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for Education

Transgender awareness in child and family social work education

Research report

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Social Science in Government

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Executive Summary

Background and objectives

In January 2016 the Women and Equalities Committee published a report on [Transgender Equality](#). In this report evidence was identified that suggested transgender people experience significant levels of inequality across a wide range of policy areas. This included inequality in the provision of public services, where evidence of discrimination and transphobia were identified within schools, social services, the NHS, prisons and probation services, and the police.

In July 2016 the [Government submitted a response](#) to the Women and Equalities Committee signposting a commitment to ensuring all public sector professionals receive adequate training on gender identity and gender variance. This commitment was framed in recognition of the diversity of the public sector workforce, and the need to assess the level, depth and frequency of training required in each profession separately. Within this context this study was commissioned by the Department for Education to ascertain the adequacy and consistency of child and family social worker education in regard to gender identity and gender variance, in order to provide evidence as to whether additional training materials should be made available in the future.

Methodology

The research underpinning this report comprised of three stages: a rapid evidence review; a content analysis of a sample of social work courses provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England; and semi-structured interviews with four key groups. These groups included stakeholders in social work education, representatives of organisations that provide support to the transgender community, representatives of HEIs that provide qualifying and post-qualifying courses in social work, and representatives of child and family social work teams working within local authorities across England.

Rapid evidence review: findings

The review identified the quantity and quality of evidence on the nature and experiences of the transgender population in the UK to be poor; hampered by data and sampling difficulties in regard to gender identity. As such, there is a significant lack of transgender-specific social work research. On the basis of the limited research identified, the evidence suggests transgender people commonly report having poor experiences within social and care settings. More specifically, evidence suggests childhood gender dysphoria remains poorly understood by social workers, resulting in transgender people experiencing discrimination. Transgender people therefore report significant gaps in services.

The review identified a complete lack of specific evidence regarding the inclusion of transgender issues in social work education in England. Some evidence which reflected on the experiences of transgender people, however, signposts the need for a knowledge-base of good practice to be incorporated into the social work curriculum in order to combat the limited knowledge or training of social workers. International evidence provides a more definitive picture; signposting not only an absence of transgender issues from social work education in the US, Canada and Australia, but also a reluctance amongst academic faculties to cover transphobia in comparison to other issues. These gaps in social work education are identified to result in social work practitioners who are often uninformed or biased toward transgender and/or gender-variant service users. The extent to which these findings apply to the child and family social work in England, however, is arguably limited.

Content analysis of child and family social work courses in England: findings

The findings of our content analysis revealed very little explicit reference to gender identity and gender variance within both undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses in England. Transgender issues may, however, be covered more implicitly, through references to broader issues such as equality and diversity, as well as anti-discriminatory principles and practices.

Qualitative research: Findings

The findings from the primary qualitative research reinforce those identified in the earlier review. Interviews with stakeholders suggest that transgender people continue to have poor experiences when in contact with child and family social services. Examples of this include some social workers behaving in a prejudicial manner, labelling parental support of gender variance as abuse, failing to recognise risks associated with unsupportive home environment, and making uniformed judgements around the acceptance of gender variance. These accounts, however, are offset with some examples of more positive experiences, with stakeholders recognising some social workers as playing a key role in family mediation, being a key resource of information, facilitating treatment pathways and support, tackling local discrimination and generally ensuring that the interests of gender-variant children and young people are best promoted.

On the basis of the range and diversity of views and experiences collected it seems likely that child and family social workers' knowledge of transgender issues is very mixed. Whereas some child and family social workers would seem to have minimal awareness of transgender issues, others operate within pockets of expertise, characterised by specialised knowledge and good practice. In line with this, child and family social workers' education and training in regard to transgender issues is likely variable, yet

largely deficient. As a result, very few social workers would seem to have specific education or training in relation to transgender issues, at qualifying or post-qualifying level. Of those that do, there would seem to be a tendency for transgender issues to be subsumed under the LGBT umbrella, resulting in a lack of specificity in education.

In instances where child and family social workers identified themselves as having little to no education or training in regard to transgender issues some describe undertaking their own research in an attempt to meet the needs of gender-variant services users. These respondents subsequently described themselves working upon a deficit model, to the detriment of services users. This was a model that was described as being further undermined through a lack of social work-specific research and resources regarding transgender issues, and recent spending cuts limiting opportunities for education, training and development.

In identified instances of good practice in regard to transgender equality a number of common drivers can be identified within higher education institutions and local authorities. These include a broader culture of trans-inclusivity; access to relevant personal and professional networks; the presence of transgender service users actively campaigning for better services; and the presence of academics and/or practitioners with particular expertise in LGB and/or T equality.

In light of these findings it would seem reasonable to suggest that the current regulatory framework in which child and family social work resides is not prescriptive enough to ensure sufficient or consistent awareness of transgender issues amongst the profession. This is due to a lack of specificity in regard to HEI's curriculum content; a lack of explicit guidance regarding professional values and ethics in regard to protected groups, and a lack of regulation applied to post-qualifying education. Within this context, it would seem transgender issues are unlikely to explicitly feature in initial and ongoing education of child and family social workers for a number of reasons. These include low priority due to low incidence; a preoccupation of core safeguarding issues (such as radicalisation and child sexual exploitation), and increasing pressure on recently declining resources.

