysis is a continual process, starting from the moment the first piece of data is collected. My life experience, involvement in social work and in social work education meant that data, in a myriad of forms, contributed to my interpretation in this research from the point of inception. This needed to be acknowledged and managed, to recognise cues and incorporate these into subsequent data collection mechanisms. This approach guided how, and what, data was collected, and determined appropriate procedures for data analysis. To ensure a methodical process involving both induction and deduction (Thyer, 2010), the strategy was sufficiently

structured to be rigorous, yet open enough to facilitate creativity. Having identified key concepts, the aim was to examine these for similarities and differences through a continuous process of sorting, collating, clarifying, questioning and challenging. The different types of data were examined, listened to, read, reread and compared.

Informed by Grounded Theory methods, the following stages were followed:

1. **Explore and clarify area of interest** – examine personal motivation for this research, reflect on previous reading, and make explicit insider knowledge, identifying facilitating factors and potential barriers to undertaking the research
2. **Question formulation** - experience and situation of social work students
3. **Collection of relevant data** - qualitative data and quantitative data to describe and enable comparison between the different types of data collected; the different students groups by key features (gender, age, ethnicity, etc); then by mode of study and the content of the literature review
4. **Open coding** - broadly code emerging themes in data collected
5. **Record, reflect and collate** - evaluate conflicts and dilemmas using reflection to refine method, inform coding and guide analysis
6. **Refine coding and theoretical sampling** - code only for the core categories and related categories
7. **Develop theoretical codes** - organise substantive codes
8. **Review the literature** - integrate theory with selective coding
9. **Develop theory** - propose theory on structures of social work education that will facilitate wider participation

Adapted from Martin, V.B. and Gynnild, A. (2011)

The method was exploratory, involving collection of different types of data to provide both depth and breadth. In order to better understand the relationship between personal circumstances, access to social work education and flexibility in programme design; detailed data was required on the background, motivation to study social work, and personal situation of students. This was collected on students registered over a four year period on two different routes - part-time and full-time - within one pre-registration Master of Arts in Social Work programme. Steps were taken to ensure that robust standards of inquiry were set with rigorous data collection and analytic methods established.

Three of the six strategies identified by Padgett (1998) for enhancing rigour were used - prolonged engagement, triangulation, and peer debriefing support through supervision.

3.3.2 The setting

The research took place at a higher education institute (HEI) in the south east of England. Established in 1962 as a teacher training college, it attained degree-awarding power in 1995, full university status in 2005 and was a member of the Million+ group of universities. Although a Church of England university, there was no requirement to recruit students holding any particular faith or religious beliefs. Programmes available include a significant number related to health and social care. A disability advice service was available to support students. Social work, both pre and post-qualification, had been taught at the university for over 30 years and was taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

The city centre campus provided easy access to main road and public transport routes. Like many city centre HEIs, car-parking was limited, with few opportunities for this to be free. "Park and Ride" facilities were available on the city outskirts.

3.3.2.1 Demography of the area

As literature suggested (HEFCE, 2013) postgraduate students were more likely to attend local HEIs, exploration of diversity necessitated some understanding of the local population. Additionally, this provided insight into how far students would reflect the community once qualified (TCSW, 2012).

Demographic statistics were available from the local authority (KCC, 2012) and local district council (CCC, 2012). Being a university city, the population had a high proportion of younger people, primarily students, compared to other parts of the county. Those aged 15 – 29 formed 25.4% of the population, compared with 18.1% of the rest of the county. 17.4% of the population were aged 30 - 44. 23.8% of the population were aged 45 - 64 inclusive.

Only a slight gender variation was seen compared to the national picture - 51.9% female, 48.1% male compared to 50.8% female and 49.2% male. At the time of the study, no data was available on sexual orientation, either locally or nationally. Government estimates were consulted to provide some insight into the number of people identifying as Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual (LGB). This suggested a figure of 5 – 7% of the population, an estimate supported by the LGB charity, Stonewall¹³. The dominant religion was Christianity, 73.2%. 92.2% of the population identified themselves as White, (including British, Irish and Other White)¹⁴. The most significant identified BME groups were: African, Indian and Chinese. There was no single method of gauging the percentage of the population disabled. Some understanding was gained through local authority (LA) data. The 2011 Census¹⁵ indicates 17.6% of people in the county have a health problem or disability. While the majority of these (20.1%) are over 65, 5% are between the age of 15 and 64¹⁶.

¹³ http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/sexual_orientation_faqs/2694.asp

¹⁴ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html>

¹⁵ http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

¹⁶ http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/8181/Disability-in-Kent.pdf

3.3.3 Participants

All registered students of a newly-revalidated, but successfully established, postgraduate programme commencing study between September 2010 and September 2013, were invited to participate. The programme was validated for 40 full-time equivalent students each year, 35 full-time places and 10 part-time places.

It is acknowledged that students had been preselected by the university's social work admissions process and therefore reflected the HEI entry requirements, views of the interviewing panel and decisions of the programme team, on whether to offer a place on the programme. For this reason, the selection process is described.

3.3.3.1 Programme selection process

Entry requirements were guided by standards set by the HEI postgraduate academic framework¹⁷ and professional requirements established by the professional registration body for Social Work, formally GSCC and, from 2012, HCPC. Applicants needed either a good honours degree (defined as first class or upper second class) in a relevant subject discipline or, alternatively, a good honours degree in an unrelated subject supported by social work related experience, gained either in a paid or voluntary capacity, deemed sufficient to have gained an initial understanding of contemporary social work in the UK. In exceptional circumstances, applicants with alternative qualifications, e.g. a relevant professional diploma, or equivalent, at level 6, or higher, plus substantial post qualification experience, could be considered. Additionally, professional regulations required applicants to have achieved at least IELTS¹⁸ Level 7 in English and Mathematics and demonstrate a basic ability to use ICT. Applications were made through the Universities Central Admissions System (UCAS).

¹⁷ <http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/support/quality-and-standards-office/policies/PAF.asp>

¹⁸ <http://www.ielts.org/>

Selection involved a multi-stage process including electronic (via email) submission of written work, participation in an observed group exercise and an individual interview.

Additionally, applicants were required to provide information on any previous interaction with social services; criminal charges or convictions; and health conditions which might impact on their ability to undertake any responsibilities associated with professional social work. Offers of a place were subject to being assessed as “of suitable character” for participation in a social work education programme¹⁹.

A successful Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) - now Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) - check and occupational health clearance were essential. European Union or international applicants, or those who had lived outside the UK for an extended period, were required to obtain a certificate of good conduct from the relevant countries, following the process outlined by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office²⁰.

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1. Documentary information

Initial statistical data was collected through the data monitoring systems established within the HEI as part of the HEFCE reporting requirements; UCAS application forms, equality monitoring forms, and documentary records held by the HEI’s planning office. This included details of age, ethnicity, gender and qualifications at the point of entry. The data monitoring systems were robust and provided a consistent and authentic source of information. As students self-reported, some concerns existed regarding credibility (Ahmed, 2010), as potential

¹⁹ <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/professional-development/educators/>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

applicants may have shaped responses to reflect factors perceived favourable to selectors. Additionally, information provided by the planning office was not raw data, but had already been collected, collated and recorded as part of specific institutional processes. Whilst contributing quantitative data pertinent to the research question, caution in interpretation was needed acknowledging the impact of the processes used to ascertain the information, the questions asked, the options provided, method of collecting and recording and the context in which the information was given (Grix, 2001).

Although records on student numbers, ethnicity, age, gender and qualification at point of entry are available in a range of formats to Programme Directors through the HEI's intranet for programme monitoring and evaluation purposes, a specific request was made to the planning department. Data was received in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet reporting statistics in the following categories:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Age group
- Country of domicile
- Highest qualification on entry
- Mode of study

Acknowledging the limitations of documentary data and being aware that this only provided a partial picture, steps were taken to test and substantiate findings and gain the greater detail needed.

3.4.2 Method triangulation

Method triangulation (Mogalakwe, 2006) was used adopting a between-method approach (Denzin, 2001). In addition to reviewing documentary evidence, I used

questionnaires and conducted in-depth interviews to augment the documentary data and overcome deficiencies associated with that data collection method.

A two-phase data collection process was followed as illustrated in figure 4.

3.4.3 Main data collection

The first phase was by questionnaire, the second phase by semi-structured interview. There was no requirement for participating students to progress from phase one to phase two.

3.4.3.1 Phase one - questionnaire

A self-completed questionnaire (appendix 6) gathered standardised data on the student group (Ackroyd and Hughes, 1981). It allowed examination of a variety of variables simultaneously and supported testing of the following hypotheses:

- There is diversity within the profile of students
- There is a difference in personal characteristics of students on different routes of study
- Flexible part-time study increases diversity
- Different routes of study support access to students with desirable characteristics/qualities

The main advantage of this method was ease of administration - students could be contacted at low cost, in a relatively short time-frame. Furthermore, using a questionnaire minimised the potential impact of interviewer effects (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982) and ensured consistency in delivery of questions.

Although a paper questionnaire and face-to-face contact could have promoted a higher response rate (Nulty, 2008), the need to consider individual circumstances

was acknowledged (Togersen, no date). Students were geographically remote and had limited direct contact time with the HEI in which to complete a hardcopy of the questionnaire. Similar consultations conducted by the HEI had resulted in a poor response rate. Postal options were discounted due to cost and potential low response rate (Bryman, 2008). Consequentially, a digitally-accessed questionnaire was chosen. While there are a number of online options for generating surveys, e.g. Surveymonkey and Kwiksurveys, formats available without subscription were limited and ²¹did not allow the range and depth of questions required. The chosen method was, therefore, via an attachment to an explanatory group email sent to each cohort registered between September 2010 and September 2013, 120 students. The first email was sent in August 2012. It is acknowledged that some students will have been at different stages of their social work education. The first request was closely associated with the majority of the 2010 cohort completing the programme whilst those registered in 2011 were towards the end of their first year. Students registering in later years initially received the questionnaire during their first term.

To maximise response rate three reminder emails were sent. Emails were generated through the virtual learning environment, BLACKBOARD, as students were familiar with this method of information exchange. Students were able to respond through email, internal or external mail, or through an electronic "dropbox" in which they could deposit their completed questionnaire. The latter method enabled students to submit completed questionnaires anonymously.

All but two, received as hard-copies, were returned by email, identifying students even where they had not agreed to continue to the second phase. Electronically returned questionnaires were coded numerically and saved in a password-protected folder, to which only I had access, on the HEI's shared drive. The two

²¹ <http://uki.blackboard.com/sites/international/globalmaster/>

hard-copies received were scanned and electronic versions saved and stored similarly. The hard-copies were given the same numeric code and stored in a locked file for future reference. These steps ensured the anonymity of respondents and also maintained confidentiality.

3.4.3.2 Questionnaire design

Acknowledging the potential low response rate of questionnaires (Mangione 1995), deliberation was given to the questionnaire format and layout. While the use of a spreadsheet, for example Microsoft Excel, would have created a clear document that facilitated analysis, knowledge of the student group suggested some students would struggle to complete this electronically. Therefore, the questionnaire was created using Microsoft Word, which all would have previous experience of using (appendix 6). Despite familiarity with Microsoft Word documents, knowledge and adeptness at using them varied between students. The questionnaire deliberately avoided requiring participants to insert symbols e.g. ticks, as some students would not know how to do this. Students instead were asked to respond by using a letter "x" as a cross. Answers were not required to be inserted into boxes, as not all students would have the ability to do this.

A mixture of font styles was used to differentiate between the focus of questions, instructions, questions being asked and possible answers (Dillman1983). Subject areas were coloured differently to be attention-grabbing, and to group questions by key concepts.

The vertical format chosen ensured that participants were able to see clearly where they should provide their answers.

An initial drafting of the questionnaire was piloted (Bryman, 2008) by asking two students and also a member of the social work teaching team to consider the

questions, but also to comment on the style and layout. Based on their feedback one question, relating to gender, was amended to allow self-identification. Line spacing was also increased to facilitate completion.

3.4.3.3 Questions asked

The questionnaire was divided into six sections, the final being an acknowledgement of interest for participation in phase 2. Sections collected descriptive data about the individual student. For most questions, students were only required to select the response they felt most applicable from options presented. In all cases, however, the final category was “other”, with the option to provide more details. This allowed students to introduce new categories.

The five main sections were informed by the concepts developed from the literature review:

1. Personal characteristics

This section explored intrinsic personal characteristics, gender, disability, age and ethnicity. Acknowledging the limitation of previous studies which utilised a gender dyad, students were asked to self-define gender. In the case of ethnicity, options presented were those in the UK National Census²². This enabled comparison and analysis. Data on other, extrinsic, factors was also collected. These included personal circumstances and reasons for choosing this HEI.

²² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-data-catalogue/census-data-quick-view/index.html>

2. Reasons for studying social work

This section explored motivation to study social work and reasons for doing so at this time. Questions sought to identify influential factors associated with the two routes of study and also within students of similar profiles. Students were asked to rate different statements as to how far this reflected their reasons for studying social work. Options offered included altruistic, intrinsic reasons, external influences, and perceptions of social work roles and tasks. Students were asked to rate the impact of wider external factors - social work advertising, a response to life events, the influence of others. Factors associated with structuring and supporting social work education were similarly examined; the option of a part-time route, work-based support and access to a bursary.

3. Previous education

The limitation of using a questionnaire to collect qualitative data on the experience of students was acknowledged. The focus for this section was exploration of the level and type of previous education.

4. Previous employment

Questions asked for details about employment status prior to studying social work, with students selecting from different options - full-time, part-time, voluntary or paid. Questions considered grade and salary prior to commencing social work education. As no research indicated possible salary range, students could enter a numerical value. This approach enabled greater analysis once responses were received. Details of the nature of the work undertaken were also collected, considering setting and tasks.

5. Social work related experience

A key aim was to consider whether flexible programme delivery enhanced the ability of those with relevant social work experience to qualify. While all postgraduate students are required to have relevant experience, this can be from work or life experience. Recognising the potential sensitivity associated with this question, students were able to select from a range of options without providing specific details.

Diverse question styles were used to reflect the best techniques for gathering data on the type of variable involved. Although some data was numerical, lending itself to statistical analysis: age, number of individuals identifying with a particular group or characteristic, etc; some focused on quantifying qualitative data (Corbin and Strauss, 2007), e.g. financial situation of students, previous experience, etc. Likert scales were used to ascertain information about students' views and perceptions, where the variable was subjective, e.g. motivation to study social work.

Questions were closed, making sure possible answers were exhaustive and mutually exclusive, clear, unambiguous and short (Alston and Bowles 2003). The possibility of an unexpected response was addressed by giving an option for participants to answer "other" and subsequently explaining this.

3.4.4. Phase two - interview

The aim of the second phase was to explore personal factors in more depth, motivation to become a Social Worker and students' views on the accessibility of social work study. It also facilitated exploration of ideas or themes identified through reviewing, reflecting on and evaluating questionnaires and documentary data. Ideas and concepts examined were, therefore, both fixed and emergent.

The requirement for relevant experience, either through work or personal life, meant that students, or members of their family, may have received social work intervention. It was important to recognise that some issues raised might hold painful or sensitive memories. For this reason, use of a focus group (Barbour, 2007), was discounted, and the decision made to conduct individual interviews. Acknowledging potential limitations of unstructured interviews (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), comparison and evaluation of factors between and within groups limited by lack of framework, semi-structured interviews were used (Rubin and Babbie, 2001). This provided comparable responses (Wisker, 2008), whilst allowing a degree of flexibility and responsiveness.

3.4.4.1 The interviews

Following an initial analysis of documentary data and questionnaire responses, a number of steps were taken prior to conducting interviews. Firstly, specific factors warranting more detailed exploration were identified. This included new ideas introduced by respondents; and patterns, trends or anomalies emerging from responses, statistical analysis and information contained in field notes.

Reviewing questionnaires and documentary information suggested some difference in the profile of students on different routes, but additionally raised new questions about the nature of diversity. This led to a broadening conceptualisation of diversity and introduced further areas for exploration. Diversity related to employment status, earning capacity, aspirations and perception of what social work involved. Additionally, the relationship between social work education and values became of interest. These developed as concepts associated with gender, ethnicity and social situation. Subsequently, an interview schedule (appendix 7) was developed, providing structure for interviews and ensuring relevant areas were explored.

For consistency, six areas of consideration were included, mirroring those of the questionnaire. While the questionnaire had focused on “what” the aim of the interview was to explore “why”. To support participants to share views freely, knowledge and skills developed during my social work career were used. I used exploratory, open questions (Rubin and Babbie, 2009), for example “can you tell me...” and “why do you think...”. At the same time, when I wanted to ascertain greater understanding of a specific issue, I also used investigative interview techniques and the associated questions; what? why?, when?, where? and how?

The broad areas of exploration were:

1. Individual factors, e.g. Why this HEI? Relationship between family situation and student status
2. Reasons for studying social work, e.g. Why be a Social Worker? Doing what? Why now?
3. Previous education, e.g. What was the experience? Why these courses?
4. Employment, e.g. Why were these roles chosen? What factors influenced this? What aspirations for the future?
5. Previous social work related experience, e.g. What type of contact with social work? What influence did this have?
6. Facilitating factors, e.g. What has helped, what has hindered, in becoming a Social Worker?

The interview schedule was not used verbatim, but provided a framework to facilitate exploration of identified factors and consideration of unexpected or new issues which the student introduced.

From the 39 questionnaire responses, 20 students agreed at the time of completion, willingness to be interviewed. By the time interviews were able to take

place, several were unable to proceed. Subsequently, eight of the ten remaining students were interviewed over a twelve month period. I interviewed students from different ethnic backgrounds, of different gender and from both routes of study. As the relatively low number of students with specific characteristics could potentially identify students, particularly when related to the findings and comments, I have not provided a breakdown describing students interviewed to maintain anonymity and confidentiality.

Interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face, in a private, neutral setting agreed with each participant. To support free and open expression, the setting was chosen to provide a relaxed, comfortable environment. Recognising participants' reluctance to make an additional journey, and acknowledging time constraints, options included meeting in a room at one of the different campuses managed by the HEI, located across the county, or at a convenient private neutral venue suggested by the student. All but one student chose to meet on the main campus. The remaining student identified a "quiet room" within a coffee shop which was agreed as appropriate.

Although the most appropriate method of collecting the required data, potential limitations of semi-structured interviews were acknowledged.

3.4.4.2 Social desirability

Data collected through interviews can lack authenticity arising from desirability bias (Bryman, 2008). Participants may skew answers to respond in a way perceived more likely to be endorsed, introducing a degree of error. For these students, this was potentially a significant factor due to the aforementioned suitability assessment process and the inference in social work education that students *become* Social Workers, assuming a life-long professional identity, rather than learn to *do* social work. Adoption of reflexivity linked this notion to concepts

explored within interviews, for example participants' perception of social work and their related values. This was addressed, firstly by acknowledging the issue, but secondly by creating an interview environment where participants felt it was acceptable and appropriate to share current and previous views without fear of recrimination.

Participants were provided with information about the nature, focus and purpose of the interviews and advised they did not have to share information they did not wish to. A contract was signed confirming agreement. Participants were also able to terminate the interview whenever they wished. With written permission of participants, interviews were recorded on a password-protected Android tablet using the freely-available application (app) Smart Voice Recorder²³. These were named by code and uploaded to Google Drive for storage in a designated file in a password-protected secure account. Interviews were subsequently transcribed. Copies of transcript and recording were available to participants on request.

3.4.5 Field notes, observations and reflection

As acknowledged, the complexity of my relationship to the research and the students was both a potential source of compromise and rich data. A robust strategy involving explicit identification of my different roles, continual reflection, review through supervision and thorough documentation, managed conflicts.

My different roles, detailed in the introduction, provided extensive knowledge of individual students and needed to be acknowledged. I recognised that my roles made me part of the system and structure I was researching - social work education. I attended programme management meetings discussing how programmes should be structured, what methods of teaching should and would be used and was part of a team of academics responsible for validating social work

²³ <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.andrwq.recorder>

pre-registration programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. I also attended and presented at conferences on social work education. Factors providing information, observations and insight, were wide-ranging and significant, influencing ideas and thought processes. My strategy for addressing this included keeping extensive field notes. At the start, I acknowledged a need to capture information that might later inform or influence my work and made a conscious decision to keep a written record of anything potentially relevant.

Types of data recorded included:

- observed behaviour of students and/or academics
- comments by students during or after lectures
- comments by students in tutorials
- comments by other social work academics within my own institution
- comments by practice educators
- feedback from conferences
- information from conferences
- comments of social work academics from other institutions
- reflections on the individual interviews
- ideas, thoughts and reflections as they occurred
- supervision advice

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive, as thought processes were influenced by a myriad of issues and events.

To record information as it happened, or as soon as possible after the event, the freely available software application Evernote²⁴ was used. Downloadable to a wide

²⁴ <https://evernote.com/>

range of devices, this enabled my devices to be linked to one account, so all notes, web clips, files and images were synchronised. This enabled me to capture information on my smartphone, tablet or laptop for later review and collation. Notes were named by situation, for example, "team meeting", "placement visit", "tutorial", etc. Spontaneous thoughts were recorded as "idea". Retrieved notes were able to be organised according to situation or idea within a central file or "notebook". The facility within Evernote to link ideas and thoughts by adding "tags" was used. This process allowed data to be searched and arranged by keywords, tags, location, etc, and was used to guide reflection, identify ideas for exploration and highlight emerging themes.

3.5 Data analysis

Data was analysed using recognised data analysis tools to identify patterns, themes and trends in the profiles of students within and between study routes.

3.5.1 Analysis of documentary evidence

A descriptive analysis of data collected by the HEI was undertaken by manually reviewing information to identify trends. The data related to nominal variables, age, gender, etc, and a rudimentary comparison with other forms of data, e.g. population profiles, was conducted.

3.5.2 Analysis of the questionnaire

Completed questionnaires were analysed using SPSS version 21²⁵. SPSS was appropriate as a widely available computer programme that assists in analysis of quantitative data where a number of different factors or variables are involved.

Using the "variable view" tab in SPSS, each student was given a case number and data pertaining to them was entered on a separate line. Each variable was then

²⁵ <http://www-01.ibm.com/support/docview.wss?uid=swg24032236>

named with an appropriate word or phrase. As different types of information were collected, different types of variables were explored. While some of the data, such as age and previous salary, resulted in scale variables (Brace, Kemp and Sneglar, 2009), the majority explored specific characteristics and resulted in nominal variables. Using the dialogue box, this was specified.

Responses were pre-coded numerically to give a value. This was then entered into SPSS to link values (numbered codes) to possible responses. By using the "data view" tab, data was subsequently entered within SPSS for each specific case.

Where questions used Likert scales (Bryman 2008), students rating a number of options, these were recorded as separate sub-questions. In a number of cases, students had not completed questionnaires in accordance with the guidance provided. For example, when asked to give one main reason for choosing a particular route, some students selected two options. Both responses were recorded and a note made to explain why the total number of responses recorded was greater than the number of students responding.

3.5.3 Analysis of the interviews

Recognising interviews as "a conversation with a purpose" (Banister, Burman, Parker Taylor and Tindall, 1994), steps were taken to ensure the interview process did not influence responses. To minimise risk of misrepresentation, e.g. by inaccurate punctuation, which could radically change the meaning of the spoken word, interviews were listened to several times before being transcribed and also during transcription. This ensured a verbatim record of the conversation that captured the subtlety and nuances of views expressed. A phenomenological critique of interviewing as a method of data collection questions the influence of interpretation and mutually created meaning (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). As a method of communication, information is not just transmitted from one individual

to another, interviewee to interviewer, but is created through interaction. Repeated playing and reading of the interviews helped to identify any points where questions, or equally important, gaps or sounds of affirmation, might have lead or prompted students to respond in a particular way. Where there was any suggestion that this might have occurred, this was considered in the weight attributed to any finding. Additionally, repeated engagement with the material made interpretation or translation (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) as accurate as possible.

Interview transcripts in themselves provide an “impoverished record” (Banister, et al, 1994) and cannot always reproduce the subtlety and complexity of interaction that takes place between researcher and participant. Shared meaning is established through the interviewer/interviewee relationship and the unspoken word, as much as through the answers to specific questions. Transcribed accounts produce an extensive amount of data, of which only a small percentage was chosen and used to develop research conclusions. To ensure data selected was a true representation of the communication that took place, field notes were kept on the interviews, including reflections during and following the event; summaries of events, behaviour and initial reflections, and thoughts arising whilst reviewing transcripts. These were included as part of the data analysis and ensured that data selected captured impressions and emergent issues, and that feelings expressed were authentic.

Once transcribed, content analysis was undertaken on the data collected in individual interviews and also field notes, using QDA (Qualitative Data Analysis) Miner Lite, (a downloadable freeware application), to explore, examine and compare. This facilitated identification of themes and patterns. This particular tool

was chosen after piloting, in preference to others provided by the HEI, e.g. Nvivo²⁶; or freely available, e.g. Atlas.ti²⁷, for its ease of use, the ability to import various documents in different formats and from several locations, and the option to code by word and colour.

Analysis of interview transcripts and associated field notes used an inductive approach:

Inductive analysis means that the patterns, themes and categories of analysis come from the data - they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis.

(Patton, 1980 pg. 306)

Emerging patterns were coded thematically. Rather than use pre-conceived codes, data was analysed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). This required that each line, sentence and paragraph of the transcribed interviews was reviewed to determine emerging themes and categories. On each reading, new, emerging codes were added, whilst others were grouped and recoded. A similar process was applied to field notes. After numerous repeated readings, final themes for exploration and discussion were determined.

3.5.4 Limitations

As a case study, data collected in this research only provides details of students attending one HEI. Findings may be influenced by a number of factors, e.g.; HEI location, time the study was undertaken, applicants' perception of this particular

²⁶ www.qrsinternational.com

²⁷ www.atlasti.com

HEI, local demography, etc. Consequently, findings are not necessarily transferable to all postgraduate social work students in all HEIs. Additionally, the relatively low number of students considered, compared to the overall number of postgraduate social work students, means that statistical findings may lack rigour. This was particularly the case for students on the flexible route and for students in minority groups, where low numbers responding to questionnaires and involved in interviews limit comparison and identification of trends.

Although more statistical information could have been gained by requesting data from HESA and UCAS, I decided against this. My rationale was that whilst this provided a larger sample size, the focus of such data was narrow, only considering a small number of factors. Confining my interest to only students within one setting allowed me to explore a broader range of factors in greater depth.

While choosing to use a case study method provided depth of information, external validity – generalisability (the ability to replicate findings more widely) and reliability (Meyer, 2001; Gibbert and Ruigrok, 2010) - may be compromised. Acknowledging the limitation of statistical generalisation, steps were taken to promote analytical generalisation (Yin, 1994; 1999) and to allow findings to provide a starting point for wider application (Eisenhardt, 1989). These included engaging in national and international debates and conferences (recorded in field notes) and participation in wider discussions, both face-to-face and via social media with students, academics and practitioners involved in social work education in other settings.

A further limitation, only apparent after questionnaires were completed, was the omission of data pertaining to degree type and classification. With hindsight, this would have been beneficial as lack of data hindered the ability to explore the

education path of students and analyse all events that have influenced their route into social work education.