Conclusions

Overall the findings of this research suggest transgender awareness is an area in need of development across the profession, with the evidence clearly indicating a demand for additional training materials. In general, the weight of evidence would suggest these materials need to feature and permeate across the profession to ensure all pathways, settings and cohorts achieve sufficient awareness. The evidence suggests these resources could take many forms, including e-learning, toolkits and good practice guides. There is however a need to avoid resources and expertise continuing to be trapped amongst individuals and within localities. As such, the development of reflexive, dynamic networks to share knowledge, resources and training would seem beneficial. A number

of key components would seem to aid this process. Recommendations include instilling leadership on the issue, namely from the Department for Education and Chief Social Workers; improving the visibility and inclusion of transgender people in the social work profession; and continuing to promote multi-agency working.

Glossary

Gender dysphoria is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress due to a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity.

Gender identity is a term used to describe an individual's sense of their own gender. For transgender people, their gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender variance is a term used to describe behaviour or gender expression by an individual that does not match conventional constructs of gender.

Transgender is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from their sex assigned at birth.

Transphobia is a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward transgender people.

List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| APSW | Association of Professors of Social Work |
| ASYE | Assessed Supported Year in Employment |
| BASW | British Association of Social Workers |
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| JUCSWEC | Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee |
| GSCC | General Social Care Council |
| HCPC | Health and Care Professions Council |
| HEI | Higher Education Institution |
| LA | Local Authorities |
| LGBT | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender |
| NQSWs | Newly Qualified Social Workers |
| PCF | Professional Capabilities Framework |
| TCSW | The College of Social Work |
| SWRB | Social Work Reform Board |
| SWTF | Social Work Task Force |
| SWTP | Social Work Teaching Partnerships |

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Background and Introduction

In January 2016 the Women and Equalities Committee published a report on [Transgender Equality](#). In this report evidence was identified that suggested transgender people experience significant levels of inequality across a wide range of policy areas. This included inequality in the provision of public services, where evidence of discrimination and transphobia were identified within schools, social services, the NHS, prisons and probation services, and the police. One of the recommendations was specifically aimed at social work: *“We have heard worrying evidence about some social workers’ lack of knowledge on gender variance...The Government should seek to address this through formal training as a matter of urgency”* (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee 2016: 78) .

In July 2016 the [Government submitted a response](#) to the Women and Equalities Committee signposting a commitment to ensuring all public sector professionals receive adequate training on gender identity and gender variance. This commitment was framed in recognition of the diversity of the public sector workforce, and the need to assess the level, depth and frequency of training required in each profession separately. Specifically on social work Government committed to *“commission a study to ascertain the adequacy and consistency of knowledge on gender variance in initial social work training and continuous professional development (CPD)”* (Government Equalities Office 2016: 29)

Within this context this study was commissioned by the Department for Education to ascertain the adequacy and consistency of child and family social worker¹ education in regard to gender identity and gender variance. This study therefore seeks to determine whether the current provision of initial education and ongoing training within the child and family social work profession permits a sufficient understanding of transgender issues, in order to provide evidence as to whether additional training materials should be made available in the future.

¹ Given the remit of the Department for Education, this report focuses on the child and family social workers in England only.

Methodology

The research underpinning this report comprised of three stages. The first was a rapid evidence review. This review took a systematic approach, aiming to provide an overview of the density and quality of evidence on social worker education in regard to gender identity and gender variance. It scoped and critically assessed published and unpublished literature from 2000 onwards and covers evidence from the UK and its constituent parts, as well as international research where relevant. Full methodology is outlined in Appendix One.

The second stage of this research comprised of a content analysis of a sample of HCPC-approved social work courses provided by Higher Education Institutions in England. This stage aimed to provide a broad assessment of child and family social worker education in regard to gender identity, in order draw conclusions on its likely adequacy and consistency.

The third stage of research comprised of the collection of new evidence via semi-structured, telephone interviews with four key groups of respondents. This includes:

- Three key stakeholders in regard to education and training in the social work profession: the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the Association of Professors of Social Work (APSW), and the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC)
- Two key transgender support organisations in the UK: Mermaids and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs).
- Seven higher education institutions (HEIs) that provide qualifying courses in social work. Respondents included all current pathways into child and family social work, including generic and 'fast-track' courses, as well as institutions currently part of formal Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs).
- Ten representatives of child and family social work teams working within local authorities across England.

Structure of the Report

This report is structured as follows:

Section one will provide the findings of the rapid evidence review. This will comprise of a brief overview of the nature and experiences of the transgender population in the UK; an account of child and family social work workforce; a brief history of reform in child and family social work education and practice; an account of legislation and policy relating to transgender equality; an account of social work practice and implications for transgender service users; as well as evidence specifically on the inclusion of gender identity and gender variance in social work education and training.