Chapter 4

Data Findings

4.1 Documentary evidence

The first step in exploring students' profiles was to review documentary information held by the HEI. This was then compared with, and supplemented by, the findings of the questionnaire in order to test the first two hypotheses, i.e. there is diversity within the profile of postgraduate students and there is a difference between the personal characteristics of students on different routes.

The starting point was to examine documentary records to determine the overall profile of students registered to study social work at postgraduate level. Records collected and collated by the HEI's planning office included data collected for the annual report to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

One finding was the ambiguity and lack of clarity provided by this data. Much of the information held is based on a snapshot of students as presented on 31 July, the end of the academic year. Data gives details of overall student numbers, including how many are studying on each route, full-time or part-time. In providing details of students' characteristics, the information made available by the planning office did not distinguish between different cohorts or route of study, but gave a summary of all students registered at that time. Although more detailed information is submitted to HESA by the institution and was requested from the planning office, this was not received. While data did not provide any information allowing comparison of students on different routes, it did provide details of the profile of individual students, giving some insight into level and type of diversity across the whole student group.

Data available covered a small, but relevant, range of factors - address at point of application, gender, age, ethnicity and highest qualification at point of entry.

4.1.1 Student location

UCAS forms record the home address of applicants. Records indicate registering students are primarily already living within the county or areas immediately adjoining it. The number of students recruited from adjoining areas, particularly south London, decreased in the last year of the research.

4.1.2 Student numbers

For each of the years studied, by the end of the recruitment period there were three times as many applications as places available. From these applications, the programme recruited to target in each of the first three years of the research. In the final year of data collection, the programme under-recruited.

In the four intakes examined, 162 students were registered on the programme. The number of students registered on each of the two routes, full-time and part-time (flexible study), at the commencement of the period of study is shown in table 4.

Table 4 Number of students on different routes 2010-2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Full-time	38	38	41	25
Part-time	4	5	5	6
Total	42	43	46	31

For the intakes considered, no students identifying as male studied on the part-time route. Student records indicate that the majority of those who chose flexible

study described themselves as White British, only a small number of students identifying as from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds - none in 2010 or 2011, one in 2012 and three in 2013.

4.1.3 Documentary data on the profile of students registered on the programme

University records provided quantitative information from UCAS application forms and equality and diversity monitoring forms. These methods of data collection did not allow students to self-identify or describe, but required them to select from options presented. Data was, therefore, limited by the options available to students.

4.1.3.1 Gender

Data collection mechanisms required students to indicate gender by selecting from limited options of male or female. For the four years considered, the majority identified as female, although there was a year-on-year increase in the number of students identifying as male.

Table 5 Cohort gender 2010-2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	7%	12%	16%	19%
Female	93%	88%	84%	81%

4.1.3.2 Age

Age of registered students was that recoded at the start of the academic year (31st August). The majority in all cohorts were over 25 years, with a high percentage over 30 years when starting the programme. The data collection system does not provide a breakdown of the age of students in the 30+ category.

Table 6 Student age on 31st August of given year

Age Group	2010	2011	2012	2013
21 - 24	15	18	13	12
25 - 29	26	20	21	20
30+	52	46	48	40

4.1.3.3 Ethnicity

During the application process, as part of monitoring equality and diversity, students were asked to provide details of ethnicity, selecting from options derived from categories used in the UK National Census. Completion was not a requirement. Responses are presented in table 7:

Table 7 Student Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2010	2011	2012	2013
White	59	62	65	60
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2	1	1	0
Black or Black British - African	27	17	13	10
Other Black background	0	1	2	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0	1
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0	0
Other Asian background	1	0	0	0
Mixed - White & Black Caribbean	1	0	0	0
Mixed - White & Black African	0	0	0	0
Other Mixed background	1	1	0	0
Other Ethnic background	1	1	0	0
Information refused	0	1	1	1

4.1.3.4 Education

For all students in higher education, qualification on entering programmes of study is, generally, determined by entry criteria set by the HEI and/or external professional requirements. This is true of the MA Social Work programme, approval requiring compliance with regulations and recommendations set by professional regulators (formerly GSCC and currently HCPC and TCSW). However, consideration of the highest level of qualification on entry does indicate diversity in range and levels of qualifications.

Table 8 Highest Qualification on Entry

Highest Qualification on Entry	2010	2011	2012	2013
Advanced Modern Apprenticeships/Vocational qualifications e.g GCE 'A'/SQA 'Higher'/SQA 'Advanced Higher' & GNVQ/GSVQ or NVQ/SVQ at level 3	1	0	5	15
Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)	1	1	0	0
First degree of UK institution	27	3	35	5
Foundation degree	1	0	0	0
Graduate of other overseas institution	9	1	1	0
Higher degree of UK institution	11	1	1	1
Non-UK first degree	2	3	0	0
Not known	2	0	0	0
Other qualification at level H	0	1	1	0
Other taught qualification at level M	2	0	0	0
Postgraduate Certificate in Education or Professional Graduate Diploma in Education	0	2	1	0
Postgraduate diploma or certificate excluding PGCE	1	0	0	0
Professional qualifications	0	0	1	1
UK doctorate degree	5	0	0	0
UK first degree with honours	28	30	0	0
UK masters degree	3	3	0	0

As could be anticipated, the most common level of qualification was undergraduate degree. While in 2010 several students had gained their qualification outside the UK, in the other three years, almost all students had obtained their previous qualifications in the UK. For all years, a number of students held the first degree required and also a postgraduate award. The number holding higher qualifications dropped over the research period, from almost 10% in 2010, to less than 1% in 2013.

4.2. Questionnaire findings

The questionnaire was sent to all students registering over the four years of the data collection - 162 students. Forty were returned completed, however one was found to be a duplicate and was discounted, leaving 39 for analysis. This represents a 24% response rate for the whole group. Seven responders were part-time students giving a higher response rate, 38%, for that route. The overall response rate is lower than hoped and suggested by research (Nulty 2008). The response rate for part-time students is closer to the 33% suggested by Nulty. One reason could be the limited time available for full-time students to undertake anything other than allocated study.

Findings were organised by questionnaire sections:

- Personal characteristics and circumstances
- Reasons for studying the MA Social Work
- Previous education
- Previous employment
- Previous social work related experience

4.2.1 Personal characteristics and circumstances

4.2.1.1 Gender of students

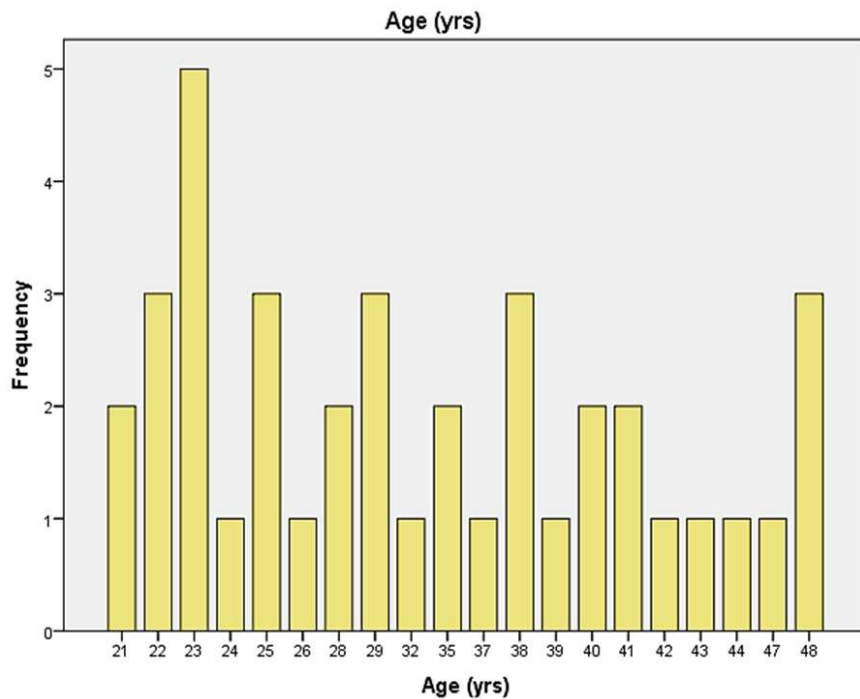
Avoiding the dichotomous choice presented by central data management systems, the questionnaire presented no specific categories, but instead asked students to describe their gender. In all cases students described themselves as either male or female. One student acknowledged that the choice was made “in the absence of a more appropriate description”. All part-time students identified as female.

Of the full-time students, seven identified themselves as male, thirty two as female. This finding, 21% male and 79% female, is broadly consistent with the documentary data for 2013.

4.2.1.2. Age of students

Age recorded was that at the point of completing the questionnaire. For all but the first cohort, the questionnaire was circulated to the student group early in their first year of study. The 2010 cohort received the questionnaire towards the end of their final year of study. Students were, however, able to complete and return the questionnaire at any time and some responses were received many months after distribution. Unlike with the central data management system, students were asked to provide their age, rather than locate themselves in predetermined, limited categories. While this could lead to a difference in findings, no noteworthy variation was found. However, a clearer picture of the 30+ age group was provided:

Figure 5 Age of students



The average age of students participating in the research was 39 years. Further consideration makes more explicit the wide variation in age, a standard deviation of 9.023, within the student group.

These more detailed findings indicate that a large number of the students are considerably older than 30, with 30% being 40 years or over. The mean age of part-time students was slightly higher than full-time students, however the range of ages was less with a standard deviation of 7.65, compared to 9.12 in full-time students. The younger students on the programme, those 23 years or under, were all full time-students.

4.2.1.3 Student status

All but one student described their status as “home student”, i.e. they met the residence criteria set by the UK government to pay the lower tuition rate²⁸. The remaining student was described as a European Union student.

4.2.1.4 Ethnicity

Students selected national identity and ethnicity using the same categories as the National Census (ONS, 2011²⁹). Reflecting HESA data, questionnaire findings indicate the student group is primarily White, with 82.5% of students describing themselves as such. The second largest group, with 7.5%, consists of students describing their ethnicity as African. Of the eight part-time students, six described themselves as White. Only one student identified as Black British. Two part-time students identified as African. In selecting nationality, 28 students chose English, one Scottish, nine British and one “other” explained as Polish. Six part-time students described themselves as English and one as Polish.

4.2.1.5 Disability

Three full-time and two part-time students reported being disabled. These figures represent a greater percentage of the students on the part-time route, 25%.

4.2.1.6 Personal situation

Thirty-nine per cent of full-time students stated they lived with their parents. This group included nine of the ten youngest students. The remaining student from this group lived in rented accommodation with a friend. Two other full-time students lived in their parents’ home with a partner. Three full-time students lived alone in their own home while a further three lived in their own home as single parents.

²⁸ <http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Fees--finance/Home-or-Overseas-fees/>

²⁹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/index.html>

Of the seven part-time students, three were single parents. Of the others, all living in their own home with partners, three had become parents immediately prior to, or soon after, commencing studies.

Fewer students had dependent relatives than those who did not - 41% compared to 59%. 47% of full-time students had dependent relatives, compared to 100% of part-time students. For all part-time students, these were children. Two students had pre-school children, two school-age and two children were simply described as between the ages of 0-18. One part-time student was a foster carer responsible for children aged 0-18. Full-time students indicated responsibilities for dependent relatives in different categories - parents (1), partners (3), parents and partners (2), pre-school children (1), school-age children (5) and children 0-18 (3). Only two of the seven students identifying as male indicated having dependants, these being children. Four of the seven BME students had dependent relatives, all children. In addition, one indicated that they had a dependent partner.

4.2.1.7 Location of students

Students were asked to give the distance from their home address, i.e. habitual residence, to the HEI. All but one student provided the information. This student said the question was not relevant as they had "not yet moved", suggesting that they intended to move closer to the HEI to access the programme. Ninety-two per cent of the students lived within 40 miles of the campus and 25% within 10 miles. The average distance students travelled to the campus was 18.2 miles. A small number of students, just three, lived between 50 and 60 miles from the HEI. While most students lived relatively close to the HEI, this was particularly true of part-time students. The minimum distance travelled by part-time students was three miles and the maximum 28 miles. All but one part-time student lived within 20 miles of the campus. It was noticeable that BME students travelled further, the

majority 30-32 miles with an average of 24.5 miles. No BME student lived closer than 13 miles.

4.2.1.8 Reason for choosing route of study

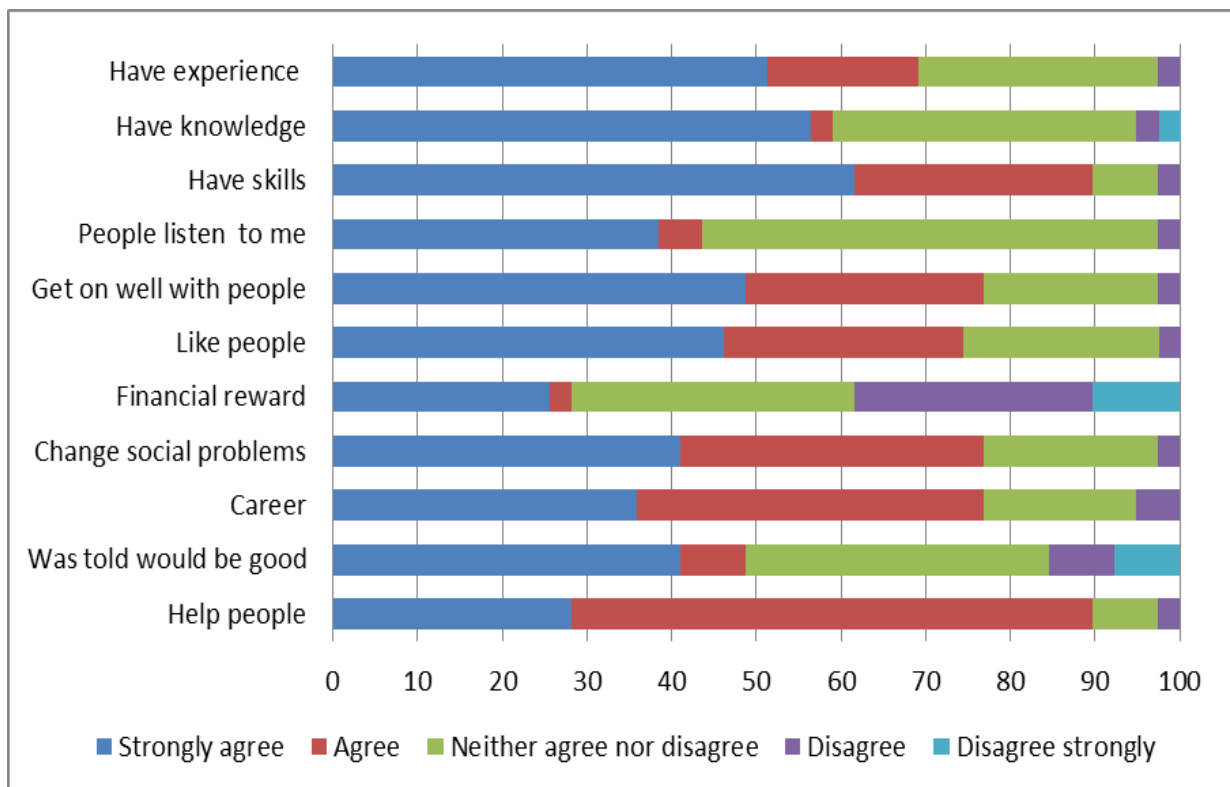
In 24 out of 32 cases (75%), full-time students chose that route in order to qualify as quickly as possible. Four students were required to study full-time by employers under a scheme that stipulated qualification as a Social Worker as part of employment conditions. Employers did not give the option to choose a part-time route. All part-time students indicated that personal circumstances were a key factor influencing their decision.

Although asked to indicate *one* main reason for choosing study route, two part-time students gave *two* reasons. Both stated being influenced by both work and home commitments. Four students, two from each route, gave their reason as "other". Both part-time students explained this as a health issue. One student explained that, although they had chosen full-time, they did not want to give the impression they were in a hurry to complete. The final student explained choosing the full-time route as "it seemed the natural progression" from the undergraduate programme.

4.2.2 Reasons for studying social work

Students rated a range of factors associated with wanting to become a Social Worker. Two factors achieved the same result. 89.7% of students indicated they *agreed* or *agreed strongly* with the statements "I want to help people" and "I think I have the skills needed". However, a difference is seen in the numbers who *agreed* and those who *agreed strongly*, 28.2% and 61.5% respectively, in the former statement, compared to 61.5% and 28.2% in the latter.

Figure 6 Reasons for wanting to become a Social Worker



Across the whole student group, previous experience was rated higher than knowledge. However, differences are apparent when considering responses of White and BME students. While all BME students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* they had the knowledge needed to be a Social Worker, only 56% of White students did so. Conversely, while 93% of White students *agreed* or *agreed strongly* they had the skills necessary for social work, this response was given by 71% of BME students. Despite this response, less than 10% of White students agreed they had the experience needed to be a Social Worker, compared to 57% of BME students. Comparing part-time students' responses to those of full-time students, two (28%)

agreed they had the knowledge, five (71%) the skills and three (42%) the experience; compared to 66%, 94% and 75% of full-time students, respectively.

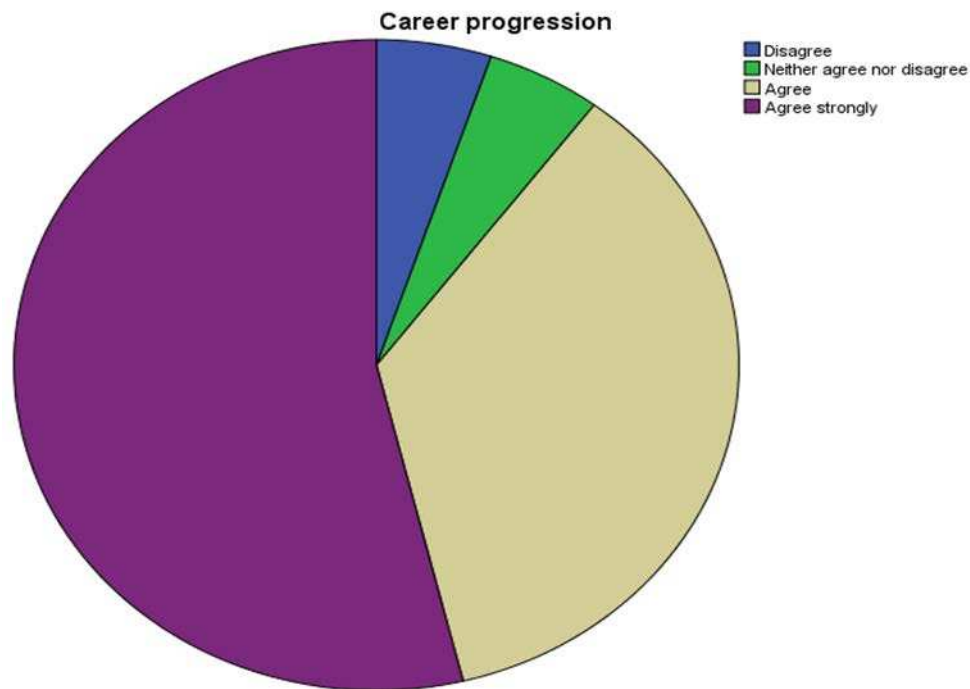
Similar responses were seen for the statements "I thought it would be good for career development" and "I wanted to work to change social problems", with 76.9% of the students *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* with both. When considering in relation to ethnicity, 71% of BME students and 78% of White students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* in the case of career development; and while all BME students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that they wanted to work to change social problems, the figure for White students was 72%. Seventy-three per cent of part-time students and 78% of full-time students *agreed* that becoming a Social Worker was associated with career development.

While most students neither *agreed* nor *disagreed*, 25% of students *agreed* they had been influenced by financial reward. One female student *strongly agreed*. Overall, however, more students, 40%, *disagreed*, with 10.3% doing so *strongly*. Of the 11 students that *agreed* or *strongly agreed* financial rewards motivated them to become Social Workers, three were from minority ethnic groups, two females and one male. One of the females was from a White Other (European) background, the other Black African.

Students were asked to choose from a range of reasons for studying postgraduate social work. Categories related to aspects of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, personal development, interest in the subject, validation of current role, and/or career progression. The most prevalent reason for choosing to study social work at this time was career progression, 89% of respondents. Only 18% of students did not consider study of social work at this time was associated with some aspect of career development. Fifty-nine per cent of students were motivated to study postgraduate social work to gain a professional qualification. Of these, 18%

already held qualifications they considered relevant, but believed they needed to be able to register as a qualified Social Worker.

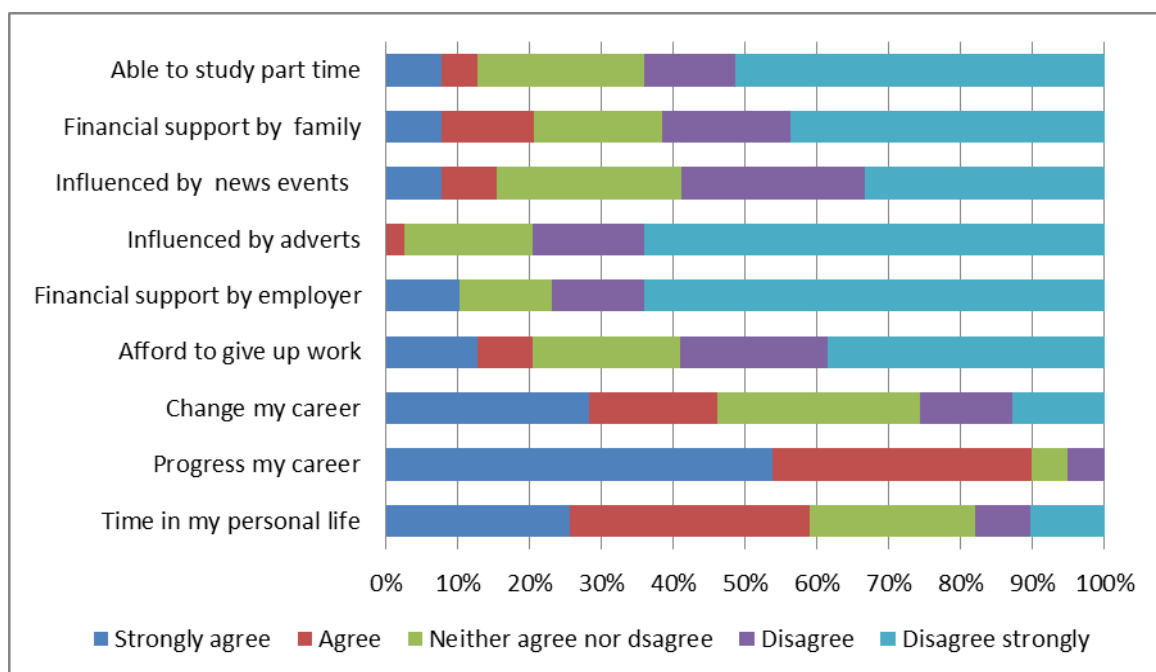
Figure 7 Career progression as motivation for study



Not all students saw career progression as an extension of their current/previous role. For a number of students, 44%, study of social work was motivated by a career change. This was more important for BME students, 57%, compared to 44% of White students. Findings also suggest motivation for a career change involved a gender dimension. Over 72% of males *agreed or strongly agreed* they had been motivated by a need or desire for a career change, compared to 40% of female students.

The questionnaire explored the factors which may have influenced students to apply for social work education at this time. A key influential factor was having the time available, with 78.9% of students *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* with this statement. A difference is seen between part-time and full-time students. While only one of the seven part-time students *agreed* having time had been influential, four *disagreed* or *disagreed strongly*. Conversely, 21 of 32 full-time students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* having time to study had influenced their decision.

Figure 8 Factors influencing postgraduate study



The ability to study part-time was only a factor for a small number of students, 12.8%. Even where students were studying part-time, two of the seven students did not consider this an influential factor.

For 46%, the views of others contributed to application. Only 14% of students did not believe they had been influenced by the views of others - the remainder neither *agreed* nor *disagreed*. Given the influence of others in encouraging social work study, it could be anticipated that media advertisements would similarly promote entry to the profession. Findings, however, suggest otherwise. Only 2.4% of students considered this the case. Indeed, 76% of students *disagreed* or *disagreed strongly* that they had been influenced by advertisements. Knowledge and awareness of recent news events was a greater motivator, but only slightly, at 15.4%. Two males and four females agreed they had been influenced by this.

4.2.3 Education history

4.2.3.1 Time since last study

Students' route to postgraduate study was, in general, part of a complex, long-term engagement with education, not just a straight-forward, linear progression from undergraduate to postgraduate study. For 23 students, registering on the MA Social Work came between one and five years after their last period of study. For 17% of students, the gap between this period of study and their previous was over six years. All of these students indicate their ethnicity as White and all but one identified as female. For all part-time students, the MA Social Work was a return to education following a break. While for the majority, the gap since engaging in further/higher education was between one and five years; for two students, between six and ten years had elapsed. The greatest break was seen in the full-time students. Within this group, three had been out of education for between eleven and fifteen years.

Considering ethnicity, while all but one BME student had experienced a break between periods of study, this was generally less than for other students - between one and five years. The BME student who described a break of less than one year

had transferred from a postgraduate social work programme at another HEI to be closer to home.

4.2.3.2 Highest level of previous study on entry

As anticipated, the highest level of previous qualification for most students reflects the minimum entry requirements' - an undergraduate degree. Additionally, 18% of students held a higher level award - six students having master's level qualifications, one student with two master's level awards and a higher-level diploma. This student gained all qualifications outside the UK, although within the European Union. One student held a professional qualification in counselling. Of the six BME students responding, one held a qualification above undergraduate level.

While equal numbers of students identifying as male and female held higher level qualifications, relative to the numbers of each gender on the programme, a greater percentage of male students held such qualifications.

Compared to full-time students, a higher percentage of part-time students held qualifications above entry-level. Two students already had a qualification at master's level, with one of these holding two such awards. An additional student held a postgraduate certificate.

4.2.3.3 Maths and English

The entry criteria for social work education require all students to have Maths and English at GCSE grade C, or equivalent. The majority of students, 25, gained these at school. Six others had passed English at college and one for previous employment. Eight students had passed English specifically to study Social Work: five female and one male prior to application; two others, one male and one

female, after receiving an offer of a place on the programme. Six of these students were full-time and two part-time. Three BME students had passed English at college. No BME students passed English in order to access social work education. All students passing English specifically to access social work education were over 30 years old, five of these being 38 or over. The two oldest students, both female, took English specifically to access social work education.

A similar picture is seen with regard to Maths. Thirty-two students had passed this at school and a further four at college. One student passed Maths for previous employment and two passed to access social work education. These three students were all female and part-time students. Only one was from a BME background.

4.2.3.4 Location of previous study

For all students, their most recent previous study was in the UK. The questionnaire did not ask them to give details of the subject; therefore it is not possible to determine whether they were referring to their undergraduate study, or another course, for example, training in the work-place. With hindsight, this was an omission in developing the questionnaire, as more details on what exactly had been studied, where and when, would have been helpful.

4.2.3.5 Method of previous study

The most common form of previous study was full-time HEI-based, with 72% of respondents indicating this. However, for students on both routes, a number had most recently been engaged in flexible programmes: three in part-time HEI-based programmes; one in a full-time work-based programme; four in part-time work-based programmes; and two in distance-learning. Only two part-time students whose previous study was other than full-time HEI-based, had been involved in part-time work-based study.

4.3.1 Work experience

While some studies suggest previous work experience is a poor indicator of success within social work education (Holmstrom, 2011), this is not reflected in the recommendations of the professional bodies, GSCC and TCSW. Consequently, all students were required to have some relevant work experience, paid or voluntary, on application. As there is no specific guidance regarding the nature of this, it is left to individual HEIs to assess relevance.

4.3.2 Previous employment status

Prior to registering for the programme, the majority of students, 77%, had been in paid positions. While students describing themselves as White gave varied responses in defining employment status, all BME students were in full-time work with the exception of the one transferring social work student. Students described a range of employment situations, some holding down both paid positions and voluntary social care roles, at times in addition to being students.

Students selected type of work undertaken from a range of options. Categories were deliberately left wide to allow broad grouping of field of work. Students were also able to elaborate on information provided.

For a small number of students, 15%, entry to postgraduate education followed a previous period of study. Two students had been unemployed. The largest category of students, 39%, was those who indicated that they had been involved in social care prior to registering on the programme. Areas of work were distributed equally between working with children and with adults. The remaining students had a varied range of work including health care, criminal justice and retail. Three students had been employed in teaching/education and two in clerical/administration positions.

Four students indicated their position as “other”. Providing more detail, they described working in foster care, one as a carer, another as “a psychological resource”, the latter additionally developed training materials and engaged in “knowledge transfer”; one student had been working for the “emergency services”, but gave no details as to what this was; and the final student had been a child-minder.

Unsurprisingly, more part-time students were engaged in activities other than full-time paid employment. Four students worked part-time, two were unemployed, one was a student and one self-employed.

Part-time students in part-time work were employed at basic grade whilst the student who was self-employed worked as a senior manager in the voluntary sector providing children’s services. Another was employed providing therapeutic services and training. Part-time students all worked in social care, either in a community setting with adults (2) or children (1) or in education (1). Fifty per cent of part-time students continued with the same work on starting the programme. For three this meant no change in working hours and one student reduced their contracted hours.

4.3.3 Previous social work-related experience

Although social work related experience is required, the HEI accepts students who have gained this in a range of different settings and, importantly, through personal life experience. Equal numbers of students in the study had paid experience only or a combination of paid and voluntary. Five students had experience as recipients of social work services at some point in their lives. Additionally, four had experience as a carer. All but one of these also had experience of paid and voluntary work.

Students showed great variation in the amount of relevant experience and the type and level of the work undertaken. The mean for number of years' experience was 6.47. At the low end of the scale, one male student had only one year of related experience prior to commencing the programme. He stated this was not undertaken specifically to enter a programme of social work education. Six students had 10 years or more experience. Notably, one student had 24 years and another 25 years previous related work. Both held senior positions in social care and both chose to study social work part-time. Females' length of experience was on average greater than males', a mean of 6.94 years, compared to 4.36. The difference in standard deviation, i.e. the measurement of how far, on average, individuals deviate from the mean, between male and female students, is 3.25, compared to 6.95, respectively.

Compared to those on the full-time route, part-time students, on average, had many more years of related experience. Fifty per cent of part-time students had 13 years or more. Conversely, the other 50% of part-time students all fell within a narrow band of between two and five years' experience. When roles held by students in the work-place are considered, a slightly higher percentage of students were employed at basic grade in the full-time group, 58% compared to 50%. More middle managers were seen in full-time students: supervisors, team leaders and managers. More part-time students were in positions that involved complex decision-making and/or senior roles.

The two students with both the greatest social work related experience and highest level of academic qualification, were part-time students and both resigned from their previous posts to complete social work education.

4.3.4. Length of experience and ethnicity

Greatest variation in length of experience was seen in White students, as might be anticipated given the larger sample size relative to BME students. All BME students had three or more years' experience and all those students with the least experience described their ethnicity as White.

4.3.5 Employment grade on entry to social work education

Given age and length of experience, it was anticipated that a number of students would have progressed to senior positions. This proved to be the case. 25% of students held positions above basic grade. Roles included supervisors, team leaders, managers and, recorded in the "other" category, professional positions such as teachers, project coordinators and information analysts. The gender difference is again notable, with four of the seven males holding senior positions. Students from BME backgrounds held positions at all grades, although more held basic grade positions than in all other categories.

4.3.6 Previous salary

Prior to entering social work education, almost 90% of students have been wage-earners. The mean salary earned by students was £14,418. This figure is mitigated by the number of those who had been unemployed with no income, or those already engaged in some form of study and on very limited income. More than half of the students were earning £17,000 p.a. or more, with 18% earning more than £25,000.

Male students were, on average, earning more than females £19,300 compared to £14,100. However, the figure for male students is lowered by two students, one a part-time worker earning £4000 and another, a student without income. Eighty-four per cent of females had annual earnings of £20,000 or less, compared to 28%

of males, while 42% of male students had annual earnings of £25,000 or more prior to studying social work.

One BME student was earning in excess of £30,000 p.a. and all others had annual earnings between £17,000 and £24,000. The average salary of BME students was less than their White peers, £15,000 compared to £29,600.

Chapter 5

Interview Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the individual interviews. Eight students who had indicated willingness to participate were contacted directly and interviewed using a semi-structured format (appendix 7). Purposeful sampling was used to gain greater insight into specific aspects of interest arising from analysis of the questionnaire. Students interviewed included those identifying as male, female, White and BME students. Given the personal nature of some information obtained and that the small numbers of some students groups, e.g. males or those from particular ethnic backgrounds, could lead to individual participants being identified, care has been taken in presenting findings to avoid giving specific descriptions of respondents.

Recorded interviews went through a rigorous process including listening repeatedly to the content and noting any observations, nuances and expressed emotions. With each play and reading, emergent categories were noted. Interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word, then imported into QDA Miner Lite ³⁰ for analysis. The individual transcripts were read and reread, summarising answers to interview questions and identifying recurring factors that provided answers to the research questions. Additionally, emerging concepts, ideas and views were categorised. Categories were coded to give themes. Themes within and across the individual transcripts were then grouped and recoded, where appropriate, becoming revised throughout the reflective analysis (Creswell 2007).

³⁰ <http://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/freeware/>

5.2 Answers to the interview questions

5.2.1 Individual factors

This area of questioning focused on personal factors related to engagement with this particular social work programme. Issues covered included reasons for choosing the programme, impact on family life, and financial factors.

5.2.1.2 Why this programme?

A key reason for choosing this HEI, expressed by all interviewed, was accessibility. Students could study without moving home and minimal travel was involved. This was true of both full and part-time students:

...purely geographical, I must confess, because, obviously I've got children, it can't be too far away. It was just location.

Where students had moved home to become a social work student, the move was not associated with characteristics of the HEI or programme, but was due to obtaining a place on a work-based scheme. The move was for the work, not for the education experience. Even in these circumstances, students still referred to being influenced by study being locally-based:

So, yeah...that was one of the incentives....It was about where my personal life was at the time. I had friends and a network in the area. I moved for the study and the scheme. When...I looked up other universities...and applied for others as well. I went for an interview with [named relatively local HEI]...offered at both...I liked both, but what swung it was the personal connection. It's better where you know people...

A key factor was the distance between campus and home address. In most cases, this was associated with home circumstances and the need to minimise travel time, to balance home responsibilities and programme commitments. One student discounted an alternative HEI, at a similar distance, as the journey to the out-of-town campus was problematic at busy times.

In addition to time, the cost associated with travelling was key and was referred to by five students, as illustrated by the following quote:

Twelve quid in petrol to get here each day! It costs...and because I had to leave early to get home, I could not use the car park-and-ride, so car parking...well it's so expensive.

5.2.1.3 Programme structure

Where students had a choice between HEIs of equal distance/travel time, a second factor influencing choice was type of programme delivery. This factor was also the primary reason given by the one student who did not give location as the main reason for selecting this HEI. Six students, both full and part-time, referred to the attendance timetable and number of days each week they were required to attend, indicating that fewer days on campus influenced choice of programme.

Students on both routes referred to structuring of taught days and saw a need for effective and efficient use of hours on campus that recognised external factors, for example rush-hour traffic; personal family commitments, such as taking children to school; and having some time to be available for significant others:

Starting at 9.30, that was ok. When the hours shifted to later days...well...I had huge empathy for my colleagues with

children. We [own family] share child-care responsibilities, but for others...If single, I would have found it very hard.

Several students, irrespective of gender, referred to needing to balance home responsibilities with programme requirements. Conflicts encountered were raised by five students. This did not mean that they wanted less direct contact - they wanted contact hours to be consolidated to make maximum use of time on campus. Students expressed the view that programme structure should reflect the average working day, i.e. nine-to-five. Long breaks within the day, between lectures or specific activities, were considered inefficient use of time:

....but the hours...It is a bit frustrating, I have to say, starting at 10 and then finishing at 3, with an hour for lunch - well to me, that's a half-day and I could have done it full-time if it could be condensed.

Similar views were expressed regarding the placement element, with both the need to be within a "reasonable" distance of home, and flexible placement hours that acknowledged child-care responsibilities discussed:

The reason I chose part-time was so I would have...erm...still have time with my family, as a single parent. I had done full time study before when I did [previous study] and it's not easy with [describes children]

While flexibility in responding to personal circumstances was considered supportive, students saw a need for consistency and predictability. Predictable timetables were helpful in structuring and planning time for family, factoring in

independent study. A regular, structured timetable was linked to managing existing work commitments and was also seen as more likely to lead to job opportunities that provided much needed income. Inconsistency, both within and across years of study, either arising from an irregular timetable or from deviations introduced by different lecturers, was problematic:

Well, the hours kept changing - that wasn't very helpful. The first year they were earlier, with a gap in the middle. I hit the traffic both ways. [sighs]...and in [module], well...the timetable might say five, but we were always out by four.

Some students found viable employment options limited:

The only thing about part-time, is that trying to find employment around it is tricky because of the balance of hours...Probably less about the course and more about the employment market, finding a job that makes it worthwhile.

One student referred to the type of programme delivery and a perception of a more "pragmatic" approach:

I liked the sound of this university, I talked to a couple of people about social work in [county], I talked to a couple of people who had done social work here and I liked the sound...that it was a really good supplier of public service employees...that seemed more proactive in their approach ...that's what they were delivering...I really wanted to be a Social Worker...it just seemed more pragmatic...[alternative HEI] appeared more academic, ironically (laughs)

5.2.2 Finance, family and social work study

All students, irrespective of background, home circumstances or route of study, described the negative impact of financial demands on their family. For most students this related to loss of income arising from giving up or reducing paid employment hours:

That's the impact on family life - me and my partner have had to make the decision that we are going to be financially tight for the next few years.

All but three students had made a decision to significantly reduce family income to study social work. The remaining students had either been made redundant and, therefore, had the decision made for them; or been employed in a position that facilitated study, either through a social work student scheme that provided a salary, or through employment which supported practically, if not financially, participation in part-time study.

For female students, while the impact on family finances was considered profound, the decision to reduce income had been conscious and self-initiated with the negative impact offset by their desire to study social work, even where this was not considered likely to increase future earning capacity:

I took a huge drop in wages...erm...and so it affected me financially, a lot. But it wasn't about the finances. I wanted to consolidate the social work skills I had previously.

This was not the case for male students who undertook social work study in response to a change in circumstance because a previous position or period of

education was coming to an end; social work study was seen as the best option for providing career opportunities and stability in the future.

For all students, even where alternative family income could alleviate the financial demands resulting from social work education, access to funding, through a bursary or sponsorship, was a significant, if not essential, factor that facilitated involvement in social work education:

I wasn't interested in money at all, but having said that...if the NHS bursary hadn't been in place...I might have thought about it...I would have thought about it if it came out of my pocket.

Erm...very grateful for the bursary, very dependent, could not have done it without it.

For one sponsored student, study was a requirement of the job, rather than a period that facilitated access to the job.

All students, whether single or in a long-term relationship, referred to the influential and supportive role played by family and friends. Families and friends provided essential financial, practical, and emotional support:

It is hard. We get by with help from family and friends and towards the end of each bursary instalment, I would be "oh my goodness", but if I...if there was not one around, if I didn't have anyone well....I...it would be very, very hard.

For one student, although the emotional support and understanding provided by the partner was a key factor and financial support was available, the decision to study part-time was associated with a desire to avoid being a “financial burden”. Part-time study provided the opportunity to remain in employment which, in conjunction with a bursary, provided financial independence and meant the student was not reliant on their partner.

For some students, changing roles within the family and the impact of family relationships was associated with the desire to study social work and promoted the ability to cope with the emotional impact. One student described the influence of becoming a parent, promoting awareness of need and ability to cope with the emotional impact of responding to others needs.

5.2.3 Reasons for studying social work

A number of different events and influences resulted in students deciding to become Social Workers. These included a requirement as part of a current job, an extension of a previous role, a need to identify a new career and the “mandate” provided by holding registered Social Worker status. A common theme was that of consolidating skills. This was particularly the case with students identifying as female. Several students expressed the view that the tasks carried out and the values held were not exclusive to those with a social work qualification. They described incidents and situations where they had managed complex situations and had been responsible for decisions that ultimately needed to be “signed off” by Social Workers who had the authority, if not the knowledge, to ratify a particular action. The motivation for qualification came from a desire to be authorised to carry out actions.

Although male students discussed previously developed relevant skills and knowledge, these were considered a foundation, with social work education providing training for the new role, rather than validation of existing knowledge.

Even where students saw social work education consolidating previous knowledge, nearly all those interviewed wanted to extend their knowledge and skills. The facilitating role of placement, providing new and varied experience, was identified. Although some acknowledged a challenge, this was welcomed and contributed to motivation:

Another aspect, for me, and I don't know if this sounds odd, I was quite looking forward...to meet the challenge aspect...it's a challenging career. I was looking for a career, a job that provided that -a job where I have to think and work with people, with risk, where it is important to make good, sound decisions - to develop myself as well.

While these factors were referred to as motivating social work qualification, more personal factors - background, individual factors and personal experience were described as, firstly, instrumental in initiating the desire to work in social care and, secondly, promoting knowledge and values associated with the social work profession. Additionally, female students believed social work could provide a career that fits more easily with family commitments than other professions perceived to hold similar values, for example, law, promoting Human Rights:

I think...there's a gender agenda [describes previous high-status career]...primarily, I'm a mother...so I had to make a decision. I carried on my voluntary work and advocacy...It seemed a way of formalising that.

5.2.4 Future aspirations

When considering where they saw themselves working in five years, all students identifying as male anticipated working for a local authority in leadership roles:

I see social work in other settings...other than statutory. I know there are other places [examples] that employ a Social Worker...But the jobs where they want a qualified Social Worker, ...that QSW in the voluntary or independent sector, the labour market is much smaller, there's a need in statutory... If you're ambitious and want to drive forward in a career, statutory's got to be the way to go, absolutely

Students identifying as female, although less sure where they would be working, were clear about the focus the work would take and the type of role they would hold. They referred to being in leadership or entrepreneurial positions through which they ran, or established, services that promoted good social work practice, and positions that meant they could influence the work of others:

Job-wise...I like flexibility and I think I can use it [social work qualification] in different ways. I can take what I've learnt back, [to current occupation] if I go...like supervision - I've never had supervision, but will make sure we all do now...We're going to do it as a team.

Reflecting on experience of working within a statutory setting, one student saw a need to extend this influence by becoming part of a wider movement promoting knowledge and skills in social work:

In 5 years [I hope] to have a PhD...to be writing... lots, spreading information, being part of the debate...There's a lot of managers who haven't got a degree...there's a gap in their knowledge. It's not their fault but...

Part-time students, whilst still aiming for positions of influence, more frequently referred to working in multi-disciplinary settings outside the statutory sector:

Ideally...erm...if I had some form of funding, to have a social enterprise with other professionals, for example, not just Social Workers, with, very much, OTs, community nurses and mental health, and other people who haven't necessarily got a title you can pin-point. I don't think it will necessarily be called "Social Worker", but with a community...a community focus person....

5.2.5 Previous education

Full-time students generally described a positive early education experienced. All part-time students, however, referred to some disruption during their secondary education years, related to personal life events. This impacted on subsequent education - restricting options, producing feelings of inadequacy or creating feelings of resistance to study:

I became utterly disillusioned with education. I actually left school saying I will *never* [student's emphasis] study again just for a qualification - I will only ever study if I need a qualification for a job I really want to do or because it's something that I'm *really* [student emphasis] interested in.

No student interviewed had considered social work as a career on leaving secondary education. Indeed, none left school with a clearly defined career plan, even when progressing from secondary education directly into undergraduate study. Where students did this, courses chosen were considered the best option at the time, given family expectations that they would go to university.

Despite expressing concerns about continuing study or lack of specific career objectives, all students enjoyed education and learning in its broadest definition and described engaging in different aspects of study, either self-initiated or work-based. Examples included: a PhD (uncompleted due to personal circumstances); a modular master's, part linked to direct work with children, part a taught element in lesbian and gay studies; and an undergraduate modular social science degree through distance learning.

5.2.6 Previous employment

Whilst acknowledging the selection process for the programme influenced the profile of the students, those interviewed had a diverse range of work experiences. White students, irrespective of gender, described involvement in high-status positions, for example in law, policy development, safeguarding children, or criminal justice. In these positions they had undertaken complex social work related roles and tasks at an influential level. This was particularly the situation for part-time students. Black BME students, irrespective of gender, described lower-status social care roles where, even with substantial length of experience, decisions were guided and made by others.

5.3 Themes

5.3.1 Opportunity

Despite career development being the most common reason for studying social work, a key theme emerging was that of opportunity. For many students, the route into social work did not arise from a preconceived, systemically progressed career plan, but from a series of events and circumstances that had led each student to this point. For some, social work education provided the opportunity to progress in their current career; for others, it came from an unexpected and unplanned change in some aspect of their life, e.g. redundancy, or restructuring of the work-place, while for yet others, it provided the opportunity to access something otherwise denied to them.

Questions asked why students had chosen to study social work at this time. For all male students, the decision was made in response to personal circumstances and not because of any particular vocational or professional aspirations specifically associated with social work. Applications followed redundancy, where the offer of redundancy provided opportunity and access to funding; or when employers lost contracts and unemployment threatened. These were circumstances when the existing role would, potentially, no longer exist and there was a need to identify a new career path, utilising previous skills and experience. At times, the decision had to be made quickly, for example whether or not to accept redundancy pay, and entry to the programme had only been facilitated because the timing of the redundancy offer coincided with the recruitment phase of the programme.

Where contracts ended, decisions were informed by changes to regulations, meaning career progression within the same area of work could only occur with a professional social work qualification. However, the move into social work was only facilitated by securing employment in a local authority student Social Worker

scheme providing work-based learning. Without this, alternative employment would have been sought.

Work-based schemes created opportunity and attracted male students who had not previously considered social work:

In my circumstances, the truth is...I wasn't...it [social work] might not have come to my attention, bizarrely. I kind of...in a way, fell into the programme...in the sense that...erm...I was quite dissatisfied in my previous...erm...job, (gives details), on a particularly...on a day I'd particularly found frustrating, I started looking up job applications and the (named local authority) scheme came up as one of those, as one of those things...

For some students, becoming a Social Worker provided the opportunity for securing, or gaining, a career when other doors were closed.

A number of BME students held higher-level qualifications obtained in other countries, but were unable to use these in the UK. Many were unrelated to social care. Students had arrived in the UK with the aim of working and/or continuing their education in other disciplines, but found access to other types of work difficult:

...it [social care] was the only work I could get. I did it and my [partner]...well, then [he/she] went into nursing. I was doing a degree in business and management. I never considered social work, well I didn't really know about it. It was my lecturer who said I should think about it.

Prior to considering social work, a number of BME students had taken positions within social care as this provided the only employment opportunities available to them in a limited job market. One student described arriving in the UK, holding a master's level qualification in another subject, unaware of social work as a profession. Having gained social care work-experience, they were subsequently able to use their previous, unrelated, award to gain entry to professional qualification. Whilst confirming the original motivation for applying for social work was to access a career - at the point of application this being *any* career - they did voice a strong commitment to remaining in the profession.

Although changing personal circumstances, chance or fortuitous encounters created opportunity that led to studying social work, this alone was insufficient. A key theme associated with opportunity was timing.

5.3.2 Timing

In all of the situations discussed by students, the relationship between timing and opportunity was crucial in determining progression to study social work. For one student, the timing of application and knowing they were being offered a place, was critical, as it determined whether they accepted voluntary redundancy:

The only reason why I would consider redundancy and leave my job was because...I was very keen to study and complete this course. The thing is, I didn't want to be in the scary position of accepting redundancy in the hope I might be accepted on your course, because if not accepted I would be in a very worrying position indeed.

For another, timing was associated with age and perceptions of training at a particular life-stage:

...went for the interview, quite surprising as the way I went about the application was a bit...quite haphazard...and got offered the job, then, I kinda...I thought I really do have to think about this...The prospect of retraining...I thought I was of an age, at a time in my life...if I'm going to do a big retraining, now's the time...don't want to leave it.

Although recognising education was involved, a number of students did not equate social work education specifically to study, i.e. being a student, but compared it to the world of work:

It was one of a few jobs I applied for...I applied for jobs that weren't training as well.

5.3.3 Challenge/resistance

An interesting emerging theme was that of challenge. This related to a number of, at times, conflicting dimensions of particular significance when considering relevance for the social work profession.

5.3.3.1 Personal challenge

While for some, the motivation for undertaking the programme was gaining registered Social Worker status, the initial motivation to become involved in *social care* was associated with the challenge presented by the nature of the day-to-day work. For many, this preceded a requirement for qualification:

...decided it was time to leave [previous job]...what am I actually going to do next? Thought...I can do this...It's not challenging now...The profile of the therapeutic parenting programme...is what I'm interested in and suited for...and it's a challenge...

For some, becoming a social work student presented an unexpected personal challenge. This was particularly the case for BME students. While students had experience of working in social care, their expectations of social work and understanding of the nature of social work practice was in conflict with the situation encountered in placement:

I thought it would be like a job - you go in, do your work and go home...but now, I think how they would feel. I even think about [service user] when I am on leave. It's the commitment, the trust, I can't let him down...I didn't expect that and... it's different now.

5.3.3.2 Challenge of becoming a Social Worker

A number of students expressed commitment towards gaining the award, but also reticence about actually becoming a Social Worker. Concerns related to joining a group of professionals that were perceived as, on many occasions, at best, ineffective and, at worst, were ineffective. Students with the greatest experience expressed negative views of social work practitioners - they were uncomfortable about becoming part of the profession, but considered it a necessary process to secure future career prospects:

The brutal truth...which I didn't give brutally in interview...I don't want to be a Social Worker. I resisted for some years. I

hated the idea of joining the ranks of such [hesitates]...an incompetent body of people...frankly...because so many are late for appointments, so many are disrespectful to clients, disrespectful of fellow colleagues, such as foster carers.

A number expressed concerns about the future of social work:

I think Social Workers are losing their identity.

Several students described witnessing incidents and situations they considered to be poor practice and/or discriminatory behaviour by Social Workers:

My manager wasn't honest. I addressed that with her at the time...at any point you could be handling a disclosure...so important you have a manager you can trust...on one incident, 16 other Social Workers there...there was a consensus in the office...and everyone felt the same. {discussing manager} I was told my social work values got in the way of doing social work...when you're told that standing up for what's right is not what you're there to do...[exasperated sigh].

Becoming qualified and being in a position to challenge this type of action was referred to as a motivating factor:

My struggle is that there are really good Social Workers out there who are life-changing...and there's lots of those around but...so frustrated by those who don't do their work

well...are not suited to the work, not in organisations that are rigorous enough...something about it that's just nuts.

Students who had encountered such situations believed it would be their responsibility to challenge both the system and individual practitioners when they perceived practice was poor and/or ineffectual.

5.3.3.3 The challenge within social work education

For students with the greatest level of experience, studying the subject and engaging in material they felt they already knew well and, on occasions, they believed better than qualified Social Workers, presented a personal challenge.

Similarly, students with previous related academic qualifications felt they were, at times, having to "jump through academic hoops". They had already demonstrated the required level of academic ability, shown through previous qualifications, had sound knowledge of material taught, demonstrated through previous qualifications or work roles, and had already shown the ability to apply this through holding positions that demonstrated practice skills. One student commented:

The big one for me...I could easily have written the assignments without turning up...so APL, transferring in, even if you create some assessed work...I could easily have not turned up and not missed anything...APL would have made it very, very attractive.

For this student, with relevant qualifications gained from extensive practice at senior levels and who had taught relevant theory at undergraduate and equivalent levels, the only reason for completing the programme was to comply with changes

to regulations such that qualified status was required to undertake roles held previously.

The greatest challenge for some students was presenting assignments in the format required by the HEI, complying with academic conventions and referencing the “right” material. The inflexibility of academic requirements, particularly at master’s level, was found to be frustrating and demotivating:

The style of teaching at MA is focused on production of academic work, not social work with people. Developing academic conventions...academic hoops. I don't want to be an academic, I want to be a Social Worker...I don't want to read something I already know about just to find a reference. Academic qualifications, they just lead to academic qualification. It seeks....and the grades are utterly irrelevant other than to further academic qualifications.

5.3.4 Changing expectation/perception of social work

Although the selection process for entry to the programme required applicants to demonstrate awareness of what was involved in social work, contrasting perceptions were seen as to what social work is and what Social Workers do:

It's not what I thought I would be doing...I don't know what I expected. I really didn't...I sort of came in a bit..."oh well, I'll see...I'm sure it's just child protection". That's what I think I thought, but now...well, it's opened up a whole...but there's so much more to it than I thought...

Several students referred to their original perception of social work changing or being challenged by what they learnt on the programme or through placement:

Even though I thought I had got a good perspective [of social work], placement gives you a glimpse of different aspects. It's one of those areas that, until you're on the course and doing it...you think you know it, but it's much more...a Pandora's box.

Even students with significant levels of relevant experience in settings such as child protection and safeguarding, described a changed view of social work. However, while recent reviews of social work education have called for greater emphasis on control, risk management and maintaining social order, as the primary tasks of Social Workers, the views expressed did not reflect this:

My role has always been very protective, about protecting children, protection training...everything to protect the child...this year I've been working with risk. I have had to think about risk and learn to adapt my thinking. People do have to...they have to take risks sometimes. There's some things where they have a right to take risks...and...well...it wouldn't even have entered my head...silly things like that. It's been a really big learning

5.3.5 Flexibility

Although no pre-set themes were established, the issue of flexibility emerged, in a number of different forms, as a theme from the interviews. Some raised issues linked with other themes, for example different prior experience of students and differing expectations of both social work and social work education. A number of students referred to barriers that had impacted on their learning and/or progression within the programme resulting from this. Perceived barriers were linked to inflexibility in the curriculum and teaching approach, and limited acknowledgement of individual students' experience and learning needs.

For one student with previous PhD level study, the wide range of academic ability within the group was felt to restrict the opportunity to maximise potential in others:

I'm going to say something that's...that might be a bit controversial. It's tricky...and I'm not saying I'm particularly clever or anything, but there are some very different levels of academic experience and [ability of] how to engage in the course...it can hold back some of the group, these people need more understanding and clarification, but once again...I know it's got to be inclusive and there's support, but it's not the right sort of support. I know that HEIs need to get people in to make some money, but...

This view on the inflexibility of social work education does not mean that these students felt they had nothing to learn, were unwilling to learn anything new, or were just going through the motions in order to obtain qualified status. Having accepted they needed to obtain an approved qualification to gain professional status, they were still seeking the previously referred-to challenge, to have their knowledge, ideas and understanding extended. It was the inflexibility of having to follow a prescribed curriculum addressing set learning outcomes, that was found to be restrictive:

I was hoping to engage in debate, discussion, to explore and be challenged...but I'm not...

Chapter 6

Data Analysis

6.1 Aims of this chapter

This chapter uses collected data to answer the research question as set out in the introduction.

6.1.1 The context of the findings

The programme recruited to target in the first three years studied. In the final year the programme under-recruited despite similar levels of applications and many offers being made. Although data on the cohort registering in 2014 were not included in this study, at the time of analysis, information was available showing a similar decline in numbers. These entries took place following changes to bursary availability (DoH, 2013). Whilst too early to determine the exact impact on recruitment, plus it is outside the scope of this study to explore funding arrangements, it is possible there is a connection between changes in the provision of bursary and reduced take-up of places. This decline also reflects concerns of other studies (Frostick and Gault 2013) on declining postgraduate recruitment.

Although the number of full-time students reduced, there was no change in the number of part-time students - consequentially the ratio of part-time students to full-time increased. This trend is supported by data on the 2014 intake, where the number of part-time students again rose, representing 30% of the group. This suggests external funding is a key factor in promoting study. When access to this is reduced, students are reluctant to engage in full-time study.

6.2 Analysis of findings in relation to the research aims

6.2.1 How do the personal profiles of applicants on flexible/part-time social work programmes compare with those of full-time students?

The sequential exploratory design not only provided data answering the research questions, but also facilitated an evolving and broad reconceptualisation of diversity as findings were analysed. This enabled an in-depth comparison of groups of students.

When introducing a flexible route I anticipated that there would be a difference in profile between students on the part-time route and those on the full-time route. To some extent, findings support this view, but only with regard to a small number of factors - age, personal situation, disability and distance from the HEI. The overall extent of diversity was less than anticipated.

6.2.1.1 Age

The average age of part-time students was slightly higher than full-time. Limited diversity was seen in part-time students with a narrower age-range.

6.2.1.2 Personal situation of students

Part-time students more frequently described encountering personal adversity. For some, this was in the past - the reason they did not continue into higher education straight from school. This corroborates previous research (Christie, 1998; Christie & Kruk, 1998/1996; Parker & Merrylees, 2002; ADSS, 2005; BMRB Social Research, 2005; Stevens, 2012) on motivation for social work, but also on barriers to higher education (Milburn, 2012). For others, difficulty encountered was more recent, contributing to the need for a more flexible mode of study. Part-time students

described an interrupted and intermittent education history, balancing multiple tasks and demands simultaneously - work, caring commitments, health problems, etc.

6.2.1.3 Disability

More disabled students study part-time, facilitated by flexibility in programme structure. The variation between routes of people declaring a disability relative to the local population is noticeable. While for full-time students the figure of 6% is broadly comparable for the age range to local authority figures of 5% (KCC, 2012; CCC, 2012). The figure among part-time students is higher, 33%. This supports the proposition that flexible study promotes access for disabled people who may have been service users. However, the small sample makes the result unreliable.

6.2.1.4 Distance from the HEI

The finding that all students lived relatively close to the HEI could be influenced by who responded to the questionnaire. Students living at the greatest distance may have had less time to participate. However, my knowledge of the students supports this proposition as travel to and from campus and placement is raised frequently by students within programme management meetings. This finding reflects previous studies (Manthorpe et al, 2010; HEFCE, 2013) on the significance of location. Part-time students lived closer to the HEI than full-time students. This is associated with the previous two factors, the ability to balance personal circumstances, commitments and health issues, with the time and cost of travelling. The cost of extensive travel is prohibitive to students from low-income families or those with limited access to independent financial and practical support, for example family and friends, but also to those living in more remote communities and without access to transport. This picture of students constrained

by practicalities, conflicts with ideas postulated by HEFCE (2013) of mobile students who travel to access study. For social work education to be accessible to those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, location and teaching site must be considered when structuring programmes. The impact of location and relationship with socio-economic status reflects concerns expressed by Wakeling (2010) on inequality and barriers to postgraduate study associated with social class. Such a position is in direct conflict with all definitions of social work (IASSW/IFSW, 2001; NASW, 2005; ALAIETS 2012) and codes of ethics that direct all aspects of practice (BASW, 2012). When the status of a profession is judged by the type of university confirming awards (Clifton, 2012), with Russell Group HEIs being used as the “gold standard” (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014), the finding that postgraduate social work students seek local study, suggests such programmes have limited attraction. This issue will be explored further in a later chapter.

6.2.2 Exploring diversity within and across the student group

Lack of explicit diversity within the profile of students on the flexible route resulted in a need to look for and explore different types of diversity, for example background, reasons for studying, etc. The questionnaire data addressed this limitation and allowed a more detailed exploration, introducing a wider range of factors for analysis. This enabled examination of difference and similarities to give new groupings - comparison was conducted across and within, rather than just between routes of study.

6.2.2.1 Gender

For the period considered, the majority of students identified as female, although there was a year-on-year increase in numbers identifying as male. However, the restricted option provided to students through institutional data collection

mechanisms contribute to replication of previous research findings and reproduces the gender dyad described by Weber (2009) and Oliffe and Greaves (2012). This was evident where the option for self-identification led to one student acknowledging that the choice made was “in the absence of a more appropriate description”. This suggests there may be greater gender diversity within the profile of social work students than might initially appear. The findings do not allow exploration of gender diversity within or between the different routes of the programme.

While findings are comparable with previous studies on social work education, they contrast with the findings of BIS (2013), which suggest that relatively equal numbers of male and female students engage in taught postgraduate programmes. This variance may result from the bias in the BIS response rate which is heavily influenced by data from Russell Group HEIs, where there are fewer postgraduate social work education programmes (HCPC, 2014).

6.2.2.2 Ethnicity

Across all registered students, there is some, limited, diversity in ethnicity. Documentary data indicated ethnic profile of students largely reflected the demography of the local area, 92.2% White (KCC, 2012), the greatest number of students in all years selecting that category - a picture supported by questionnaire findings. However, although 7.5% of students describe themselves as African, reflecting the figure given by the local authority for the total BME population (KCC, 2012), the overall number of BME students on the programme, 17.5%, is higher than might be expected if all students came from the local community and had equality of access. The greater distance travelled by BME students, and knowledge gained through my role as admissions tutor, indicates that a significant number of BME students travelled from areas of greater ethnic diversity. However, ethnic

diversity has decreased over the four-year period, as the number of students describing themselves as White increased from 63% in 2010, to 83% in 2013. This may suggest increasing reluctance to travel.

Fewer BME students chose part-time study. Of the eight part-time students participating, six described themselves as White. Surprisingly, given the increasing diversity in wider society, only one student indicated in the questionnaire that they were Black British. This low figure may arise from the data collection process. Students were able to self-identify from given categories resulting in varied descriptions. In addition to Black British, students describe themselves as English African and others as British African. Knowledge of the students indicated that descriptions were not always derived from place of birth, but from students' self-perception and the culture they identified with. Students from similar backgrounds selected different descriptors.

6.2.2.3 Age

The majority of students in all years were classified by the HEI as "mature students", i.e. those that are over the age of 25. This may be expected, given that entry to postgraduate study requires students to have already undertaken a period of higher education. The questionnaire findings indicate that 25% of students were aged 23 or younger. This is a much lower figure than that suggested by BIS (2013) who concluded that approximately 49% of postgraduate students' applications came from those aged 23 or under. However, there is a decrease in diversity by age - with the exception of 2012, the number of younger students has increased over the years studied, from 29% in 2010, to 39% in 2013. Related to this, it is notable that all of the youngest students studied full-time and all but one of the nine students described themselves as White British. It is also notable that all but one of these students lived with parents. This is concerning in a programme seeking to be

inclusive and purporting to uphold anti-discriminatory values. It supports Wakeling's (2010) proposition of an advantaged profile of younger full-time postgraduate students, whose ability to access study is aided by family support. Calls for postgraduate only entry to social work may lead to a future where disadvantaged people, e.g. without family support, care-leavers, low socio-economic status, etc, are excluded. This may result in a return to social work being a White, elitist profession and conflicts with aspirations of the profession representing society (TCSW, 2012).

6.2.2.4 Education history

Diversity was found in the education background of students with reference to level of previous study, type of programme undertaken, barriers encountered and attitude towards education as a process. Diversity was associated with age, gender and ethnic background.

While some students (25%) had followed either a direct route through education into study of social work, or only had a small break between periods of higher education; for others the path to study social work was considerably less direct. For the majority of students registering on the MA Social Work (23), this came between one and five years since their last period of study.

For students over 40 years (a third of the group), engagement with postgraduate study was part of an ongoing journey through education. Of the 39 respondents, only the three oldest students, with a maximum age of 48, had been out of education for more than 11 years. In most cases, enrolment represented a reengagement, or continuing involvement with education over an extended period, rather than depicting progression from undergraduate to postgraduate degree as referred to by BIS (2013). The impact of the diverse age-range on education background is exemplified in the 17% of students for whom the gap between this period of study and most recent previous was over six years. All of

these students described their ethnicity as White and all but one identified as female. That all those indicating they had taken a qualification in English specifically to study social work were both White and in the older age group, including all three oldest students, is notable. This supports Bolton's (2012) proposition that the education history and experience of older students will be significantly different to students who have engaged with the education system in more recent times. Changing entry requirements for postgraduate study may exclude mature students - those with greater life experience identified as a desirable quality (Munro, 2011) - unless strategies are developed to address this.

6.2.2.5 Relevant previous experience

All students were required to have previous relevant experience, however, given the contested understanding of what social work is, interpretation of relevance was made by the programme team and relied on the student's description. Despite this, diversity was evident - type of work, location of employment, length of experience and grade. While greatest range and variety was seen among full-time students, greater extremes were seen in part-time students, both in terms of length of experience and grade.

Consequentially, two types of students were found to apply for part-time study, those seeking to develop knowledge and those seeking to validate a previous role by gaining professional status. Contrary to finding diversity, within the part-time student group there was a polarising of experience both practice-related and academic.

Recorded comments of students, academics and practice educators refer to the challenge of delivering a programme able to respond to the diverse and different learning needs of this student group. While recognising that some students

required greater support and foundation knowledge, some experienced social care students found this stifled development. At the same time, the need of some students for greater preparation in key skills was identified by practice educators. This is illustrated by comments from practice educators on the ability of programmes to prepare students for the emotional dimension of social work practice. A need is seen to first orientate students to the significance of relationship and emotional intelligence:

I really didn't think [student] would get it. At first it was...[students] thinking was: come in, do the hours, go home... It was all about doing the hours, ticking boxes. Now...well, I'm worried. It's the emotional side. Now that [students] grasped this...I'm just not sure they will be able to cope with the feelings. It's only just starting to hit [student].

These factors suggest a need for greater flexibility and differentiation in teaching methods, delivery style and focus across the programme.

6.2.2.6 Salary

Associated with previous employment, diversity was seen in the previous salary of students. More than half were earning £17,000 p.a. or more, with 18% earning more than £25,000, the average starting salary for a newly-qualified Social Worker (Prospects, 2014). This figure is only £2000 below the mean gross annual earnings for full-time employees (£27,000) (ONS, 2013), coinciding with previous studies (Waterman, 2002; Stevens et al, 2010; Daniel, 2011) in suggesting that increased earning potential is not a primary motivation to study social work for many students.

Although a motivating factor for some females, most students were uncomfortable with notions of an association between desire to study social work, role and financial gain. This finding might reflect a reluctance of students to express views perceived as contrary to the altruistic and ideological values represented by definitions of social work (IASSW/IFSW, 2001; NASW, 2005; ALAIETS, 2012), obscuring the views of students who come from less advantaged positions.

When considering level of earning by gender, the UK median gross annual earnings of £23,000 for females and £29,300 for males (ONS, 2013) was earned by eight female and two male students.

Inequality of financial status, associated with ethnicity and gender, was evident. Reflecting the national picture for salaries (DCMS, 2014), males, in general, were earning more. BME students were more likely to have been earning less than both their White peers and the median gross annual earning figure. This provides possible insight to the reason why social work education programmes have a relatively high percentage of BME students (Hussein et al, 2008; Dillon, 2011; Moriarty et al, 2011) and a low percentage of students identifying as male. The latter group is underrepresented in social work study and practice in all but the highest levels (Furness, 2007; Stevens et al, 2010; Dillon, 2011; Moriarty et al, 2011). Males are more likely to be in employment, earning a reasonable wage and accessing promotion without a social work qualification. This reflects wider gender inequalities in society. When males do access postgraduate social work education, it is motivated by extrinsic factors (Reeves, 2008; Stevens et al, 2010; Wakeling and Kyriacou, 2010) arising from opportunity, and a desire for senior positions within statutory services. This suggests that, far from promoting gender diversity in frontline practitioners, social work qualification at postgraduate level may contribute further to the existing gender divide (Furness, 2007; Hussein et al, 2008; Moriarty et al, 2009/2011).

In the context of diminishing financial support for social work students (DoH, 2013), registering as a student, particularly full-time, had a significant impact on income, resulting in student apprehension.

Despite concerns, the majority of students had either given up employment or reduced working hours to enable them to undertake the programme. In these circumstances, students wanted to qualify in the shortest possible time in order to return to full-time employment. This wish for minimum time commitment conflicts with the need of some students, identified by students, academics and practice educators, for more time to develop awareness and essential skills. It is also contrary to the emphasis on life-long learning (SWRB, 2010; Munro, 2011; TCSW, 2012).

BME students were multiply-disadvantaged when accessing social work education - they started from a poorer economic position, yet travelled further, incurring greater expenses. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that more wanted to consolidate class-based learning through full-time study and reduce the additional level of travel associated with part-time routes.

Reflecting wider concerns about the funding of postgraduate education (Wakeling, 2010), the question arises as to how students previously in full-time work - many earning not inconsequential salaries - can support themselves and, where applicable, their families, in addition to funding social work study, without access to some form of financial support.

6.2.2.7 Reasons for studying social work at this time

Conflicting with previous studies, findings (Christie & Kruk, 1998; Wilson & McCrystal, 2007) suggest most postgraduate students view the programme as a

means-to-an-end not, primarily, a learning experience. They aspire to gain qualified status as quickly as possible.

Key drivers are extrinsic factors, e.g. requirements of employers for practitioners holding particular qualifications, desire for validation and recognition by other professionals, and perceived restrictions in career progression without professional status. Many students were motivated to complete postgraduate social work education not from a desire to participate in the learning process or to gain required knowledge, but from a desire to validate knowledge and skills considered already possessed.

A high percentage of students believed they already had the skills, knowledge and experience needed to be a social worker. Over 85% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* they had the skills needed, 66% *agreed* or *agreed strongly* they had the experience, while 56% felt they had the required knowledge. Validation was not related to individual factors originating in the psyche (Manktelow, 2005), but from a need to demonstrate capability to others and “open doors”, particularly in the case of BME students, in the absence of wider opportunity. There is a difference in motivation between White and BME students. While many White students considered social work education promoted career progression and widened options, BME students considered it provided opportunity where alternatives were limited. The role of social work education for BME students in challenging and overcoming acknowledged disadvantage and structural inequality is important and will be considered in a later chapter. All but one BME student had an education pattern characterised by intermittent periods of study at undergraduate level or lower, but were in continuous employment. This could suggest that education is viewed as training to increase access to work, an opinion encountered on numerous occasions throughout the study in the comments made by people from BME

backgrounds, students, academics, and practitioners, reflecting on their own experience.

6.2.2.8 Influential factors

Although some (Clifton, 2012; Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014) refer to public image of social work as a motivating or demotivating factor, this had limited impact on students. Only one female student believed her application to study social work had been influenced by advertisements. This has implications for how and where social work education is marketed, both by the profession and by HEIs. The views of family, friends, employers and educators were influential - being considered by others as "the sort of person" with the skills and attributes needed was important. Intrinsic factors and self-perception were highly influential as identifying as a person with skills and attributes needed to be a social worker led to application. A difference arose, associated with ethnicity, on the nature of these skills and attributes.

While all BME students *agreed* or *strongly agreed* they had the knowledge needed to be a Social Worker, this was only true of 56% of White students. Conversely, while 93% of White students *agreed* or *agreed strongly* they had the skills necessary for social work, this response was given by 71% of BME students. Interestingly, despite this response, less than 10% of White students agreed they had the experience to be a Social Worker, compared to 57% of BME students. Comparing part-time students' responses to those of full-time students, two (28%) agreed they had the knowledge, five (71%) the skills and three (42%) the experience, compared to 66%, 94% and 75% of full-time students, respectively.

When considering this in relation to work experience, many BME students had worked in social care settings, residential care, and community care. Their experience was task-based, providing day-to-day care for vulnerable people. Their

perception of social work was task-orientated, whilst holding decision-making power. Accordingly, social work education was seen as the means by which the procedure associated with making decisions could be learnt - a concrete, rather than abstract and conceptual process. The youngest students, with the least life experience, held similar views; that social work education was teaching what decisions to make and when. These students acknowledged limited experience and identified the need to acquire knowledge and skills.

This reflects the concerns expressed previously regarding the need of some students for more time to develop self-awareness. It additionally suggests diversity in perceptions of the types of skills needed. While BME and the younger, White students emphasise the “clinical” dimension (Corvo et al, 2003; Freund et al, 2013), more mature students emphasise the ideological dimension and promotion of social change (BASW, 2012). This conflict might go some way to explain the inequitable performance of BME students (Hussein, 2009; Bernard et al, 2011). It also suggests further consideration is needed into public depiction of social work. In identifying qualities needed, Munro (2011) endorses the less tangible, interpersonal, emotional and creative skills. My findings see these most closely associated with mature students, while other groups, most notably younger and BME students, need greater time for development.

6.2.2.9 Future aspirations

The findings of this study suggest most postgraduate social work students undertake the programme to progress to management and leadership positions. Few see themselves remaining in front-line practice for more than a few years. As previously stated, for males the aspiration is to become a manager, at least, within a statutory setting; for women, anticipated location is more diverse. While some full-time students see themselves working within statutory services, many refer to advancing their career in the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI)

sector, as a manager or owner of a social care agency. No part-time students considered they would be working for statutory services five years from qualifying. Their views reflected more entrepreneurial aspirations. Anticipated locations for future employment included management within the PVI or management of a social enterprise.

This is significant. Munro (2011) referred to the need to identify people with commitment. Whilst not explicitly stating that this would be to statutory services, the focus of the report, child protection, implied that this was the case. While postgraduate students demonstrate commitment to social work, per se, there is limited evidence that postgraduate education, flexible or otherwise, will increase commitment to statutory, front-line practice. This does not mean that students qualified through programmes cannot contribute to an effective and diverse social work profession, but does mean that consideration needs to be given to how people can be supported in developing skills and knowledge needed for different levels of practice.

6.3 How far, if at all, do opportunities for flexible study increase the diversity of applicants to preregistration master's level programmes?

This programme provided flexibility through part-time study, engaging in fewer modules and completing fewer placement days each academic year, over an extended period, and by allowing students to move between different routes, responding to personal circumstances. This particular configuration of flexibility resulted in limited increase in diversity. It did not increase ethnic diversity within the student group, nor did it increase gender diversity. The reduced time commitment and flexibility of studying, whilst being able to respond to individual commitments such as caring responsibilities and work, did increase diversity with respect to the personal circumstances of students. More single parents, women with young children and people from White, lower socio-economic backgrounds

selected this route. Similarly, flexibility provided by this route also widened diversity to social work for disabled people and those unable to commit to full-time study for health reasons. This is not to say that this study did not provide some insight into the type of flexibility needed to promote diversity, as some clear indicators of the types of flexibility required were identified. These will be examined in the final section of this chapter.

6.4 What kinds of flexibility in programme delivery increase the diversity of applicants to preregistration social work programmes?

A significant factor that impacted on exploration of the profile of students on particular routes became apparent as the study progressed. Whilst I had anticipated students would register on a particular route and remain on that to completion of the programme, it became evident this was not the case - a number of students moved between routes at different times due to changes in personal circumstance. Examples of reasons given were: pregnancy; redundancy; personal or family-related health issues; unexpected and unplanned major incidents (accidents, death in family, divorce, etc); and financial need to gain employment. Consequently, neither group of students was static and consistent. Five students went from full-time to part-time and five from part-time to full-time. Two students moved from part-time to full-time, but later returned to part-time. Changes between modes of study occurred at different times in the year and points in the programme, although more changes were recorded from part-time to full-time at the end of the second year of study, meaning those students completed the programme in three years, rather than four. This suggests that while the initial focus of this study had been flexibility as an issue that facilitated access to study, broader consideration of what constitutes flexibility was needed. It was apparent that the ability to transfer between modes of study was also instrumental in supporting progression, enabling students who might otherwise have left, to complete the programme.

Although literature suggests mature postgraduate students often chose local study (HEFCE, 2013), the extent of limitation was surprising - 64% of students lived within 20 miles of the HEI. Further consideration indicates that although BME students also seek local study, they need to travel further to access social work education when more local opportunities are denied. Even with a flexible timetable, programme structure remains rigid in that students generally travel to access education. A more flexible approach would take education to students, using methods associated with FE and offshore programmes (Brydon, 2010; Brydon and Liddell, 2012). This would lead to a number of benefits for social work. Those educated locally would not only reflect the demography of their community, but also would have greater understanding of specific social problems of that area. This would also facilitate better workforce planning (SWRB, 2010; Munro, 2011).

Currently, provision of social work education, while regulated by the HCPC, is "owned" by the delivering HEI. As such, programmes are restricted by administrative processes, recruitment cycles, and annual intakes, with all HEIs adopting the same timing and competing for students. This is restrictive if the opportunity for students to study does not coincide with the appropriate recruitment phase. Associated with this is the current "whole programme" approach to social work education. While accreditation of prior learning (APL) and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is permitted, it is viewed as an exceptional situation (TCSW, 2012). Given the diverse experience, and prior education, of postgraduate students, flexibility associated with a modular approach to social work education would be more appropriate. Registered status could be achieved when students provided evidence they had completed agreed modules on core subjects derived from the PCF. This type of flexibility would also respond to the diverse learning needs identified by students, practice educators and academics. Flexibility would enable students to select when and where they

study individual modules, adopting a similar approach to that described by Maple et al (2013).

While the basis of this proposed new and radical approach to social work education already exists - the PCF; a recognised College of Social Work; and mechanisms for delivering asynchronous and synchronous education - a number of issues need to be addressed. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

Discussion

7.1 The contemporary context of social work education

This study aimed to explore flexibility in postgraduate social work education as a mechanism for supporting access to the profession for those with personal qualities identified as desirable (Munro 2011). While the specific model of flexibility considered had limited impact on diversity, lessons were learnt about types of flexibility that may widen participation.

Recent changes to preregistration social work education have introduced new programmes and created alternative routes into social work, e.g. Frontline. At the same time, reviews of social work education (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014) call for greater support for work-based programmes such as “Step Up To Social Work”. These reviews, and others focusing on funding of social work education (DoH, 2013), emphasise postgraduate study as the preferred level of qualification. Entry at this level is perceived beneficial for the profession, creating a more intelligent and able workforce capable of better practice. This is despite recognition that postgraduate qualification is a poor indicator of ability, moral character or future success (Holmstrom, 2013). That qualification as a Social Worker is dependent on successful completion of practice, where no distinction is made between academic levels (TCSW, 2012), presents a further paradox.

While the flexibility provided by this study did promote some, potentially beneficial, diversity, it was less than expected. This leads to the proposition that social work education needs to be reconceptualised. Qualification should not be available only through study on a single qualifying programme, but also through

an integrated, sequential learning experience that addresses individual learning needs and identified, but conflicting, requirements of employers, government, service users and wider society.

7.2 Diversity within postgraduate education

Introduction of a flexible route to postgraduate social work education was anticipated to increase gender and ethnic diversity. This was not the case. It did increase diversity related to socio-economic status, disability and relevant experience. Of concern in postgraduate social work education is decreasing diversity, with increasing numbers of younger, White students, advantaged by access to family support, commencing study. Despite this, it is clear that postgraduate social work students are not a homogenous group. Importantly, this study identified a high level of diversity in terms of learning needs. While students with various desirable attributes and qualities bring alternative understanding, practice experience, and personal qualities; so they have different expectations and knowledge gaps. This requires introduction of a range of approaches providing a personalised journey to qualification (Lefevre, 2013).

7.3 Benefits of flexibility in postgraduate social work education

Postgraduate students tend to be more mature. Older students were not supported to access social work education by flexible delivery, but by having reached a stage in life where personal circumstances permitted study. Motivation was associated with a desire to achieve greater balance between personal values and wider society (Tennant and Pogson, 1995). However, the impact of changing, more rigid, entry requirements is concerning and might restrict access for mature students as previous qualifications may not meet current standards - particularly in Maths and English.

Flexibility - studying part-time or adjusting route to respond to personal circumstances - promotes access for those who have encountered and overcome personal challenges and who may, as a result, have greater emotional intelligence and emotional resilience. Goleman (1998) asserts that emotional intelligence, not IQ or academic qualification, leads to success in practice. The four dimensions of emotion intelligence - ability to accurately perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion into thought, understand emotion, and regulate emotions in self and others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) - align well with the personal qualities categories referred to by Munro (2011). In addition to emotional intelligence, mature students bring greater life experience - having experienced social problems themselves, they may have a better understanding of the real worlds of those they will work with. Importantly, flexibility promotes social work values (BASW, 2012), challenging inequality and promoting access for some who would otherwise have been excluded.

That students on flexible postgraduate routes include those with a high level of previous experience within related practice, is both a benefit, providing the means to continue in key social care roles now requiring qualification, but also a potential loss, as these same students aspire to use the qualification to move on to more senior leadership roles. The leadership aspirations of emotionally intelligent students have been identified in relation to other professions, e.g. law and teaching (Goleman, 1998), and evaluations of Teach First (Hutchings et al, 2006; Smithers et al, 2013). These views reflect the ambitions of students in this study. The majority of students sought to gain authority to undertake tasks they believed they had already been performing, albeit supervised by qualified staff. Motivation for qualification was not to continue with those tasks, but for career progression to access senior or leadership positions. This reflects the findings of previous research on study motivation of social care workers (Forrester-Jones and Hatzidimitriadou, 2006). One difference between students on different routes was

the location in which they envisaged working. Full-time students aim to work in a statutory setting, e.g. team leaders within children and family teams, while part-time students aim to work in the private sector - either returning to, or renewing relationships with, previous work colleagues; or through establishing their own business. Within contemporary welfare services, influenced by right wing political ideology, diminishing state provision and increased emphasis on the market (NSPCC, 2011), there are benefits associated with supporting qualification of entrepreneurs, those willing and able to establish welfare services in the face of a shift to the PVI sector³¹

Additionally, qualification of students aiming for management and service development roles benefits the profession. The need for effective social work leaders providing quality supervision has been recognised as a key factor in supporting and maintaining a strong and effective workforce. According to Laming (2009), "good supervision is the 'cornerstone' of good social work practice", a view also expressed by Munro (2010).

7.4 Limitations of postgraduate social work education

7.4.1 Rapid promotion

Despite the identified benefits, postgraduate preregistration education will provide fewer benefits than reports (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appley, 2014) anticipate. There is a danger that, if students see pre-registration social work as preparation for management, past problems may be repeated. Preregistration education is intended as preparation for practice, not for management. From this perspective, postgraduate students moving rapidly to leadership positions may do so without sufficient grounding in this role. At the same time, promotion of experienced

³¹ <https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/21929.pdf>

qualified people to posts removed from frontline work and direct practice with vulnerable individuals, might exacerbate current deficits.

7.4.2 Perpetuated gaps in the workforce

The finding that many postgraduate students aspire to take up entrepreneurial or management positions suggests postgraduate social work education leads to students taking up a narrow range of positions once qualified. This leaves significant gaps in the social work workforce. These gaps seem inevitable given the confusion and conflict around what social work *is* and what social work education is preparing students to *do* and *be*. Recent reviews of social work education (Narey, 2014; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014) have focused on safeguarding and risk assessment tasks undertaken by a small, but significant, number of Social Workers. Education is viewed as training, preparation to undertake tasks currently only permitted by people holding a social work qualification. However, many postgraduate students described undertaking similar tasks prior to social work education - completion of the programme was to legitimise skills and knowledge already held.

This is a limited view of social work education and one in opposition to that presented by professional codes of ethics (BASW, 2012; NASW, 2013) and reflected in the ideology underpinning teaching criticised by Narey (2014).

Indeed, learning acquired on the programme can appear at odds with the prescriptive, procedural safeguarding role presented by Narey (2014) and Croisdale-Appleby (2014).

That many students, practice educators and academics referred to the part played by social work education in changing students' thinking, emphasises the centrality of values in approaches to teaching social work.

Students' views about what social work is, changed considerably. While the changes reflect many of the qualities referred to by Munro (2011), and will be perceived as beneficial by some; others, particularly some organisations and employers looking to recruit workers, may disagree. Social work education made students more assertive in advocating for needs of service users, more assertive and demanding of line managers with regard to supervision and support, and more challenging of poor practice in others. These changes are not unique to social work, but are also seen in relation to social care education (Forrester-Jones and Hatzidimitriadou, 2006). This suggests a need to reconsider the connection between training and education, and greater clarity about the relationship between *doing*, *knowing* and *being*.

7.4.3 Social work qualification determined by administration of higher education

There are significant limitations, when accessing social work education programmes, associated with bureaucratic, procedural process; rigid institution-led delivery; costs involved; and restricted financial support for postgraduate students.

Access to higher education is determined by the structuring of the entry process. Many HEIs use the annual UCAS recruitment cycle. Even where an independent admission process is used, intakes are generally governed by the education process and annual recruitment cycle, which is associated with national arrangements for funding and monitoring of higher education (HEFCE, 2010). While this might be appropriate for study of academic subject motivated by personal interest, it is not necessarily appropriate when responding to the needs of the profession, workforce planning, or of students seeking to qualify as part of continual professional development where timing is guided by work situation.

The limited financial support available for postgraduate study restricts access for students who do not have an independent income. While changes to bursary are recent, and research has yet to be conducted, capping of funding (DoH, 2012) may contribute to increasing numbers of younger students with parental support, while restricting opportunity for less advantaged students.

7.5 Ownership of social work education

Regardless of the need for social work education programmes to be approved by the professional body (HCPC), programmes are owned by the delivering institution. Education is driven by market forces, rather than professional need; this results in competition, rather than collaboration between different institutions. Shifting ownership of professional education to the profession, a College of Social Work with authority to act on behalf of the profession (Munro, 2011) may address this.

Similarly, despite recommendations that HEIs work in partnership with employers, currently the balance of power lies with HEIs and the education process. This is illustrated by the limited input that practitioners have into the curriculum and observed reluctance of academics to relinquish aspects considered education to employers, even when those employers are Social Workers. Greater flexibility and a more equal relationship would address the limitations identified above. Greater clarity is needed in the purpose of social work education before this can happen.

7.6 What are we educating for?

There is a mismatch between the expectations of government, employers, students and the social work profession. This reflects the paradox and many “truths” in social work identified by Martínez-Brawley and Zorita (1997) - it promotes both conformity and conflict. However, on further reflection, recognising that most social work employers are themselves Social Workers, it might be more accurate to refer to a conflict between academic and practice perceptions of social work

education. The crux of the debate is the difference between education and training. Governments and employers want, and indeed need, students trained to undertake tasks in the way employers tackle them now. This is reflected in the comments of those interviewed as part of Narey's review (2014):

There were basics missing from my degree training – I didn't even know what a core assessment was when I left university and that's key to the job.

(Narey, 2014 pg 10)

A procedural and process-driven approach to social work education only prepares students to undertake a narrow range of tasks. While increased access to social work can be promoted by flexible methods of delivery, increasingly inflexible, yet conflicting expectations and learning outcomes may exclude creative, reflective practitioners able to adapt to the dynamic and multifaceted world that is the reality of social work.

For social work education to prepare students to undertake all roles required of them, once qualified, and respond to current and emerging social needs, it is necessary to develop greater understanding of what social work education is aiming to do and flexibility in how it is achieved.

7.7 The impact of postgraduate study - reinforcing structural inequality

The findings of this study suggest that without increased flexibility, even with part-time flexible routes, postgraduate study may reinforce current structural inequality.

Male students not only started from a position of greater advantage, but also accessed study to gain positions of authority, reflecting Belenky et al's (1986) earlier findings. Female students faced greater barriers: current, e.g. dependent relatives, caring responsibilities, etc; and previous, e.g. the relationship with education creating an unequal, disadvantaged position. The equating of intelligence to exam results fails to acknowledge different types of intelligence, e.g. emotional intelligence, and the benefits afforded, as already discussed. Nor does it acknowledge barriers to higher education and factors that might impact on progress through education, despite considerable recognition (Wakeling, 2009/2010/2012) and expressed concerns on "the ticking time bomb" of postgraduate education (Wakeling, 2010/2012; Milburn, 2012; Frostick and Gault, 2013). Students whose life experience motivates study of social work and develops desirable attributes and qualities, may be those who face greatest barriers accessing postgraduate study. Education needs to be responsive to changing circumstances and locally provided.

7.7.1 Ethnic diversity

Postgraduate social work study is used by BME students as a means of overcoming disadvantage inherent in society. This is not a direct and planned route to career progression, but comes as a consequence of involvement in social care. The high aspirations of BME students with regard to education are acknowledged (Connor et al, 2004), as is the use of social work education as a means of increasing capital (Dillon, 2010b). This clearly coincides with social work principles, promoting social change and challenging injustice. However, postgraduate social work education may exacerbate and replicate structural oppression of wider society (Bourdieu, 1990), by failing to recognise the current situation, past experience and resultant learning needs, of BME students (Bernard et al, 2013). Anastas (2010) identified problems faced by BME applicants associated with self-perception in the

admissions process, and Dillon (2010) identified problems associated with increased entry requirements. For students in this study, barriers were encountered through a disconnect between their perception of education, being taught how to undertake tasks; and the development of less tangible aspects of social work, particularly self-awareness and reflection. This disconnect reflects the challenges identified by Brydon and Liddell (2012) of academics understanding the needs of international students. Flexible approaches to social work education need to consider life-course theory (Dillon, 2010b) and the impact this has on the relationship BME students have with education. Inclusive education will overcome emotional barriers (Burke, 2014) and provide a flexible, supportive structure which enables students to “fit in” and have self-belief. These factors are a prerequisite of independent, creative and confident practice. Compounding these challenges experienced by BME students is the impact of location. BME students confront challenge, not just in the curriculum and teaching style, but in the practicalities of accessing education. They start from an economically disadvantaged position and yet, lacking local opportunity to study, travel further, incurring greater costs in terms of both time and money.

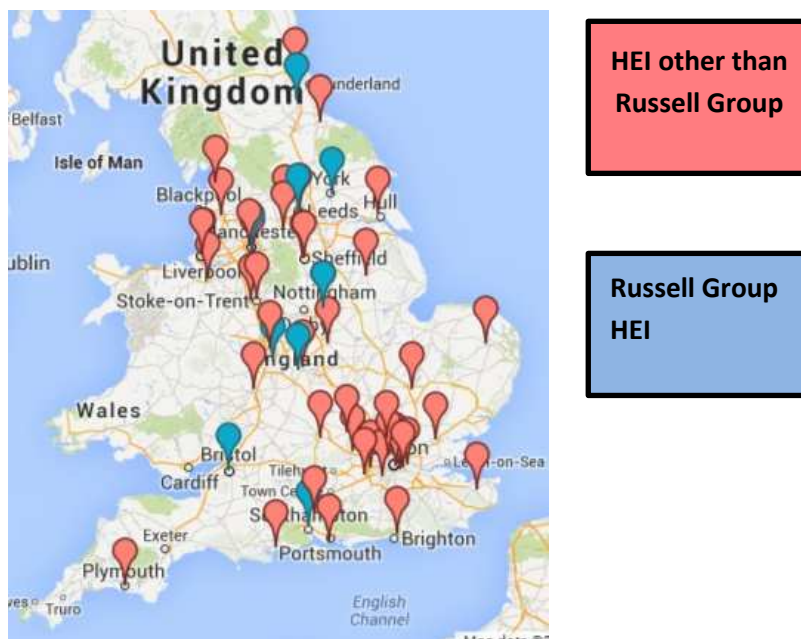
Dillon (2010b) highlighted the part played by geography in limiting access to education for BME students. These views, and those expressed by Belenky et al (1986), on the particular challenge faced by those in rural communities, show parallels with students’ views on the significance of location.

7.8 Recruitment black-spots - flexibility in location

One problem associated with social work education at postgraduate level, is location. If students look for local study, the site and mode of delivery is important. Currently approved postgraduate programmes (HCPC, 2014) are clustered - many in some areas, few, if any, in others, giving students in some

locations restricted options. Given the perceived status of Russell Group education (Clifton, 2012), the limited availability of this is particularly significant as only a small number of students have access. It is also notable that the areas of the country with highest social work vacancies, and recruiting greatest numbers of agency workers, are those furthest from HEIs offering postgraduate education³².

Figure 9 Location of HEIs offering postgraduate education



The difficulties experienced assessing Russell Group universities by some BME (Dillon, 2010/2010b/2011) and socially disadvantaged (Social Mobility Commission, 2014) individuals, are widely recognised.

³² http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2013/10/30/find-out-the-vacancy-rates-in-social-work-teams-in-your-local-authority/#.UzcAjfl_uSp

The changing profile of students over the duration of this study coincides with other research (Wakeling, 2010/2012) suggesting higher education is increasingly elitist - the domain of the most affluent. Research (Jerrim, 2013) indicates students with parents from professional backgrounds are almost three times more likely to enter high-status universities than those with working-class parents.

Rather than develop a learning community located at a distance from the world of practice, there is a need to develop a community that learns - to take learning to the community not the community to the student. In many UK programmes, this view of a learning community is centred on building it within the teaching institution. A more flexible approach would see HEIs adopt techniques used in distance and offshore education, by introducing a greater range of synchronous and asynchronous teaching methods. This would enable social work education to respond to the changing world of social work and what Drolet et al (2012) refer to as the "Shifting Sites of Practice", by working with culturally diverse individuals and communities, in multicultural societies and rural and remote communities. This recognises the impact of globalisation.

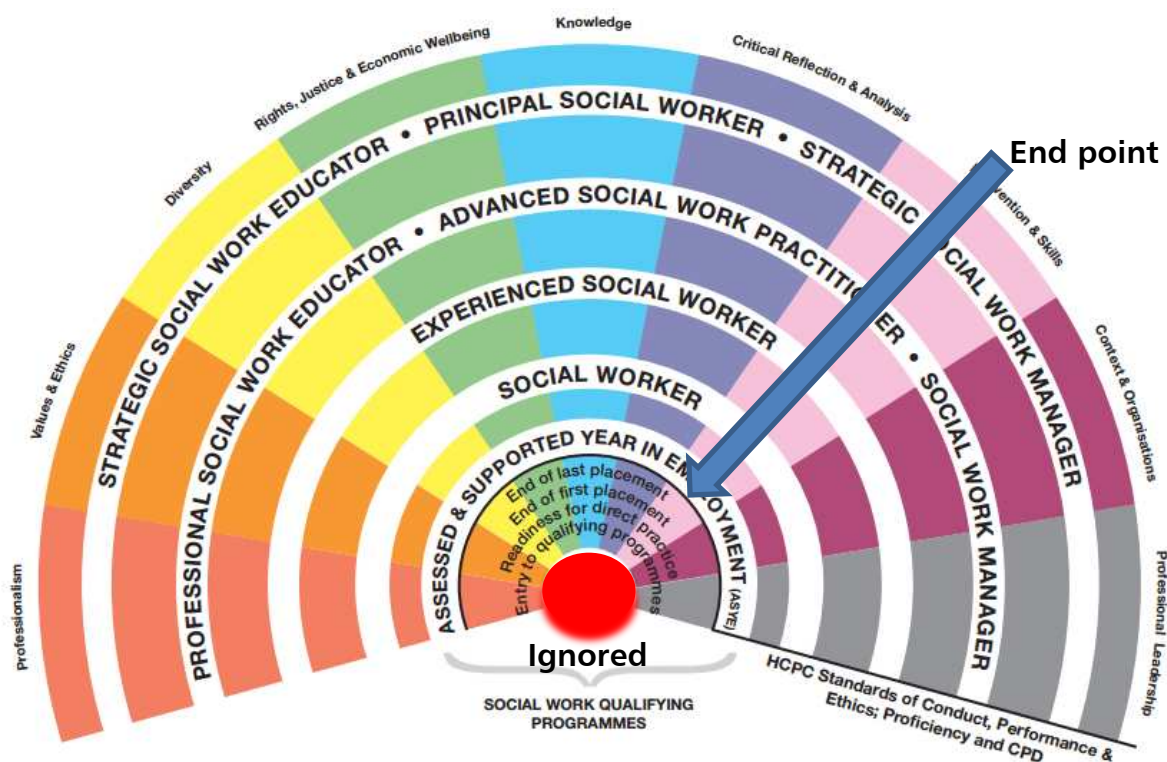
7.9 Social work education - a means-to-an-end and an end in itself

While students view social work education as a means-to-an-end, so social work education reinforces qualification as an end in itself. Changes have seen the removal of national occupational standards and introduction of the PCF. At the same time, an optional ASYE was introduced. A key feature of the ASYE is that it is holistic, flexible and responds to individual learning needs of the newly qualified Social Worker and the practice setting (Skills for Care, 2012). If ASYE is to be an effective continuation from pre-registration education, as suggested by the PCF, a similar flexible approach is needed.

7.10 Developing a flexible framework for social work education

The PCF provides a framework for social work education that addresses the different types of knowledge and skills required at different levels. It states clearly what practitioners should know and be able to do at the point of qualification. However, this valuable framework is underutilised. The point of qualification falls at a very low level and, although the PCF suggests required skills and knowledge at different levels, lack of a clear continuing professional development (CPD) framework emphasises education only to the point of qualification.

Figure 10 The PCF - an underutilised framework



(Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers TCSW 2012)

Narey (2014) identified the need for clearly defined practice expectations and learning outcomes to be set for each stage of the social work career. A more flexible and responsive social work education system would not only address skills and knowledge required at the point of qualification, but would consider how skills and knowledge previously acquired related to the framework. Currently, despite acknowledgement that APL and APEL is possible, there is no system for accreditation, and social work education fits into the narrow band from registering on to completing an approved programme.

Associated with this is the lack of clarity of what social work is and consideration of the relationship between social *care* and social *work*. There have been regular calls for registration of social care workers and development of recognised training and accreditation. A code of conduct and minimum training standards have been developed for healthcare support workers and adult social care workers in England³³, although social work assistants are excluded. Despite links between the roles conducted and overlaps in required knowledge and skills, a distinction is made between social care and social work. As future social workers will have previous social care experience, the relationship between them needs to be recognised.

This illustrates the conflicting understanding of social work education for different people involved. For governments and many employers, social work education teaches how to do the tasks - qualification comes once students demonstrate ability to do the job. For many academics, the purpose is to develop a particular set of values. Qualification is associated with the ability to demonstrate particular shared values. It is this that confirms membership.

³³ <http://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Standards/National-minimum-training-standards/National-minimum-training-standards.aspx>

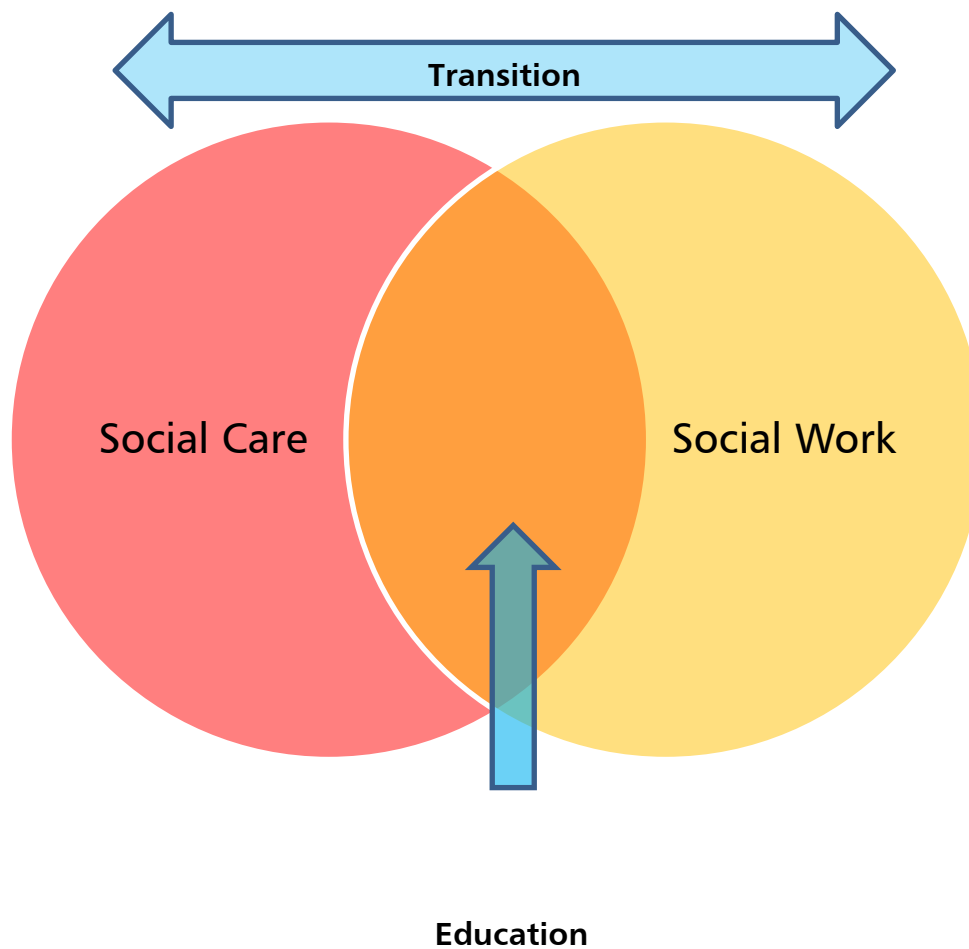
7.11 Understanding the relationship between social care and social work

All social work students are required to have some social work related experience. In this study, the majority, 39%, gained this through paid and/or voluntary work. This figure is lower than the true number involved in social care, as it does not include those who described previous work in related fields of health or education. Yet, in planning social work education, little or no consideration is given to the relationship between social care and social work, or of links between training and education for different aspects of the work. This is remiss, particularly since practice educators and employers have identified the depth of skills and knowledge held by some students gained from social care experience.

As in social work, ensuring appropriate staff levels and workforce development is a recurrent concern in social care (CWI, 2011) - a significant and growing mismatch identified between supply and demand (Fenton, 2011)³⁴. Many of those who will become the Social Workers of the future are currently employed in social care and recognised as being experienced and highly skilled (Narey, 2014), yet are unable to engage in full-time academic study and gain professional qualification. While experienced students are seeking validation of knowledge through social work qualification, lack of recognition of knowledge held and differentiation of teaching is perceived restrictive and frustrating, stifling further development. Rather than separating social care and social work, a new approach would acknowledge similarities and intersecting knowledge and see social work education as being a more flexible transition between two dimensions of practice.

³⁴ Fenton W (2011). The Size and Structure of the Adult Social Care Sector and Workforce in England, 2011. Skills for Care. Available at: www.skillsforcare.org.uk/research/latest_research_reports/Size_and_structure_2012.aspx

Figure 11 The relationship between social care and social work



7.12 Flexibility in attitude - academics perceptions

The tension associated with the marketisation of education referred to by some writers (Gibbs, 1994; Gibbs and Macy, 2000; Kropf, 2000; Barlow and Coleman, 2003) is apparent. While students, and indeed the education system, see HEIs offering a product to a discerning customer, the professional perspective identifies pre-registration education as the means of recruiting members. The values associated with this distinction are not necessarily in accord. Membership implies socialisation to a particular way of thinking and behaving; it does not always allow

for ideas to be challenged. This is illustrated by identified conflicts between practitioners, employers and academics on the purpose of education and the learning needs of students, but also by previous studies (Sieminski and Seden, 2010) which reported academics' perception that experienced students needed to unlearn previous practice knowledge. This must surely pose a conflict in a profession underpinned by values of social justice, social change and libertarian principles (BASW, 2012). The emphasis on one qualification that acts as a gatekeeper, a validator of knowledge and a membership committee, places those in the position to facilitate access to qualification in a position of great power. Currently, this power is held by education and social work academics, yet concerns have been raised that many academics are out of touch with new initiatives in contemporary practice (Moore, 2008; Cooner-Singh, 2010; TCSW, 2012). At the same time, HEIs have a vested financial business interest.

Tensions arise between perceptions of social care and social work. Concerns are expressed about employment-based schemes, with sponsored social work students and distinctions made between education and training (Manthorpe et al, 2010). While there is no recognition of social care as a profession, social work has a stated, albeit contested, definition, and "Social Worker" is a protected title³⁵. Greater emphasis on the relationship between social care and social work will, undoubtedly, lead some to feel the identity of social work is under threat. Fears about loss of identity are already raised by some (Webb, 2006; Ferguson, 2012). Reconceptualising the relationship between social care and social work may be perceived as weakening the status of the Social Worker title, in the same way that other health and social care professionals felt threatened with the introduction and recognition of new roles (Larsen, 1977/1990; Fournier, 1999; Baxter 2011). For academics, out of practice and distant from social care, strengthening of the practice element presents a further threat to their position. However, clarification

³⁵ <http://www.hcpc-uk.org.uk/aboutregistration/protectedtitles/>

of the relationship would provide for elucidation of both similarities and differences, and would address the various dimensions of practice (Clements, 2012).

The need to rethink the relationship between HEI, employer and student has already been discussed. In addition to flexibility associated with structural and recruitment dimension, there is a need for greater flexibility in approaches to teaching.

7.13 Flexible teaching - a modular approach

Adoption of a modular approach to social work education, module content aligned to the domains of the PCF, together with development of a robust APL/APEL mechanism and accredited education and training standards in social care, would provide an effective and holistic framework underpinned by principles of lifelong learning. This approach, reflecting the sentiments of the ASYE, would enable students to build on previous knowledge, develop new skills and provide a personalised approach to development (Lefevre, 2013) responding to individual learning needs and providing a differentiated curriculum (Vught, 2009). Greater integration of the different stages of education, from social care, through pre-registration level, into CPD, would provide the opportunity to develop content that responded to the needs of the different actors involved, e.g. employers, service users, students, and importantly, could reflect local need and clarify the distinction between *doing*, *knowing* and *being* (Lefevre, 2013).

In developing programmes to build on previous experience, it must be acknowledged that diversity brings difference, including learning needs of students. These can only be met by including a variety of teaching techniques, including inquiry-based learning and incorporating online, technology-enhanced elements. Programme structures need to adopt a task-based, problem-solving

approach, rather than didactic teaching - an interactive approach (Cummings, Foels & Chaffin, 2012).

7.14 Taking education to the community

Location, flexibility in where education is provided, is key to widening participation and overcoming barriers experienced by specific groups. Programme structure must recognise personal constraints experienced by students and be informed by student and profession need, not just academic process. The role of the academic is facilitator of learning, including consideration of environment. Greater use of blended and distance learning by hosting HEIs can provide social work education in remote community locations, overcoming barriers associated with travel, but also enabling programmes to be culturally sensitive.

Students need peer networks, yet these are limited by personal circumstances and isolation resulting from placement (Bates, 2005). The sense of isolation, and identified demands of home life, requires recognition. This requires programmes to develop active engagement strategies; peer communication via email, face-to-face activity, video and/or telephone contact, that help students achieve learning goals and enhance interaction skills (Cameron and Este, 2007; Collins, 2007; Swain, 2007). The role of the educator is not “didactic dispenser” of knowledge, but facilitator (Mitchell, 1999), the “Sage on the Stage” giving way to the “Guide on the Side” (Rossman, 1999 p6). Flexibility in teaching style, informed by pedagogical theory, is needed. Taking education to the community can be facilitated by greater use of distance learning methods (Bydon, 2010; Brydon and Liddell, 2012). The reticence of some academics to engage with technology (Waldman and Rafferty, 2008; Ayala, 2009; Moore, 2009; Young and Delves, 2009; Cooner-Singh 2011) poses a barrier to development of effective new strategies and needs to be

addressed. Successful development of programmes requires commitment from academics and HEIs, with time and staff development being a prerequisite to promote familiarisation with the online tools and understanding of the educational milieu. For partnership with practice to be genuine, this development must also include relevant others, e.g. practice educators. Once established, these techniques can improve teaching quality through the greater preparation required and increased range of material used (Crowell & McCarragher, 2007; Westwood, 2014).

7.15 Communities of practice

The use of technology and the internet as part of social work education provides the opportunity to develop and maintain communities of practice that will support lifelong learning and knowledge exchange. Communities of Practice comprise “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis” (Wenger et al, 2002, p. 4).

This is developing in an unstructured way, through Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media. However there is an untapped potential to extend this in a more structured and comprehensive manner. Simply setting up a virtual discussion group and expecting it to become a Community of practice and promote student cohesion without thought and input will not be effective. People join and remain part of such groups because of the potential to learn and participate (Moore 2008). The format developed needs to not just give information (learning about) but must be about the application of knowledge, (learning to be) (Moore 2008).

Northedge (2012) examined the significance of creating an “Appropriate Discursive Environment”. This is an environment where the different voices of a diverse student group are supported to engage in the dialogue and through this become participants in the learning process. The students within this study raised the need

to for education to have a more flexible approach to hearing their voices and expressed needs. The development of virtual communities of practice is one way of promoting this, participation supporting students to engage with and internalise the associated deliberations, conflicts also exist, as the focus of the discourse is guided by those establishing and leading the discussion. For social work the conflict arises in the competing agendas of those with vested interests in social work, employers, governments and academics. The issue of power within these groups also needs to be considered as communities that are dominated by an dominant authoritative expert voice, academics or employers is unlikely to engage less confident students and support learning. Conversely, communities that support students to become active participants in knowledge exchange are more likely to promote not just current scholarship but also lifelong learning skills.

References

- Ackroyd S. and Hughes, J. A. (1981) *Data Collection in Context*. Longman
- Adams, R. (1997) 'Potential and pitfalls of open learning initiatives in health care and social work', *Issues in Social Work Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 30–48.
- Aguirre, R. T. P. and Mitschke, D. B. (2011) "Enhancing Learning and Learner Satisfaction Through the Use of WebCT in Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 30(7), pp. 847–860.
- Ahmedani, B. K., Harold, R. D., Fitton, V. a. and Shifflet Gibson, E. D. (2011) "What Adolescents Can Tell Us: Technology and the Future of Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 30(7), pp. 830–846.
- Ainley, P. (1994). *Degrees of difference: higher education in the 1990s*, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Allen, L and Storan J (2005) "*Widening Participation A Rough Guide for Higher Education Providers.*" Action on Access. HEFCE London
- Alston Mt, Bowles W (2003) *Research for Social Workers: An Introduction to Methods*. Psychology Press,
- Anand, M. (2009) "Gender in Social Work Education and Practice in India," *Social Work Education*, 28(1), pp. 96–105.
- Anastas (2010)*Teaching in Social Work*. New York. Columbia University Press
- Anderson KH, Friedemann ML (2010). Strategies to teach family assessment and intervention through an online international curriculum. *Journal of Family Nursing*. ;16(2):213–233
- Archer, L. Hutchings, M. and Ross, A.(2003) *Higher Education and Social Class:issues of exclusion and inclusion*. London: Routledge/Falmer
- Artess, J., Ball, C. and Mok, P. (2008). *Higher Degrees: Postgraduate study in the UK 2000/01 to 2005/06*. London: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.
- Ayala, J. (2009). Blended learning as a new approach to social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 45(2), 277 – 288.

Balen, R. and White, S. (2007) 'Making critical minds: Nurturing 'not-knowing' in students of health and social care', *Social Work Education*, 26, (2), pp. 200-206.

Ballantyne, N. (2008) "Multimedia Learning and Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 27(6), pp. 613–622.

Band-Winterstein, T. Doron, I and Naim, S (2014) 'I Take Them With Me' – Reflexivity in Sensitive Research, Reflective Practice: *International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, 15 (4), pp. 530-539

Banks A and Faul A (2007): Reduction of Face-to-Face Contact Hours in Foundation Research Courses: Impact on Students' Knowledge Gained and Course Satisfaction, *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 26:8, 780-793

Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M. and Tindall, C. (1994). *Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Barbour, R. (2007). *Doing focus groups*. London: Sage.

Barlow, C, & Coleman, H. (2003). Suitability for practice guidelines for students: A survey of Canadian social work programmes. *Social Work Education*, 22,142-16

Barter, S. (1997) "Social work students with personal experience of sexual abuse: Implications for diploma in social work programme providers," *Social Work Education*, 16(2), pp. 113–132.

BASW (2013) "All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into the State of Social Work report." British Association of Social Workers. Birmingham

Bates, A. (2005) *Technology, e-Learning and Distance Education* London: Routledge

Baxter, J (2011). *Public Sector Professional Identities: A Review Of The Literature*. The Open University, UK, The Open University, UK.

Baxter, P and Jack, S (2008) Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (4) pp. 544-559 Available online at <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf> [accessed January 2015]

Beaty, L., Gibbs, G., & Morgan, A. (2005). Learning orientations and study contracts. In F. Marton, D. Hounsell, & N. Entwistle (Eds.), *The experience of learning: Implications for teaching and studying in higher education* (3rd (Internet) ed., pp. 72–86). Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B.M., Goldberger, N. R., & Tarule, J.M. (1997). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York, Basic Books.

Bennett, S., Maton, K. & Kervin, L. (2008) 'The "digital natives" debate: a critical review of the evidence', *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 39, (5), pp. 775–786

Beresford, P., Branfield, F., Taylor, J., Brennan, M., Sartori, A., Lalani, M. and Wise, G. (2006) "Working Together for Better Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*. Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group, 25(4), pp. 326–331.

Berger, R., Stein, L. and Mullin, J. B. (2009) "Videoconferencing: A Viable Teaching Strategy for Social Work Education?," *Social Work Education*, 28(5), pp. 476–487.

Berings, D, De Fruytb, F, and Bouwenc R (2004) Work values and personality traits as predictors of enterprising and social vocational interests. *Personality and Individual Differences*. 36 (2004) 349–364

Bernard C, Fairtlough A, Fletcher J and Ahmet A (2011) Diversity and Progression among Social Work Students in England. Goldsmith. University of London. Online Available at <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/scwru/dhinitiative/projects/bernardetal2011diversityfinalreport.pdf> [accessed January 2013]

Bernard, C., Fairtlough, A. and Fletcher, J. (2013) "A Qualitative Study of Marginalised Social Work Students ' Views of Social Work Education and Learning," *British Journal of Social Work* pp. 1–16.

Berridge D (2006) Theory and Explanation in Child Welfare: Education and Looked-After Children. *Child & Family Social Work* 12, (1) pages 1–10,

Biggs, J. (1987). *Student approaches to learning and studying*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research Online Available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED308201.pdf>

Bolton, P (2012) Changes to Higher Education Funding and Student Support from 2012/13 –Commons Library Standard Note (SN05753). Online. Available at <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN05753/changes-to-higher-education-funding-and-student-support-from-201213>

Business, Innovation and Skills (2013) *Exploring Student Demand for Postgraduate Study*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Crown Copyright

Blewett, B. J., Lewis, J. and Tunstill, J. (2007) "The Changing Roles and Tasks of Social Work. A literature informed discussion paper," *Advances In Social Work and Welfare Education*, Vol 13 pp. 1–46.

Boud, D, Feletti G (1998)*The Challenge of Problem-based Learning Psychology* Press,

Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*: Polity. Cambridge

Bourn, D. and Bootle, K. (2005) "Evaluation of a Distance Learning, Post Graduate Advanced Award in Social Work Programme for Child and Family Social Work Supervisors and Mentors," *Social Work Education*, 24(3), pp. 343–362.

Bowers-Brown, T. (2006) "Widening participation in higher education amongst students from disadvantaged socio-economic groups," *Tertiary Education and Management*, 12(1), pp. 59–74.

Bowie, S., Cherry, D. & House Wooding, L. (2005) 'African American MSW students: personal influences on social work careers and factors in graduate school selection', *Social Work Education*, 24, (2), pp. 169–184.

Bowie, S. L., Hall, J. C., & Johnson, O. J. (2011). Integrating diversity into graduate social work education: A 30-year retrospective view by MSW-level African American social workers. *Journal of Black Studies*. 42(7) pp 1080-1105

Bowes, et al. (2013) "The Uses and Impact of HEFCE Funding for Widening Participation," Report to HEFCE by CFE and Edhe Hill University.

Brace R, Kemp, N and Snelgar, R (2009) *SPSS for Psychologists*: 4th Edition. Palgrave. Macmillan.

Breen, R., & Lindsay, R. (2002). Different Disciplines Require Different Motivations For Student Success. *Research in Higher Education*, 43(6), 693–725

Bridges, D. (1999) "Educational Research: pursuit of truth or flight into fancy?," *British Educational Research Journal*, 25(5), pp. 597–616.

Briskman, L. (2013) "Courageous Ethnographers or Agents of The State: Challenges For Social Work," *Radical and Critical Social Work* 1(1), pp. 51–66.

British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) Social Research. (2005). *Motivations For Under- Taking The New Social Work Degree*. Scottish Executive Education Department, Edinburgh.

Brown, D. (2002). Status of theories of career choice and development. In D. Brown & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development*, (4th ed., pp. 510-515). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Brown, J (2010) *Securing a Sustainable Future For Higher Education An Independent Review of Higher Education Funding & Student Finance*. Online Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/31999/10-1208-securing-sustainable-higher-education-browne-report.pdf [accessed July 2013]

Brydon, K. (2010) "Offering social work education in an offshore context: A case study of an Australian programme delivered in Singapore," *International Social Work*, 54(5), pp. 681–699.

Brydon, K and Liddell, M (2012): Supporting International Students Undertaking Australian University Studies, *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 31:8, 995-1011

Bryman A (2008) *Social Research Methods* 3rd Edition Oxford University Press.

Burke, P (2012) *The Right to Higher Education: Beyond widening participation*. London and New York: Routledge

Burke, P (2014) *Changing pedagogical spaces: Difference, diversity and inclusion* Presentation UALL 2014 Annual Conference. University of London Online

Available at

https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uall.ac.uk%2Fuserfiles%2F%2FP_J_Burke.ppt

Butler, Ian (2002) 'A Code of Ethics for Social Work and Social Care Research', *British Journal of Social Work* 32(2): 239-48.

Bye, L., Smith, S. and Rallis, H. M. (2009) "Reflection Using an Online Discussion Forum: Impact on Student Learning and Satisfaction," *Social Work Education*, 28(8), pp. 841–855.

Byrom, T. (2010) "*The dream of social flying*": social class, higher education choice and the paradox of widening participation, *Eden Conference Workshop*. Available at: <http://etheses.nottingham.ac.uk/1053/>.

Candy, P, Crebert, G & O'Leary, J 1994, *Developing lifelong learners through undergraduate education*, Commissioned report. Australia. National Board of

Employment, Education and Training no. 28, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Cairns, K. & Stanway, S., (2004). *Learn the Child - Helping looked after children to learn: a good practice guide for social workers, carers and teachers* Skyline House: London.

Canterbury City Council (2011) Canterbury District 2010 – Equality and Diversity Profile. Online Available at <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/media/561740/Canterbury-District-Equality-and-Diversity-Profile-2010.pdf> [accessed March 2013]

Caspersz, D. and Olaru, D. (2013) "Developing 'emancipatory interest': learning to create social change," *Higher Education Research & Development*. Routledge, 33(2), pp. 226–241.

Cassidy, S. (2012) Exploring individual differences as determining factors in student academic achievement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education* 37, 793-810.

Centre for Workforce Intelligence (2011) *Developing the adult social care workforce: issues and opportunities* [online]. Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/cfwidework> [Accessed March 2013].

Chapman, J. (2013) "Talking About Quality And Corporate Governance :," (5), Quality assurance Agency pp. 1–8. Gloucester.

Chevalier, A and Conlon, G, (2003) Does It Pay to Attend a Prestigious University?. *Discussion Paper No. 848*. University College Dublin (UCD) - Institute for the Study of Social Change

Chivers, G. (2006) Informal learning by professionals in the UK. Paper presented at Professional Lifelong Learning: beyond reflective practice, a one-day conference held at Trinity and All Saints College, Leeds, 3 July 2006 [online] Available at <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/155669.pdf> [Accessed March 2013]

Chowdry H, Dearden L, Goodman A and Jin W (2012) The Distributional Impact of the 2012–13 Higher Education Funding Reforms in England. *Fiscal Studies*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 211–236 0143-5671

Christie, A. (1998). Life experience: A neglected form of knowledge in social work education and practice. *Practice*, 10(1), 55–68.

Christie, A., & Kruk, E. (1998). Choosing to become a social worker: Motives, incentives, concerns and disincentives. *Social Work Education*, 17(1), 21–34.

Christie, H., Munro, M. and Wager, F. (2005) Day students' in Higher Education: widening access students and successful transitions to university life, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*. Institute of Geography; The School of Geosciences; The University of Edinburgh, pp. 3–30.

Clapton, G. (2012) "Minding the Gap: Assisting the Transition from the Academy to the Profession," *Social Work Education*, 32(3), pp. 411–415. doi:

Clark, C. (2005) "Moral Character in Social Work," *British Journal of Social Work*, 36(1), pp. 75–89.

Clay Siebert D and Spaulding-Givens Jennifer (2006): Teaching Clinical Social Work Skills Entirely Online: A Case Example, *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 25:1, 78-91

Cleaver H, Unell I and Aldgate J (2011) *Children's Needs – Parenting Capacity. Child abuse: Parental mental illness, learning disability, substance misuse and domestic violence* 2nd edition Department of Education. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182095/DFE-00108-2011-Childrens_Needs_Parenting_Capacity.pdf

Clements, A. J., Kinman, G. and Guppy, A. (2014) "'You Could Damage Somebody's Life': Student and Lecturer Perspectives on Commitment," *Social Work Education*, 33(1), pp. 91–104.

Clifford, G. C. (2000) 'Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research', in N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn., pp. 133–55. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Clifford, V. and C. Joseph (2005) *Report of the Internationalisation of Curriculum Project*. Melbourne: Monash University.

Clifton, J. (2012) *"Front Line Improving the Children's Social Work Profession,"* Institute for Public Policy Research

Cochrane, A. L., Australasian Cochrane Centre. and Cochrane Collaboration. (1994) *The Cochrane Collaboration : preparing, maintaining and disseminating systematic reviews of the effects of health care*. Bedford Park, SA: Australasian Cochrane Centre.

Collins, J,(2004) Principles of Adult Learning. *Education Techniques for Lifelong Learning*. Volume 24, Issue 5

Collins, S. (2008) "Open and Distance Learning in Qualifying Social Work Education in Britain and the USA: Celebrating Diversity and Difference?," *Social Work Education*, 27(4), pp. 422–439.

Conlon, A. (2003) "*Does it pay to attend a prestigious university?*" London School of Economics and Political Science. London.

Cooner, T. S. (2004) "Preparing for ICT enhanced practice learning opportunities in 2010—a speculative view," *Social Work Education*, 23(6), pp. 731–744. doi:

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2007). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 3rd ed., Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cornford, I. R. (2006) "*Making generic skills more than a mantra in Vocational Education policy*," Australian Association for Research in Education. Available at <http://www.aare.edu.au/publications-database.php/5000/making-generic-skills-more-than-a-mantra-in-vocational-education-policy>

Cornwell, A. (1998) 'The National Open Learning DipSW Programme: origins and implications', *Issues in Social Work Education*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 89–100.

Corvo K, Selmi, P. and Montemaro S. (2003):"Marketing social work education: Icons of conformity" *Journal of Community Practice* 1. (1) 85-99.

Costley, C, Elliot, G and Gibbs, P (2010). *Doing Work Based Research; Approaches to Enquiry for Insider-Researchers*. University of Middlesex. Sage

Crawley, B. K. J. (2003) "Creative Pathways to Establishing a Graduate Social Work Program: An International Context," *International Social Work*, 46(4), pp. 511–523.

Cree, V. E., Hounsell, J., Christie, H., McCune, V. and Tett, L. (2009) "From further education to higher education: Social work students' experiences of transition to an ancient research-led university," *Social Work Education*, 28(8), pp. 887–901. Available at: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/39394/>.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Creswell J W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E.(2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209–240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cronin, P., Ryan, F. and Coughlan, M. (2008) "Undertaking a literature review: a step-by-step approach.," *British journal of nursing (Mark Allen Publishing)*, 17(1), pp. 38–43. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18399395>.

Cross-Denny, B., & Heyman, J.C. (2011). Social Justice Education: Impacts on social Attitudes. *Journal of Emerging Economies*, 3 (1), 4-15.

Crowell, L. F. and McCarragher, T. (2007) "Delivering a Social Work MSW Program through Distance Education: An Innovative Collaboration between Two Universities, USA," *Social Work Education*, 26(4), pp. 376–388.

Croxford, L. and Raffe, D. (2014) Social class, ethnicity and access to higher education in the four countries of the UK: 1996-2010, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33(1), 77-95

Cummings, S. M., Foels, L. and Chaffin, K. M. (2013) "Comparative Analysis of Distance Education and Classroom-based Formats for a Clinical Social Work Practice Course," *Social Work Education*, 32(1), pp. 68–80.

Currer, C. (2008) "Assessing Student Social Workers' Professional Suitability: Comparing University Procedures in England," *British Journal of Social Work*, 39(8), pp. 1481–1498.

Curtis, L., Moriarty, J. and Netten, A. (2011) "The Costs of Qualifying a Social Worker," (July), pp. 1–19.

Cwikel, J., Savaya, R., Munford, R. and Desai, M. (2010) "Innovation in schools of social work: An international exploration," *International Social Work*, 53(2), pp. 187–201.

D'aprix, A. S., Dunlap, K. M., Abel, E. and Edwards, R. L. (2004) "Goodness of fit: career goals of MSW students and the aims of the social work profession in the United States," *Social Work Education*, 23(3), pp. 265–280.

Daniel, B and Taylor, J eds. (2005) '*Child Neglect: Practice Issues for Health and Social Care*', Jessica Kingsley, London

Daniel, C. (2011) 'The path to social work: Contextual determinants of career choice among racial/ethnic minority students', *Social Work Education*, 30(8), pp. 895–910.

Danto, E. A. (2008) "Same Words, Different Meanings: Notes Toward a Typology of Postmodern Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 27(7), pp. 710–722.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds) (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Department for Children Schools and Families (2010) *Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities*. London. Crown Copyright.

Department for Culture Media and Sport (2014) *Secondary Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap Changes in the gender pay gap over time*. Department for Culture Media and Sport. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295833/Analysis_of_the_Gender_Pay_Gap.pdf

Department for Education and Skills (2003) *The Future of Higher Education*, London, HMSO.

Department for Education and Skills (2010) *The Importance of Teaching The Schools White Paper* London, HMSO.

Department Of Health (2003) *Social Services And Public Safety Access To The Social Work Degree*. London: DOH

Department of Health (2012) *Building a safe and confident future: Maintaining Momentum, Progress report from the Social Work Reform Board*. Crown Copyright. Online. Available at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175947/SWRB_progress_report_-_June_2012.pdf [accessed September 2013]

Department of Health. (2013) "Reforming the Social Work Bursary; the Government response to the consultation," Crown Copyright. London

Dey, I, (1993) *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Routledge

Dhooper, S. S., Royse, D. D. and Wolfe, L. C. (1990) "Does social work education make a difference?," *Social Work*, January(1), pp. 57–61. Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2315763>.

DiCaccavo, A (2002). Investigating individuals' motivations to become counselling psychologists: The influence of early caretaking roles within the family. *Psychology and Psychotherapy, Theory, Research, and Practice*, 75, 463-472.

Dillon, J. (2010) "The conundrum of balancing widening participation with the selection of suitable students for social work education.," *Social Work Education*. Routledge, 26(8), pp. 827–841.

Dillon, Jean (2010b) Realisable or thwarted ambitions?: 'Access to social work' students' post-compulsory education and career choices. *International Journal of Learning*, 17 (2). pp. 219-231.

Dillon, J. (2011) "Black Minority Ethnic Students Navigating their Way from Access Courses to Social Work Programmes : Key Considerations for the Selection of Students," (March), pp. 1477–1496.

DeNeui, D. L. & Dodge, T. L. (2006). Asynchronous learning networks and student outcomes: the utility of online learning components in hybrid courses. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, 33, 4, 256–259.

Doyle, L Brady A, and Byrne G (2009) An Overview of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Research in Nursing* 14: pp. 175-185,

Drolet, J., Clark, N., & Allen, H. (2012). *Shifting sites of practice: Field education in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.

Dunne, C (2011) The Place of The Literature Review In Grounded Theory Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 14. (2) pp. 111–124

Eisenhardt K. (1989). Building Theories From Case Study Research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14 (4): 532-550.

Erikson, E.H. (1963). *Childhood and Society*. (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.

Fabricant, M and Burghardt S (1992) *The welfare State crisis and the transformation of social service work*. New York: Sharpe.

Fairtlough, A., Fletcher, J., Bernard, C. and Ahmet, A. (2012)'Experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual students on social work programmes: Developing a framework for educational practice' *British Journal of Social Work* 42 (1):

Fargion, Silvia, Gevorgianiene, V, and Lievens, Pieter (2011): Developing Entrepreneurship in Social Work Through International Education. Reflections on a European Intensive Programme, *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 30:8, 964-980

Faul, A. C., Frey, A. J. and Barber, R. (2004) 'The effects of web assisted instruction in a social work research course', *Social Work Education*, vol. 23, pp. 105–118.

Fernandez, E. (1998) "Student perceptions of satisfaction with practicum learning," *Social Work Education*, 17(2), pp. 173–201.

Field J and Leicester M (2000) *Lifelong Learning: Education Across the Lifespan* London. Routledge

Finlay, L., and Gough, B. (Eds.). (2003). *Reflexivity: A practical guide for researchers in health and social science*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Fook, J., Ryan, M. and Hawkins, L. (2000) *Professional Expertise: Practice, Theory and Education for Working in Uncertainty*, London, UK, Whiting and Birch.

Forrester-Jones R & Hatzidimitriadou E (2006) Learning in the real world? Exploring widening participation student views concerning the 'fit' between knowledge learnt and work practices, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, , 31:6, 611-624,

Fournier, V. (1999) 'The Appeal to "Professionalism" As A Disciplinary Mechanism', *The Sociological Review*, 47(2): 280-307.

Freund, A., Blit-Cohen, E., Cohen, A. and Dehan, N. (2013) "Professional Commitment in Novice Social Work Students: Socio-Demographic Characteristics, Motives and Perceptions of the Profession," *Social Work Education*, 32(7), pp. 867–887.

Frostick, T and Gault, T. (2013) *Postgraduate education : better funding and better access*. CentreForum UK

Fuller, A., (2001), "Credentialism, adults and part-time higher education in the United Kingdom: an account of rising take up and some implications for policy", *Journal of Education Policy* 16:(3), pp 233-248

Fuller, A., (2007), Mid-Life 'Transitions' to Higher Education: Developing a multi-level explanation of increasing participation, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 39:2, 217-235.

Furlong, J (2013) *Education - an Anatomy of the Discipline: Rescuing the University Project?* USA and Canada Routledge,

Furness, S. (2007) "An Enquiry into Students' Motivations to Train as Social Workers in England," *Journal of Social Work*, 7(2), pp. 239–253.

Furness, S. (2011) "Gender at Work: Characteristics of 'Failing' Social Work Students," *British Journal of Social Work*, 42(3), pp. 480–499.

General Social Care Council (2012) "*The supply of social work practice placements : Employers ' views*" Research report. General Social Care Council

Gerke S K., and Berens L V. (2005) *The I in Team: Accelerating Performance of Remote and Co-located Teams*: Unite Business Press

Gibbert, M., & Ruigrok, W. (2010). The "what" and "how" of case study rigor: Three strategies based on published research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 13(4): 710-737.

Gibbs, P. (1994). Screening mechanisms in BSW programs. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 30, 63-75.

Gibbs, P., & Blakely, E.H. (2000). Academic standards for admission and retention. In P. Gibbs & E.H. Blakely (Eds.), *Gatekeeping in BSW programs* (pp. 259-278). New York: Columbia University Press.

Gibbs, P., & Macy, H. J. (2000). Introduction: The arena of gatekeeping. In P. Gibbs & E. H. Blakely (Eds.), *Gatekeeping in BSW programs* (pp. 107-134). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Gibbs, A. and Stirling, B. (2010) "Reflections on Designing and Teaching a Social Work Research Course for Distance and On-Campus Students," *Social Work Education*, 29(4), pp. 441–449.

Giffords, E. D. (1998) "Social work on the Internet: An introduction," *Social Work*, 43(3), pp. 243–251.

Gillingham, P. (2009) "Ghosts in the Machine: Student Participation and Grade Attainment in a Web-Assisted Social Work Course," *Social Work Education*, 28(4), pp. 423–435.

Gillingham, P. (2011) Decision-making tools and the development of expertise in child protection practitioners: are we 'just breeding workers who are good at ticking boxes'? *Child and Family Social Work* 16 (4) 756 412.

Glaser B (1965) The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis. *Social Problems*. 12, (4) pp. 436-445 University of California Press

Glaser, BG. & Strauss, AL. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*, London, Bloomsbury

Gorard et al (2006) *Review of Widening Participation Research: addressing barriers to participation in higher education*. HEFCE: Bristol

Gordon, J., Dumbleton, S. and Miller, C. (2010) "We thought we would be the dunces' – From a vocational qualification to a social work degree: an example of widening participation in social work education," *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 12(0), pp. 169–184. Available at: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/25088/>.

Greene, M (2014) On the Inside Looking In: Methodological Insights and Challenges in Conducting Qualitative Insider Research. *The Qualitative Report* 19, (15), 1-13 Available online <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR19/greene15.pdf> [Accessed January 2015]

Green, J. and V. Caracelli, (eds). (1997). Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges and benefits of integrating diverse paradigms. In *New directions for evaluation*, American Evaluation Association. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Griffiths, V. (2007) "Experiences of training on an employment-based route into teaching in England," *Journal of In-Service Education*, 33(1), pp. 107–123.

Hancock, D, & Algozzine, B. (2006). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Harasim, L. (2000). Shift happens: Online education as a new paradigm in learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(1–2), pp. 41–61,

Harding, S., Ferguson, M. & Radey, M. (2005). Does poverty matter? An analysis of courses on poverty at the top 50 schools of social work. *Arete*, 28(2), pp.39-53.

Harrison, N. (2011) Have the changes introduced by the 2004 Higher Education Act made higher education admissions in England wider and fairer? *Journal of Education Policy*, 26 (3). pp. 449-468.

Hewitt-Taylor J (2001) Use of Constant Comparative Analysis In Qualitative Research *Nursing Standard*, 15(42):39-42

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2001) *Strategies for Widening Participation in Higher Education – A Guide to Good Practice*. 2001/36. Bristol: HEFCE. Online Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/2001/01_36.htm [accessed July 2013]

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2002) *Information on Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Final Report of the Task Group*. 2002/15. Bristol: HEFCE. Online Available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2002/02_15.htm [accessed July 2013]

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2003a) *HEFCE Widening Participation and Fair Access Research Strategy*. 2004/06. Bristol: HEFCE Online Available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04%5F06/default.asp> [accessed July 2004]

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2003b) Performance Indicators in Higher Education: 2000-01 and 2001-02. 2003/59. Bristol: HEFCE. Online Available at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/perfind/2003/default.asp> [accessed 13 August 2004]

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2006) Review of widening participation research : addressing the barriers to participation in higher education. Higher Education Funding Council for England. London

Higher Education Funding Council for England (2013) "Trends in transition from first degree to postgraduate study : Qualifiers between 2002-03. Higher Education Funding Council for England. London

Higher Education Policy Institute. (2013) "*Flexible Learning : Wrapping Higher Education Around the Needs of Part- Time Students*", [online] Available at <http://www.hepi.ac.uk/2013/03/21/flexible-learning-wrapping-higher-education-around-the-needs-of-part-time-students> [Accessed January 2014]

Higher Education Statistics Agency (2012) *Patterns and Trends In Uk Higher Education*. HESA

Hillage J, Uden T, Aldridge F, Eccles J (2000) Adult Learning in England: a Review Report 369, *Institute for Employment Studies*.

Holmström, C. (2014) "Suitability for Professional Practice: Assessing and Developing Moral Character in Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*. Taylor & Francis, pp. 451–468.

Holmström, C. and Taylor, I. (2008) "Researching Admissions: What Can We Learn about Selection of Applicants from Findings about Students in Difficulty on a Social Work Programme?," *Social Work Education*, 27(8), pp. 819–836.

Hussain S, Abbas M, Shahzad K and Asiya Bukhari S (2012) Personality and career choices. *African Journal of Business Management*. 6(6), pp. 2255-2260,

Hussein, S., Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J. and Huxley, P. (2008) "Diversity And Progression Among Students Starting Social Work Qualifying Programmes In England Between 1995 And 1998 : A Quantitative Study," *British Journal of Social Work*.38, pp. 1588–1609.

Hussein, S., Moriarty, J. and Manthorpe, J. (2009) *Variations in Progression of Social Work Students in England: Using Student Data to Help Promote Achievement: Under-graduate Full-Time Students' Progression on the Social Work Degree*, London, Social Care Workforce Research Unit, King's College London and General Social Care Council.

Hussein, S., Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J. and Huxley, P. (2006) *A Report on Progression among DipSW Students*, London, The General Social Care Council.

Hussein, S., Stevens, M., Manthorpe, J. and Moriarty, J. (2011) "Change and Continuity: A Quantitative Investigation of Trends and Characteristics of International Social Workers in England," *British Journal of Social Work*, 41(6), pp. 1140–1157.

Hutchings M, Maylor U, Mendick H, Menter I and Smart Sarah (2006) *An Evaluation of Innovative Approaches to Teacher Training on the Teach First programme: Final report to the Training and Development Agency for Schools*. Institute for Policy Studies in Education

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2001) *Definition of Social Work* Berne, Switzerland: Online available at <http://ifsw.org/policies/global-standards/>

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) (2012) "*The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development Commitment To Action*" International federation of social workers

Igun S E. (2010) Difficulties and Motivation of Postgraduate Students in Selected Nigerian Universities University of Nebraska - *Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)* 5-(24)-Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Ivankova, N. V. (2006) "Using Mixed-Methods Sequential Explanatory Design: From Theory to Practice," *Field Methods*, 18(1), pp. 3–20.

Ives, N. G. and Aitken, O. (2008) "Technology and Access: Responding to the Social Work Education Needs of First Nations and Inuit Communities," *Social Work Education*, 27(6), pp. 683–692.

Jalali, S. (2012) "Systematic Literature Studies: Database Searches vs . Backward Snowballing." *Empirical Software Engineering and Measurement (ESEM)*, ACM-IEEE

Jenkins, A (2006) "Women, lifelong Learning and Transitions into Employment," *Work, Employment & Society*, 20(2), *Work Employment Society*; 20; 309 pp. 309–328.

Jerrim J (2013) Family Background and Access To 'High Status' Universities. The Sutton Trust

Johnson, B. (2013) "User Movies as a Means of Incorporating the Knowledge and Experience of Users in Web-based Professional Education," *Social Work Education*, 32(4), pp. 468–483.

Johnson, R and, Onwuegbuzie, A (2004) Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come. *Education Research* 33: pp14–26.

Jones, C. (2001) 'Voices from the front line: State social workers and New Labour', *British Journal of Social Work*, 31(4), pp. 547–62

Jones, K. (2006) "Valuing Diversity and Widening Participation: The Experiences of Access to Social Work Students in Further and Higher Education," *Social Work Education*. 25(5), pp. 485–500.

Kropf, N.P. (2000) Gatekeeping in BSW programs. In P. Gibbs and E.H. Blakely (eds.), *Gatekeeping in BSW programs*, Columbia University Press, New York, 60-72.

Kember, D., Hong, C. and Ho, A. (2008) "Characterizing the motivational orientation of students in higher education: a naturalistic study in three Hong Kong universities.," *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78(Pt 2), pp. 313–29.

Kent County Council (2012) Equality and Diversity Profile of Canterbury District. Online Available at http://www.kent.gov.uk/your_council/kent_facts_and_figures/equality_and_diversity.aspx [accessed March 2013]

Kolb, A. Y. and Kolb, D. A. (2012) "Learning Styles and Learning Spaces : Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2), pp. 193–212.

Laming, H. (2009) *The Protection Of Children In England: A Progress Report*, London: The Stationary Office. London

Landau, R. (2008). Social work research ethics: Dual roles and boundary issues. *Families in Society*, 89, 571–577.

Larson, M.S. (1977) *The Rise Of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Larson, M.S. (1990) 'In the matter of experts and professionals, or how impossible it is to leave nothing unsaid', in R. Torstendahl & M. Burrage (eds.) *The formation of professions: Knowledge, state and strategy*. London: Sage.

Leece, J. and Leece, D. (2011) "Personalisation : Perceptions of the Role of Social Work in a World of Brokers and Budgets," *British Journal of Social Work* (41), pp. 204–223.

Lefevre, M. (2013) "Becoming Effective Communicators with Children : Developing Practitioner Capability through Social Work Education," *British Journal of Social Work*, pp. 1–21.

Lenning, Oscar T.; Ebbers, Larry H.(1999) The Powerful Potential of Learning Communities: Improving Education for the Future. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report*, Vol. 26, No. 6.

Levinson, D. J. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York: Ballantine.

Liu, M., Sun, F. and Anderson, S. G. (2013) "Challenges in Social Work Field Education in China: Lessons from the Western Experience," *Social Work Education*, 32(2), pp. 179–196.

Lymbery, M. (2012) "Social Work and Personalisation : Fracturing the Bureau-Professional Compact ?," *British Journal of Social Work* 44 (5) pp. 1–17.

Lymbery, M. (2009) "Troubling Times for British Social Work Education?," *Social Work Education*, 28(8), pp. 902–918.

Madoc-Jones, I. and Parrott, L. (2005) "Virtual Social Work Education—Theory and Experience," *Social Work Education*, 24(7), pp. 755–768.

Maidment, J. (2005) "Teaching Social Work Online: Dilemmas and Debates," *Social Work Education*, 24(2), pp. 185–195.

Mangione, T.W. (1995). *Mail Surveys: Improving the Quality*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Manktelow, R. and Lewis, C. A. (2005) "A Study of the Personality Attributes of Applicants for Postgraduate Social Work Training to a Northern Ireland University," *Social Work Education*, 24(3), pp. 297–309.

Manthorpe, J., Harris, J. and Hussein, S. (2010). Social Work Educators' Views and Experiences of Grow Your Own Qualifying Programmes in England, *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 30:(8), 882-894

Manthorpe, J., Moriarty, J., Hussein, S., Stevens, M., Sharpe, E., Orme, J., MacIntyre, G., Lister, P. G. and Crisp, B. (2010) "Applications to Social Work Programmes in England: Students as Consumers?," *Social Work Education*, 29(6), pp. 584–598.

Maple, M., Jarrott, H. and Kuyini, A. B. (2013) "Blended Learning in Rural Social Work Education: Reflections from a New Australian Bachelor of Social Work Course," *Social Work Education*, 32(3), pp. 349–364.

Mariano, C. (2000). Case study: the method. Chapter 10. In P. Munhall & C. Oiler Boyd, Eds. *Nursing Research. A Qualitative Perspective* (2nd ed.) (pp. 311- 337). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.

Marshall, C and Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousands Oaks: Sage Publication

Martin, V.B & Gynnild, A. (Eds). (2011). *Grounded Theory: The Philosophy, Method, And Work Of Barney Glaser*. Boca Raton. Brown Walker Press.

Martinez-Brawley, E. E. (1999) "Social work, postmodernism and higher education," *International Social Work*, 42(3), pp. 333–346.

Martinez-Brawley, E. & Zorita, P. (2007) Tacit and Codified Knowledge in Social Work: A Critique Of Standardization In Education And Practice. *Families in Society*, 88(4), pp. 534-542.

Maxwell, J.A. and Loomis, D.M. (2003) 'Mixed Methods Design: An Alternative Approach', in A. Tashakkori and C. Teddlie (eds) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, pp. 209–40. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Mayer, R.E., (2005). Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. In R. E. Mayer (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning* (pp.19-30). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Mayer, R. E., & Moreno, R. (2003). Nine Ways to Reduce Cognitive Load In Multimedia Learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 38, 43–52.

Mercer J (2007) The Challenges of Insider Research in Educational Institutions: Wielding a Double-Edged Sword and Resolving Delicate Dilemmas, *Oxford Review of Education*, 33:1, 1-17

Meyer C (2001) A Case in Case Study Methodology. *Field Methods* 13: 329

Millburn (2012) *University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility A progress report by the Independent Reviewer on Social Mobility and Child Poverty*. Crown Copyright. Available at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/80188/Higher-Education.pdf

Mohan, B. A. B. C. (2008) "Rethinking international social work," *International Social Work*, 51(1), pp. 11–24.

Moorjani J, Manika MS, Sujata G (2007). Career Choice and Personality as Predictors of Cognitive Interference. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology.*, 33(2): 291-294

Moore, B. (2008) "Using Technology to Promote Communities of Practice (CoP) in Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 27(6), pp. 592–600.

Moore, J. C. (2009). A synthesis of Sloan-C effective practices: December 2009. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 13(4), 84-94

Moore J, Sanders J and Higham L (2013) *Literature Review of Research into Widening Participation to Higher Education* ARC Network Ltd HEFCE

Morgan, D. (1998). Practical strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative methods: Applications to health research. *Qualitative Health Research* 8:pp. 362–76.

Moriarty, J., Hussein, S., Manthorpe, J. and Stevens, M. (2011) "International social workers in England: Factors influencing supply and demand," *International Social Work*, 55(2), pp. 169–184.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Chauhan, B., Jones, G., Wenman, H. and Hussein, S. (2009) "'Hanging on a Little Thin Line': Barriers to Progression and Retention in Social Work Education," *Social Work Education*, 28(4), pp. 363–379.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Stevens, M., Hussein, S., Sharpe, E., Orme, J., MacIntyre, G., Green Lister, P. and Crisp, B. (2010) A depth of data: Research messages on the state of social work education in England. *Research, Policy and Planning*, 28(1), 29–42.

Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Hussein, S., Stevens, M., Sharpe, E., MacIntyre, G., Orme, J., Green Lister, P. and Crisp, B. R. (2011) "The Social Work Bursary in England: Impact of Funding Arrangements upon Social Work Education and the Future Workforce," *British Journal of Social Work*, 42(5), pp. 957–973.

Moriarty, J. and Murray, J. (2005) "Who Wants to be a Social Worker? Using Routine Published Data to Identify Trends in the Numbers of People Applying for and Completing Social Work Programmes in England," *British Journal of Social Work*, 37(4), pp. 715–733.

Mullen F (2010) *Briefing Barriers to Widening Access to Higher Education*. Spice Information Centre

Munro, E. (2011) *The Munro review of child protection: Final report*. London: The Stationery Office.

Napier, L. and George, J. (2001) "Changing social work education in Australia," *Social Work Education*, 20(1), pp. 75–87.

Narey, S. M. (2014) *Making The Education Of Social Workers Consistently Effective*. Crown Copyright. London

NASW (2005) *Definition of social work*. Online Available at http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/clinical_sw.asp#definitions [Accessed December 2013]

Northedge, A. (2003) "Rethinking Teaching in the Context of Diversity," *Teaching in Higher Education*. 8(1), pp. 17–32.

NSPCC (2011) *Smart Cuts? Public spending on children's social care*. A report produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). Online available at http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/smart_cuts_pdf_wdf85752.pdf

Nulty D (2008) The Adequacy of Response Rates to Online and Paper Surveys: What Can Be Done? *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. 33, (3), 301–314

Oliffe J L and Greaves L (2012) *Designing and Conducting Gender, Sex, and Health*. British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health Research. University of British Columbia, Canada

Okech, D., Barner, J., Segoshi, M. and Carney, M. (2014) "MSW Student Experiences in Online vs. Face-to-Face Teaching Formats?," *Social Work Education*, 33(1), pp. 121–134.

Office for National statistics (2012) 2011 Census, Key Statistics for Local Authorities in England and Wales. Online Available at <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-2862621> [accessed March 2013].

Osmond, J., & Darlington, Y. (2005). Reflective analysis: Techniques for facilitating reflection. *Australian Social Work*, 58(1), 3–14.

Oxford Economics (2013) *The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Students*. A report for the University of Sheffield. Oxford Economics

Pack, M. J. (2013) "A Tale of Two Programmes: Developing Communities of Learning with Practice Partners in Social Work and Humanitarian Studies at Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory, Australia," *Social Work Education*, 32(8), pp. 1011–1020.

Padadaki, V. (2001) 'Studying social work: choice or compromise? Students' views in a social work school in Greece', *Social Work Education*, 20, (4), pp. 137–147.

Padgett, D. K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social work research: Challenges and rewards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Panos, P. T. (2005) 'A model for using videoconferencing technology to support international social work field practicum students', *International Social Work*, vol. 48, (6) pp. 834–841.

Parker, J., & Merrylees, S. (2002). Why become a professional? Experiences of care-giving and the decision to enter social work or nursing education. *Learning in Health and Social Care*, 1(2), 105–114.

Parton N (2008) Changes in the Form of Knowledge in Social Work: From the 'Social' to the 'Informational'? *British Journal of Social Work* 38, 253–269

Patton, M. Q. (1980). *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Payne, M (2006) *What is Professional Social Work?* Bristol, Policy Press

Pierson, John (2011) *Understanding Social Work: History And Context*: McGraw-Hill International,

Perry, R. W. and Cree, V. E. (2003) "The changing gender profile of applicants to qualifying social work training in the UK," *Social Work Education*, 22(4), pp. 375–383.

Perry, R. W. (2004) "The Impact of Criminal Conviction Disclosure on the Self-reported Offending Profile of Social Work Students," *British Journal of Social Work*, 34(7), pp. 997–1008.

Pollard, K. C. and Miers, M. E. (2008) "From students to professionals: results of a longitudinal study of attitudes to pre-qualifying collaborative learning and working in health and social care in the United Kingdom.," *Journal of interprofessional care*, 22(4), pp. 399–416.

Powell, J. L. and Khan, H. T. A. (2012) "Foucault, social theory and social work," Parton, N. (ed.) *Social Work*. Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, p. 1. Available at: <http://eprints.mdx.ac.uk/91115/>.

Prem S. Fry, Corey L. M. Keyes (2010) *New Frontiers in Resilient Aging: Life-Strengths and Well-Being in Late Life*. New York. Cambridge University Press.

Prospects (2014) Social worker: Salary and conditions Online. Available at http://www.prospects.ac.uk/social_worker_salary.htm [accessed July 2014]

QAA (2009) "Academic credit in higher education in England - An introduction". Quality Assurance agency for higher education. Gloucester

QAA (2011) "UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards Contents". The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education .Gloucester

OFSTED (2011) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2010/11 Online*

Available at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/annualreport1011>

Quick, L., Forsyth, K. and Melton, J. (2007) "From Graduate to Reflective Practice Scholar," *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 70(11), pp. 471–474.

Quinney, A. (2005) "'Placements Online': Student Experiences of a Website to Support Learning in Practice Settings," *Social Work Education*, 24(4), pp. 439–450.

Quinney, L. and Fowler, P. (2013) "Facilitating Shared Online Group Learning between Carers, Service Users and Social Work Students," *Social Work Education*, 32(8), pp. 1021–1031.

Reeves, P. M. and Reeves, T. C. (2008) "Design considerations for online learning in health and social work education," *Learning in Health and Social Care* 7, (1) pp. 46

Reynolds, B. C. (1942/1985). *Learning and teaching in the practice of social work*. New York: Russell and Russell; Silver Spring, Md.: National Association of Social Workers

Robertson, M. and Wilkinson, D. (2006), *Student Entrepreneurial Intentions Survey 2005-06*, Centre for Graduate Entrepreneurship in Yorkshire, Leeds.

Rubin, A, and Babbie, E (2009) *-Essential Research Methods for Social Work* Cengage Learning

Rudd P (2011), *Interventions to Promote Improved Access to Higher Education: Exploratory Paper*. Evidence resource by the Bridge Group. Online available at <http://www.thebridgegroup.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/InterventionsHE.pdf> [Accessed March 2014]

Russell Group (2010) "Staying on top: The challenge of sustaining world-class higher education in the UK," *Russell Group Papers* – (2).

Sakamoto, I., Anastas, J. W., McPhail, B. A. and Colarossi, L. G. (2008) "Status Of Women In Social Work Education," *Journal of Social Work Education*, 44(1), pp. 37–62.

Sastry, T. (2005) *Postgraduate research degree programmes in English universities- costs and revenues*, HEPI Online available at <http://headsaa5.miniserver.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/postgraduateresearchdegreeprogrammes-costsandrevenues.pdf>

Schön, D (1987) *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass

Seabury, B. A. (2005) 'An evaluation of on-line, interactive tutorials designed to teach practice concepts', *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, vol. 25, pp. 103–115

Searle, R. H. and Patent, V. (2012) "Recruitment, Retention and Role Slumping in Child Protection: The Evaluation of In-Service Training Initiatives," *British Journal of Social Work*, 43(6), pp. 1111–1129.

Sellers, L. & Hunter, A. (2005) 'Private pain, public choices: Influence of problems in the family of origin on career choices among a cohort of MSW students', *Social Work Education*, 24, (8), pp. 869–881.

Shaw, R.L. (2010). Embedding Reflexivity Within Experiential Qualitative Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 7(3), pp 233- 243.

Siebert, D. C. and Spaulding-Givens, J. (2006) "Teaching Clinical Social Work Skills Entirely Online: A Case Example," *Social Work Education*, 25(1), pp. 78–91.

Sieminski, S. and Seden, J. (2011) "An Exploration of How Some Tutors Use Learning Materials to Enable Student Social Workers to Link Theory to Practice While Learning in the Workplace," *Social Work Education*, 30(7), pp. 797–810.

Sikes, P and Potts, A (2008). *Researching Educationn from the Inside; Investigations from within*. Routledge.

Singh, S., Gumz, E. J. and Crawley, B. C. (2011) "Predicting India's Future: Does it Justify the Exportation of US Social Work Education?," *Social Work Education*, 30(7), pp. 861–873.

Skehill C (2007) Researching the history of social work: exposition of a history of the present approach, *European Journal of Social Work*, 10:4, 449-463

Skills for Care (2012) *The Social Work ASYE: A 'Mini-Guide' to The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment*. Leeds, www.skillsforcare.org.uk

Smith R (2009) *Doing Social Work Reseach*.Maidenhead.Open University Press

Smith, R., Mclenachan, J., Venn, L., Weich, H. and Anthony, D. (2013) "Step up to Social Work Programme Evaluation 2012: The Regional Partnerships and Employers Perspectives," (June), pp. 0–160.

Smithers A, Robinson P and Coughlan M-D (2013) *The Good Teacher Training Guide 2013*. Centre for Education and Employment Research University of Buckingham. Online Available at <http://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/GTTG2013.pdf> [accessed July 2014]

Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (2014) "Elitist Britain ?". Commission on Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission. London

Social Work Policy Institute (2011) *"Investing In The Social Work Work Force"*. National Association of Social Workers. USA

Social Work Reform Board (2010) "Building a safe and confident future : One year on," Crown Copyright

Spolander, G., Pullen-Sansfacon, a., Brown, M. and Engelbrecht, L. (2011) "Social work education in Canada, England and South Africa: A critical comparison of undergraduate programmes," *International Social Work*, 54(6), pp. 816–831.

Strauss, A and ; Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc..

Steele, C M. (1997) A Threat in The Air: How Stereotypes Shape Intellectual Identity and Performance. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629

Stevens, M., Moriarty, J., Manthorpe, J., Hussein, S., Sharpe, E., Orme, J., Mcyntyre, G., Cavanagh, K., Green-Lister, P. and Crisp, B. R. (2010) "Helping others or a rewarding career? Investigating student motivations to train as social workers in England," *Journal of Social Work*, 12(1), pp. 16–36.

Swanborn, P. (2010). *Case study research: What, why and how?* London, UK: Sage.

Swenson, P. W., & Evans, M. (2003). Hybrid courses as learning communities. In S. Reisman, J. G. Flores, & D. Edge (Eds.), *Electronic learning communities: Issues and practices* (pp. 27-71). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Tashakkori, A., and Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative And Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Taylor, I. and Bogo, M. (2014) "Perfect Opportunity ~ Perfect Storm? Raising the Standards of Social Work Education in England," *British Journal of Social Work* 44 (5) 1–17 pp. 1–17.

Taylor, Y. (2008) "Good students, bad pupils: constructions of 'aspiration', 'disadvantage' and social class in undergraduate-led widening participation work," *Educational Review.*, 60(2), pp. 155–168.

Taylor, C. and White, S. (2006) 'Knowledge and reasoning in social work, educating for humane judgement', *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, pp. 937–54.

Teddlie, Ch., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Torgersen D.(nd) *Increasing Response Rates to Postal Questionnaires*. University of York Department of Health Sciences

The Cochrane Collaboration (2011) *Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions*. [online] Available at <http://www.cochrane.org/handbook> [Accessed December 2012]

The College of Social Work. (2011) "Recommendations for the selection of students onto social work degree courses in England", Available at <http://www.tcsw.org.uk/Educators/>

Thompson, J. & Bekhradnia, B. (2010) *The government's proposals for higher education funding and student finance – an analysis*, Oxford: HEPI

Thyer, B (2010) *The Handbook of Social Work Research Methods*. Sage

Trevithick, P. (2008) "Revisiting the Knowledge Base of Social Work: A Framework for Practice," *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(6), pp. 1212–1237.

Trow M. (1973). *Problems in the Transition from Elite to Mass Higher Education*. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education.

Trow, M. (2007) "Reflections on the Transition from Elite to Mass to Universal Access: Forms and Phases of Higher Education in Modern Societies since WWII," in Forest, J. F. and Altbach, P. (eds) *International Handbook of Higher Education SE - 13*. Springer Netherlands (Springer International Handbooks of Education), pp. 243–280.

Trowler, P. (2011) Researching your own institution, *British Educational Research Association* on-line resource. Available on-line at <https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Researching-your-own-institution-Higher-Education.pdf> Accessed January 2015

UNISON (Nodate) Community and voluntary services in the age of austerity. Online available at <https://www.unison.org.uk/upload/sharepoint/On%20line%20Catalogue/21929.pdf>

Urdang, E. (2008) *Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Interweaving the Inner and Outer Worlds*, 2nd edn, Routledge, New York.

Urdang, E. (2010). *Awareness of Self – A Critical Tool*. *Social Work Education*, 29(5), 523-538.

Van Vught, F (2009) Diversity and Differentiation in Higher Education: Mapping the Higher Education Landscape. *Higher Education Dynamics* 28, , pp 1-16.

Velde, C. (1999) "An alternative conception of competence: implications for vocational education," *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 51(3), pp. 437–447.

Vygotsky, L. (1978) Interaction between learning and development in *Mind in Society*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 79–9

Wakeling, P. B. J. (2009) Social Class and Access to Postgraduate Education in the UK: a Sociological Analysis. PhD thesis. University of Manchester.

Wakeling, P. B. J. (2010) *Access To Higher Education After The First Degree Do Background Effects Continue To Decline?* Paper presented to the European Conference on Educational Research University of Helsinki, Finland

Wakeling, P. and Kyriacou, C. (2010) "Widening Participation From Undergraduate To Postgraduate Research Degrees A Research Synthesis,". Department of Educational Studies University of York

Waldman, J and Rafferty J (2008) Technology-Supported Learning and Teaching in Social Work in the UK—A Critical Overview of the Past, Present and Possible Futures. *Social Work Education* 27 (6), 581-591

Walkowitz D J (1999) *Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-class Identity*. University of North Carolina Press

Warren, D. (2002) "Curriculum Design in a Context of Widening Participation in Higher Education," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 1(1), pp. 85–99.

Waterman, B. T. (2002) "Motivations for Choosing Social Service as a Career," pp. 1–19. Available at <http://www.bedrugfree.net/articles.html> (Accessed 09//07/13)

Watson, D. and West, J. (2006) "Social Work Process and Practice: Approaches, Knowledge and Skills," *Social Work*. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 184. Available at: <http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&btnG=Search&q=intitle:Social+Work+Process+and+Practice:+Approaches,+Knowledge+and+Skills#0>.

Watson, D. and West, J. (2008) "The Impact of Using Personal Learning Audits as a Means of Preparing Students for Practice: A Small-Scale Evaluation," *Social Work Education*, 27(7), pp. 744–758.

Webb, C. M. and Carpenter, J. (2012) "What Can Be Done to Promote the Retention of Social Workers? A Systematic Review of Interventions," *British Journal of Social Work* 42, pp. 1235–1255.

Webb, S., Brine, J. and Jackson, S. (2006) "Gender, Foundation Degrees and the knowledge-driven economy," *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 58(4), pp. 563–576.

Weber, L (2009) *Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality: A Conceptual Framework* Oxford University Press, USA

Webber, M., Currin, L., Groves, N., Hay, D. and Fernando, N. (2010) "Social Workers Can e-Learn: Evaluation of a Pilot Post-Qualifying e-Learning Course in Research Methods and Critical Appraisal Skills for Social Workers," *Social Work Education*, 29(1), pp. 48–66.

Webster, J. and Watson, R. T. (2011) "Analyzing The Past To Prepare For The Future : Writing A Review," *Management Information System Quarterly* 26(2).

Welbourne, P. (2011) 'Twenty-first century social work: the influence of political context on public service provision in social work education and service delivery', *European Journal of Social Work*, 14, (3), pp. 403–420.

Wilson (2005) "An Overview of Social Work Education in Australia" *Portularia* pp. 187–204. Universidad de Huelva

Wilson G and Campbell A (2012) Developing Social Work Education: Academic Perspectives *British Journal of Social Work* 44 (5) 1–19

White, S. (1997) "Beyond Retrodution? — Hermeneutics , Reflexivity and Social Work Practice," *Social Work*, 27(5), pp. 739–753. Available at: <http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/27/5/739>.

Wiebe, M. (2012): "Shifting Sites of Practice, Field Education in Canada", *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 31:5, 681-682

Wiesenberg, F. & Stacey, E. (2005) 'Reflections on teaching and learning online: quality program design, delivery and support issues from a cross global perspective', *Distance Education*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 385–404.

Wilke D.J. & Vinton L. (2006) Evaluation of The First Web-Based Advanced Standing MSW program. *Journal of Social Work Education* 42, 607–620.

Williams, C. and Parrott, L. (2012) "Anti-Racism and Predominantly ' White Areas ': Local and National Referents in the Search for Race Equality in Social Work Education," *British Journal of Social Work* 44 (5) 1–20 pp. 1–20.

William-White, L. (2012). Multicultural Education and Social Justice in the Age of Economic Uncertainty. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 5(2), 1 75-203.

Wilson, G. and Campbell, A. (2012) "Developing Social Work Education : Academic Perspectives," *British Journal of Social Work* *British Journal of Social Work* 44 (5), pp. 1–19.

Wilson, G. & McCrystal, P. (2007) 'Motivations and career aspirations of MSW students in Northern Ireland', *Social Work Education*, 26, (1) pp. 35–52.

Wisker, G. (2008) *The Postgraduate Research Handbook*. 2nd ed. London: Palgrave.

White, C., Fook, J. & Gardiner, F. (eds) (2006) *Critical Reflection in Health and Social Care*, Open University, Berkshire.

White, S. and Stancombe, J. (2003) *Clinical Judgement in the Health and Welfare Professions: Extending the evidence base*. Maidenhead: Open University Press

Wyness G (2010) Policy changes in UK higher education funding, 1963-2009. *DoQSS Working Paper No. 10-15* Department of Quantitative Social Science. Online Available at <http://repec.ioe.ac.uk/REPEc/pdf/qsswp1015.pdf> [accessed January 2014]

Yin, R. (1993). *Applications of case study research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Yin, R. K. (1999). Enhancing the quality of case studies in health services research. *Health Services Research*, 34(5), 1209-1224

Yin, R. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5rd ed.). Cosmos Corporation: Sage.

Young and Ashton (1967) *British Social Work in the Nineteenth Century*. Butler and Tanner Ltd Frome and London. Online Available at [http://www.historyofsocialwork.org/PDFs/1965,%20Young%20Ashton,%20British%20social%20work%2019th%20century%20OCR%20\(c%20notice\).pdf](http://www.historyofsocialwork.org/PDFs/1965,%20Young%20Ashton,%20British%20social%20work%2019th%20century%20OCR%20(c%20notice).pdf) [accessed December 2013]

Young S, and Delves, L (2009) *Expanding to fit the (blog)space: Enhancing social work education through online technologies* Proceedings ascilite. Auckland Online Available at <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/auckland09/procs/young.pdf> [accessed December 2013]

Appendices

Appendix 1 Literature Databases

ASSIA: Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts

Australian Education Index

British Education Index (BEI)

CINAHL – nursing and allied health

EBSCO

ERIC

IngentaConnect

JSTOR

PsycINFO

Social Care Online

Social Services Abstracts

Appendix 2 Data Extraction forms

Data Extraction Form

1 Primary sources

Title	
Author and year	
Journal/book/conference paper (full reference)	
Purpose of study:	
Type of study:	
Setting	
Data collection method	
Major findings:	
Recommendations:	
Key thoughts/comments,	
e.g. strengths/weakness	

Data Extraction Form

2 Secondary sources/reviews

Title:	
Author and year	
Journal/book/conference paper (full reference)	
Review questions/purpose	
Key definitions:	
Review boundaries:	
Appraisal criteria:	
Synthesis of studies	
Summary/conclusions:	
Key thoughts/comments	
e.g. strengths/weakness	

Data Extraction Form

3 Non research literature

Title	
Author and year:	
Journal/book/conference paper (full reference)	
Purpose of paper/presentation/book	
Credibility	
Quality:	
Content	
Coherence:	
Recommendations	
Key thoughts/comments	
e.g. strengths/weakness	

Adapted from Cronin (2008):

Appendix 3 Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

A) Methods of delivering social work education

Inclusion	Exclusion
Studies that considered pre-registration social work students	Studies that considered students on professional education programmes other than social work
Studies that explored teaching methods in programmes leading to qualification as a social worker	Programmes that do not lead to qualification e.g. post qualifying programmes, access to social work, or general consideration of social work
Studies that explore the structure and/or method of delivery that led to professional registration	Studies that consider the content of programmes.
Studies relating to programmes delivered on or after September 2005	Studies related to programmes completed by September 2005

B) Who wants to be a social worker?

Inclusion	Exclusion
pre-registration social work students	post registration/qualified social workers
programmes approved by the countries' accrediting authority as enabling students to register as a qualified practitioner on successful completion that en	In house training/education not part of an accredited preregistration programme
data collected from 2005, the year of introducing degree level pre-registration study in the UK	data collected prior to 2005, irrespective of location to ensure relevant comparison
studies providing information on personal profiles of students, characteristics, personal and professional experience and situation	studies providing data only on achievement and/or performance
Postgraduate and undergraduate students	Foundation degree or access to higher education

C) Why students choose a social work career

Inclusion	Exclusion
Studies that considered pre-registration social work students	Studies that considered students on professional education programmes other than social work
Studies that explored students' motivation to become a social worker/study social work	Motivation in general
Studies that explore the motivation of qualified social workers for undertaking education that led to professional registration	Reasons for engaging in education that did not lead to professional registration
Studies conducted after September 2005	Studies completed before September 2005
Postgraduate study	Undergraduate study

D) Why study at postgraduate level

Inclusion	Exclusion
Literature that considered any programme of study after undergraduate level	Literature that considered students undertaking doctoral research
Studies that explored the motivation of students to register on a postgraduate programme	Studies that examined the motivation of students within the programme e.g. how to increase performance and/or engagement with the teaching

Appendix 4 Statement on disclosure/suitability from MASW Handbook

2011 & 12

Assessment of Suitability for Social Work

All universities are required to ensure that all those who complete the Master in Social Work have:

“shown they are suitable to practise as a social worker”

(p.13 Accreditation of Universities to Grant Degrees in Social Work, GSCC, 2002).

Assessment of Suitability is a continual process, assessed through practice placements and through interactions with all those encountered through the duration of the programme of study.

If at any time during a placement a student’s behaviour raises concern this will be managed using the University’s policy in respect of professional misconduct. The student will be suspended from practice as a neutral action whilst the situation is investigated. If the concern is upheld the future of the student on the programme will be agreed between the University and the Training Authority.

2013 & 14

Assessment of Suitability for Social Work

All universities are required to ensure that all those who complete the Master in Social Work suitable for the profession and must undertake assessment to ensure this (TCSW)³⁶.

Assessment of Suitability is a continual process, assessed through practice placements and through interactions with all those encountered through the duration of the programme of study. Students whose actions or behaviour suggests that they are NOT suitable will be reviewed under the University Fitness to practice procedures

³⁶ <http://www.collegeofsocialwork.org/professional-development/educators/#curr>

Appendix 5 Information for participants

Information for participants

Title of Project: A evaluation of the role of flexible methods of programme delivery in social work education in widening access to professional qualification

Name of Researcher: Pauline Franklin

Brief Outline Of The Project

As part of the evaluation of the revalidated MA Social Work, I am interested in exploring whether there is a difference in the profiles of students following the two routes, full time and part time (flexible). Having a clearer understanding of the situation of students, and why they have chosen a particular route will assist in developing programmes that accessible to those wishing to qualify as social workers.

The research will be in two parts, phase one being this questionnaire, phase two will be a follow up interview at a later stage.

This research will aim to examine the following questions;

- *Is the personal profile of applicants on flexible study social work programmes different to that of full time students?*
- *Does flexible study lead to greater diversity within the profile of individuals enrolling on the*

social work education programme?

- *Does flexible study facilitate access to social work qualification?*
- *What models of social work education promote accessibility and widen participation?*

What will be asked of me

You can decide how much, or how little information you choose to share. Phase one, this questionnaire, asks for details of individual and personal characteristics e.g gender, ethnicity, age, personal background, career history and motivation to become social workers. The information is provided anonymously and is returned electronically through the blackboard (CLIC) submission folder. On completing phase one you are asked to indicate whether you are willing to proceed to phase two. You need only identify yourself if you are willing to continue into phase two. There is no requirement to continue if you do not wish to do so.

Phase two will be carried out by personal interview, in a private setting. More detailed questions will be asked about individual personal situations and the reason why you chose to train as a social worker looking at motivating factors, facilitating factors and the obstacles you faced when seeking to access social work education. All information collected will be stored securely and confidentiality will be maintained. Collected information

will be analysed using recognised data analysis tools (e.g SPSS and Nvivo) to identify any patterns, themes, and trends in the profiles of the students.

If you have any questions about this research please contact me on;

Pauline.franklin@canterbury.ac.uk

Appendix 6 Questionnaire

MA STUDENT SOCIAL WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE

I would appreciate it if you could please complete the following questionnaire. As part of the evaluation of the MA Social Work I am interested in exploring the profiles of students. The research will be in two parts, part one being this questionnaire, part two will be a follow up interview at a later stage.

IF YOU COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT TO CONTINUE TO PART TWO OF THE RESEARCH IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO DO SO.

Guidance

There are six sections to this questionnaire. Please complete all questions in each sections 1-5.

Please be aware that there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions that you are asked to complete. The questionnaire can be completed anonymously, however, if you are willing to be interviewed, please provide your name in section 6, at the end of the questionnaire, to enable you to be contacted at a later date. Completed questionnaires can be returned by email or by sending a hardcopy directly to me. If you select the latter method, place the questionnaire in an envelope addressed to Pauline Franklin, Bf05 Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Rd, Canterbury, Kent.

Thank you.

Pauline Franklin

SECTION ONE- ABOUT YOU

1) **How would you describe your gender?**

2) **How old are you?**

years

3) **What is your student status (please mark with an X)?**

Home student (UK Citizen)

EU student

International student

4) **How would you describe your national identity (please mark with an X)?**

English

Welsh

Scottish

Northern Irish

British

Other (please describe)

5) **How would you describe your ethnicity (please mark with an X)?**

a) White

English/welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Other white (please describe)

b) Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Other mixed/multiple background (please describe)

c) Asian/Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Other Asian (please describe)

d) Black/African/Caribbean/black British

African

Caribbean

Other (please describe)

e) Other ethnic group

Arab

Other (please describe)

6) **Do you consider yourself to have a disability (please mark with an X)?**

No

Yes (give details)

7) **What is your personal situation (please mark with an X)?**

Living with parents in their home

Living with partner in own home (rented or owned)

Living alone in own home (rented or owned)

Living in own home (rented or owned) as a single parent with children

Living in student accommodation

Other (give details)

8) **Do you have dependent family members (please mark with an X all that apply)?**

Partner

Parent/s

Pre-school children (0-5 years)

School age children (5-18 years)

Children over 18 but in full time education

Other (give details)

9) **How far, in miles, do you live from the University?**

Miles

10) **Do you drive and have access to a vehicle (please mark with an X)?**

I drive and have regular access to a vehicle

I drive but do not have regular access to a vehicle

I cannot drive

Other

SECTION TWO- ABOUT YOUR REASONS FOR STUDYING THE MA SOCIAL WORK

11) Why do you want to be a social worker?

For the following statements insert the number (1-5) that best represents your view

5 = agree strongly, 4=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree,
2 =disagree, 1=disagree strongly

- a) I want to help people
- b) I was told I would be good at it
- c) I thought it would be good for career development
- d) I wanted to work to change social problems
- e) I thought it would be financially rewarding
- f) I like people
- g) I think I get on well with people
- h) I think people listen to me
- i) I think I have the skills needed
- j) I think I have the knowledge
- k) I think I have the experience needed

12) How are you completing the MA Social Work (please mark with an X)?

Full time

Part time (flexible)

13) Which of the following best describes your reason for choosing this route (please mark with an X)?

- It fits around work commitments*
- To fit around family commitments*
- To complete the programme as quickly as possible*
- My employer required me to follow this route*
- Other (give details)*

14) Which of the following best describes your reason for studying the MA Social Work (please mark with an X)?

- I wanted a career change*
- I had related qualifications but wanted professional social work status*
- I felt I needed a professional social work qualification to progress in my career*
- My employer required me to qualify as a social worker*
- I was interested in the subject*
- Other (give details)*

**15) Why have you chosen to study the MA social work at this time in your life?
For the following statements insert the number (1-5).that best represents your view**

**5 = agree strongly, 4=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree,
2 =disagree, 1=disagree strongly**

- a)I had the time in my personal life*
- b)I wanted to progress my career*
- c)I wanted to change my career*
- d)I could afford to give up work*
- e)I was given some financial support by my employer*
- f)I was influenced by adverts*
- g)I was influenced by recent events in the news*
- h) I was given some financial support by my family*
- i)I was able to study part time*

SECTION THREE- ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS EDUCATION

16) What previous qualifications, (Diploma level or higher) do you have/did you have on admission to the programme (please mark with an X all that apply)?

Degree (e.g. BA, BSc)

Postgraduate certificate

Master level Degree

Doctorate (PhD, EdD etc)

Professional Diploma (e.g. Nursing, Probation, Youth Work)

Higher Diploma

Other (give details)

17) Prior to registering for the MA Social Work where did you complete your most recent period of study

UK

Other (give details)

18) At the point of admission how long is/was it since your last period of study (please mark with an X)?

Less than one year

1-5 years

6-10 years

11-15 years

More than 15 years

19) The GSCC required social work students to have maths and English at GCSE grade c or equivalent. (For each subject mark with an X the answer that best matches your situation).

Maths English

I passed this at school

I passed this at college

I passed this for/in a previous employment

I passed to be able to apply for social work training

I took the access test after being offered a place on the programme

Other (give details)

20) Which method of study best describes your last period of study

Full time college based

Part time college based

Full time work based

Part time work based

Distance learning
Other (give details)

SECTION FOUR- ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

21) What was your employment status prior to starting the MA social work (please mark with an X)?

- Full time employment*
- Part time employment*
- Self employed*
- Student*
- Unemployed*
- Voluntary work*
- Full time carer for dependant relative*
- Other(give details)*

22) If you were involved in paid work which best describes the field of work (please mark with an X)?

- Social care with adults*
- Social care with children*
- Nursing*
- Other health care (give details)*
- Criminal Justice*
- Teaching*
- Retail*
- Clerical/administration*
- Other (give details)*

23) Which of the following best describes your employment grade prior to starting the programme (please mark with an X)?

- Basic grade/assistant*
- Supervisor*
- Team leader*
- Manager*
- Senior manager*
- Other (give details)*

24) What was your annual salary prior to starting the programme?

£/pa

25) On starting the programme which of the following statements best fits your employment status (please mark with an X)?

- No change in employment status*
- My employer agreed a paid break in my employment*
- My employer agreed an unpaid break in my employment*
- I reduced my hours with my employer*
- I resigned and will/did not work*

I resigned and started a different job on less/different hours
Other (give details)

SECTION FIVE- ABOUT YOUR PREVIOUS SOCIAL WORK RELATED EXPERIENCE

26) The MA Social Work requires you to have some social work related experience at the point of entry. How did you gain this (please mark with an X all that apply)?

Paid work

Voluntary work

Personal life experience as a service user

Personal life experience as a carer

Other (give details)

27) What sector did your experience take place in? (please mark with an X all that apply)

Statutory sector (e.g. local authority)

Private sector (e.g. Independent service provider)

Voluntary sector (e.g. charity)

Other (please give details)

28) At the point of entry how long have/had you been involved in a social work related activity?

years

29) Did you become involved in this activity specifically to help you get on to a Social Work training programme (please mark with an X)?

Yes

No

30) What tasks best describe those you did in your social work related activity (please mark with an X all that apply)?

Daily/personal care with adults

Daily/personal care with children

Residential care with adults

Residential care with children

Foster care

teach adults

teach children

Develop/write care plans

Run group work with adults

Run group work with children

Manage other support workers

Follow/work with care plans

Nurse someone with a specific health need

Work as part of a multidisciplinary team

Work with adult offenders

Work with young offenders

Provide supported lodgings

Other (please list any task that you consider describes you experience which has NOT been covered above)

**SECTION SIX- ABOUT YOUR CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN
THIS RESEARCH**

Would you be willing to be interviewed as the second part of this research (please mark with and X)?

Yes

| *No*

If you have answered yes, please provide your name. You will be contacted at a later date to arrange an interview at a time that suits you.

Name:

Preferred Email address for future contact with regard to this research

If you do agree to be interviewed you may change your mind and with draw from this research at any time.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix 7 Interview Schedule

AREA OF QUESTION	QUESTION FRAMEWORK
Individual factors	<p>Why did you choose to study at CCCU?</p> <p>How does your family situation impact on your life as a student?</p> <p>How did where you live impact on your attending lectures/placement?</p> <p>How has being a social work student affected you financially?</p>
Reasons for studying social work	<p>Why do want to be a social worker?</p> <p>Why did you choose the part time/full time route?</p> <p>What do you think will be the benefits to you of becoming qualified as social worker?</p> <p>Where do you see yourself in 5 years?</p>
Your previous education	<p>What was your experience of school?</p> <p>What previous qualifications have you taken since leaving school?</p> <p>What influenced you in choosing those subjects?</p> <p>Why social work at Masters level and not earlier?</p>
Your previous employment	<p>What jobs have you had since leaving school?</p> <p>Why did you choose these jobs?</p> <p>How has your employment status affected your ability to study social work?</p>
your previous social work related	<p>What social work related experience have you had?</p> <p>How has this influenced your view of social work?</p> <p>With regard to your social work related experience, what</p>

experience	<p>tasks did your day to day job in entail?</p> <p>What skills do you think you gained through this experience?</p>
Facilitating factors	<p>What barriers have you faced in trying to qualify</p> <p>What has helped you in seeking qualification?</p> <p>How has the structure of the programme helped/hindered your progress?</p>

Appendix 8 Screen shot of coding in QDA Miner Lite

Example 1

The screenshot displays the QDA Miner Lite interface. At the top, the menu bar includes 'File', 'Cases', 'Variables', 'Codes', 'Document', 'Retrieval', 'Analyze', and 'Help'. The main window shows a document titled 'DOCUMENT' with a text area containing interview transcripts. The transcripts are organized into a list of questions and answers (Q: and P:). The coding scheme is visible on the left side, showing a hierarchy of codes: 'values' (selected), 'challenge', 'challeng', 'employe', 'previous', 'self', 'social w', and 'system'. On the right side, there are labels for 'flexible', 'Intrinsic consistency', and 'consistency contact hours'. The text area shows the following transcript:

R: Why CCCU?

P: To do part time... it was that or [Named HEI] but I was looking at doing part time I thought this would work out better.

R: Why part time?

P: Because of work,I did not want to give up work. [Named HEI] were looking at doing part time, and they said you could do it butwere a bit vague, I spoke to you and you said you were going to do it, this is how it is and this is how its going to run.

R: As student did you have to take into consideration family circumstances?

P: Yeh ...a bit, because of [partners] shifts, I was worried about how much time I'd get to spend with him because he does month on month off. so I was like, am I going to be stuck at uni the whole time he's home and not able to do anything. How am I going to do my work when he's away? How am I going to structure it all.

R: How's that worked?

P: Really well [laughs]. When he's not here I spend all my time doing it, when he's here I sit back a bit.

R: How about attendance?

P: It's ok, I drive down. It's not too bad.

R: What about the hours? The times you have to be here?

P: [Exasperated sigh] They kept changing, that's not very helpful [disgruntled laugh]. The first year the lectures were sort of...earlier, but then we had a gap in the middle, so I hit the traffic both ways if driving down and back. But....as it's changed ..well we're here a lot less now, They were 12 til 4 [this year]... here a lot less, ...but it's good for travelling I leave earlier. coming from [location] better with later lectures

Example 2

The screenshot displays the QDA Miner software interface. The main window shows a document with the following text:

R: Why CCCU?

P: Purely Geographical, I must confess, because... obviously I've got children so could not take too long to get there, ...location.

R: Why Social Work study?

P: I think it's something I had considered in the past, err.....I think, myself, and other, ...like many other people I thought, would I be able to cope with it? I thought it was all child protection, and that would be too horrible for me. After I had my children,..... I think I was working at a school and actually the school had a lot of looked after children,.....I thought...."I wish I had positions I could do more", not just children but in the wider community. Perhaps I did not think that I, perhaps, even though interested, perhaps I didn't think I knew enough. I wanted the support and the information behind me.

P: The placement putting me in the setting, that was the key thing. It's one of those areas that until your on the course, until you do it, you don't know if you will be able to cope.

What dong in 5 years,

Ideally erm...if I had some form of funding to have a social enterprise with other professionals, for example not just social workers, wt, very much OTs, community nurses, and mental health and other people who haven't necessarily got a title you can pinpoint. I don't think it will necessarily be called social worker but with a community, ...a community focus person....

On the right side of the document, there are several code annotations in brackets:

- location
- emotional resilience
- authority
- theory
- place of learning
- emotional resilience

The interface also shows a menu bar with 'File', 'Cases', 'Variables', 'Codes', 'Document', 'Retrieval', 'Analyze', and 'Help'. A toolbar with various icons is visible below the menu. The bottom left shows a sidebar with 'TABLES', 'FILE 2', 'DOCUMENT [DOCUMENT]', and 'ES'.

Example 3

The screenshot shows a software window titled 'DOCUMENTS:' with a document named 'Humnst777BT'. The document content is as follows:

R: Why CCCU?

P: Err ...its local to me, the next most local was [named HEI]. Theyre relatively equidistant, but for me... I have to say that when I first looked into it full time was two days a week. That was one of the big differences...

R: Part time?

P: No full time...2 days (on campus), then when I arrived that had turned into 4 days. That's why I had to go part time-because I knew could commit..my [described role] tasks... and beyond that.. to work to generate some income. When I became a [described role] I took a £25,000 a year pay cut. 2 days can be done... 4 days can't a period of placement can be managed.

[description of current social care job]

If it's only 2 days, I could arranged cover

R: what was the impact of study on your family life?

P: Now just myself and my partner... well, we're pretty flexible, when you taking out [describes an identifying social care role]

But the times are frustrating. 10-3 with an hour for lunch. For me that's a half day. It could be condensed, then you would be back into the work market quicker, that's the impact on famly life, finances are going to be tight. It's the impact on our finances. I would rather have fuller fewer days each week.

I see inefficient delivery. There should be more use of the day...longer days, less here [on campus]

Yeah...for sure. I can get to work for 9. I see this inefficiency reflecting inefficiency in sw.

R: Why social work study?

Annotations on the right side of the document:

- 'location' and 'delivery' are grouped together with a bracket.
- 'contact hours' is annotated with a bracket under the paragraph starting with 'P: No full time...2 days...'
- 'contact hours' is annotated with a bracket under the paragraph starting with 'But the times are frustrating...'
- 'contact hours' is annotated with a bracket under the paragraph starting with 'I see inefficient delivery...'

Appendix 9 Glossary of Terms

APEL - Accreditation of Prior Experiential (Uncertificated) Learning

The accreditation of prior experiential learning by awarding credit for learning based on prior experience e.g. from work, community or volunteer experience that has not previously been assessed and/or awarded academic credit.

APL - Accreditation of Prior Learning

Prior learning that is subsequently credited against a (new) qualification and consequentially gives exemption from taking part of the qualification in question.

Asynchronous Teaching/Instruction

Teaching which uses online and digital resources to enable information sharing between people outside the constraints of time and place. Possible online learning resources that support asynchronous learning include email, electronic mailing lists, social network systems (SNS), online discussion boards, wikis, and blogs.

ASYE - Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

The ASYE scheme is designed to help newly qualified Social Workers develop skills, knowledge and professional confidence, by providing access to regular support during the first year of employment. ASYE was recommended by the Social Work Task Force and introduced in September 2012, replacing all former arrangements for newly-qualified Social Workers in England.

Blackboard/Blackboard Learn

Blackboard Learn is the flagship learning management system provided by Blackboard an enterprise technology company a developer of education software.

CWDC - Children's Workforce Development Council

A UK non-departmental public body set up in 2005 to support the implementation of the "Every Child Matters" strategy. The CWDC closed in March 2012.

DCSF - Department of Children, Schools and Families

The ministerial department, between 2007 and 2010, responsible for issues including child protection and education, relating to those in England under the age of 19. The DCSF was replaced by the Department for Education in 2010.

DE - Distance Education

A method of delivering education to students who are geographically remote and who are not physically present in a traditional setting such as a classroom.

DfE - Department for Education

The ministerial department responsible for education and children's services in England from 2010 to the time of writing.

DoH - Department of Health

The ministerial department of the United Kingdom Government responsible for government policy on health and adult social care matters in England.

FHEQ - The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

The reference point for providers of higher education in institutional audit/review and other forms of external review. It applies to degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards (other than honorary degrees and higher doctorates) granted by a provider in the exercise of its degree awarding powers.

GSCC - General Social Care Council

A non-departmental public body of the Department of Health established by the Care Standards Act, 2000. It was the regulator of Social Workers and social work students in England between 2001 and 2012. The GSCC was closed on 31 July 2012 and the regulation of Social Workers was taken over by the Health Professions Council, renamed the Health and Care Professions Council.

GYO - Grow Your Own

Programmes established to deliver social work education to students receiving employer sponsorship, secondment or traineeship.

HEFCE - Higher Education Funding Council for England

Agency responsible for distributing public money for higher education to universities and colleges in England.

HEI - Higher Education Institution

Institutions that provide post-secondary education.

KIS – Key Information Sets

Comparable sets of information about full or part-time undergraduate courses. They contain the items of information that prospective students have identified as most important to inform their decisions³⁷.

LA - Local Authority

The agency responsible for local government. In England, these take different forms: single-tier (unitary) and two-tier authorities. Local authorities also include any bodies which have the statutory power to bill, precept or make other demands for money from other local authorities where those powers are derived from those sections of the relevant Local Government Finance Acts specified in ICTA88/S842A. They have a general power to "promote economic, social and environmental well-being" of their area.

Million+

A university think-tank. The stated aim is to "use rigorous research and evidence-based policy to address and provide solutions to complex problems in higher education". Million+ publish research reports and policy papers and submit evidence to parliamentarians, government and other agencies³⁸.

Moodle

A free software e-learning platform, also known as a Learning Management System, or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

MSW - Master of Social Work

A pre-registration social work education programme taught at post graduate level

³⁷ <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lt/publicinfo/kis/>

³⁸ <http://www.millionplus.ac.uk/who-we-are/our-role>

Open Learning

Generally refers to activities that either enhance learning opportunities within formal education systems, or extend formal education systems to provide learning opportunities outside the classroom using a range of teaching methods.

PCF - Professional Capabilities Framework

An overarching professional standards framework for social work developed by the Social Work Reform Board and is now owned by The College of Social Work. It starts from the point of entry to the profession and covers the whole career.

PVI - Private Voluntary and Independent Sector

Organisations outside state provision and not Local Authority-maintained. Services provided by private individuals or companies, voluntary groups and charities or independent organisations.

QAA - Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

The independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK higher education.

Russell Group Universities

An association of 24 British public research universities which states it is committed to maintaining the very best research, an outstanding teaching and learning experience and unrivalled links with business and the public sector.

Snowballing (also referred to as “reference harvesting” or “pearl growing”)

The process by which researchers identify references and literature relating to hard-to-locate populations/issues by reviewing footnotes and bibliographies of articles and other documents.

SNS - Social Network System

Web-based services which enable individuals to build social networks, or social relationships, with others who share interests; activities, backgrounds or real-life connections.

Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust was founded in 1997 to improve social mobility through education. The Trust is both a “think tank” and a “do-tank” undertaking research and advocating policy change. It manages, develops and evaluates programmes aiming to address educational inequality.

SWRB - Social Work Reform Board

Group with representatives from higher education, employers, service users and carers, and the social work profession, established to take forward the recommendations made by the Social Work Task Force to ensure sustainable improvements to social work.

SWTF - Social Work Task Force

An expert group, jointly appointed by the Secretaries of State for Health, and Children, Schools and Families to undertake a comprehensive review of frontline social work practice and to make recommendations for improvement and reform of the whole profession, across adult and children’s services.

Synchronous Teaching/Instruction

Teaching that requires the simultaneous participation of all students and instructors i.e. “real-time” interaction. This can be face-to-face or enabled by use of technology.

TCSW - The College of Social Work

A registered charity established in response to the recommendation of the Social Work Reform Board. TCSW is led by, and accountable to, its members and sets the professional standards for the profession. TCSW can endorse programmes of social work education and provide guidance on the content and delivery of programmes.

TELT - Technology Enabled Learning and Teaching

The range of technologies and software applications that can support learning and teaching.

UCAS - University and College Admissions Service

Provide an application service across a range of subject areas and modes of study for UK higher education providers.