Section two will provide the findings of our content analysis. Drawing on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses from 35 HEIs, this section will provide a broad assessment of the adequacy and consistency of child and family social workers' initial education in regard to gender identity.

Section three will outline the findings of our primary qualitative research. Drawing upon our semi-structured, telephone interviews with all four groups of respondents, this section will address all aspects of including transgender equality within child and family social work education. This will include an account of:

- The nature of awareness of transgender issues amongst child and family social workers and its implications for transgender service users;
- Current and future intentions around the inclusion of transgender issues in child and family social work education and training. This will cover undergraduate, postgraduate and 'fast-track' courses such as Frontline and 'Step-Up to Social Work' within institutions both part and not-part of formal Social Work Teaching Partnerships (STWP), as well as within the Assessed Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD);
- Opportunities and challenges for the development of additional resources to help raise awareness of transgender issues in child and family social work.

Section Four will provide conclusions and recommendations.

Transgender awareness in child and family social work: rapid evidence review

This review takes a systematic approach, providing an overview of the density and quality of evidence on social worker education in regard to gender identity and gender variance. It scopes and critically assesses published and unpublished literature from 2000 onwards and covers evidence from the UK and its constituent parts, as well as international research where relevant.

Literature searches were undertaken using pre-determined protocol, and using a wide range of databases and search engines. This was supplemented by the manual searching of key organisations' websites likely to hold relevant information.

Bibliographies of publications identified to be relevant were also searched to ensure maximum coverage. Full methodology is outlined in Appendix One.

As this review will identify, the quantity and quality of evidence on the nature and experiences of the transgender population is poor; hampered by data and sampling difficulties in regard to gender identity. As a result, there is a significant lack of transgender-specific social work research conducted in the UK. There is however some transgender-specific international literature (mostly from the US and Canada) that seeks to inform social work practice. This report will therefore make reference to this international research, signposting its relevance throughout.

The transgender population in the UK

Transgender, often abbreviated to 'trans', is an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term 'transgender' therefore covers a wide spectrum of gender non-conformity and gender variance that exhibits both complexity and fluidity².

Due to conceptual and practical issues surrounding the collection of data on gender identity³, there are currently no official estimates of the size or growth of the transgender population in the UK (ONS, 2009). Other estimates have varied from 65,000 in 2005 (Johnson 2005), to 300,000 in 2009 (Reed et al., 2009) to 650,000 in 2015

² This report will use the terms '*transgender*' and '*trans*', as well as '*gender identity*' and '*gender variance*', in reference to the full spectrum and fluidity of gender identities and expressions that exist in the UK. More specific terminology will be used to refer to particular subsets of this diverse population, where relevant.

³ Data collection methodology and question design are currently in development (ONS 2016).

(approximately 1 per cent of the UK population) (GIRES, 2015; House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016)⁴.

Due to a lack of official data there is currently very little robust evidence on the experiences of the transgender population in the UK. Mitchell and Howarth (2009), Communities Analytical Review (2013) and Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf (2016) each provide a systematic overview of the evidence base. On the basis of the limited evidence identified, these reviews describe transgender people as suffering particularly high levels of inequality. This includes inequality in respect of hate crime and harassment, mental health outcomes, health service treatment (both in respect of transitioning and general health needs) and employment discrimination, amongst other areas. These findings are reinforced by direct evidence put forward to the Women and Equalities Committee (2016), which suggested transgender people experience significant levels of inequality across a wide range of policy areas. This includes in the provision of public services, where evidence of discrimination and transphobia was identified within schools, social services, the NHS, prisons and probation services, and the police.

A key component of research into the lives of transgender people is the way in which their experiences of inequality are varied and influenced by other social position (de Vries, 2014). Evidence therefore identifies many important nuances regarding the intersection of transgender identities. This includes in regard to ageing (Siverskog, 2014), race (Follins et al., 2013), class and sexuality (de Vreis 2012), as well as through experiences of domestic violence (Riggs et al. 2016), substance abuse (Hughes and Elison, 2002), self-harm (Scourfield, et al. 2008) and those seeking asylum (Heller, 2009). Given that the focus of this research is on child and family social work education in regard to gender identity and gender variance, these intersections will not play a prominent part of this review. They do, however, provide an important backdrop for understanding the complexity of transgender identities, and the role of social workers in providing support.

Child and family social work in England

As defined by Department for Education (2017a), child and family social workers are:

“Social workers that are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), working within a local authority in a children’s service department in England”

Department for Education 2017a: 3

⁴ Based on EHRC survey of 10,000 people, 1% answered “yes” to a question about gender reassignment.

As of September 2016 there were approximately 27,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) child and family social workers in England⁵. This was supplemented by an additional 5,530 (FTE) child and family social workers working via agencies. The number of child and family social worker vacancies in England during this period stood at 5,540 (FTE), an increase of 1.3 per cent (5,470) from the previous year. The FTE number of child and family social workers starting in the year ending September 30 September 2016 was 4,720 (FTE). The number leaving was 4,190 (FTE). The FTE turnover therefore stood 15.1 per cent⁶. During the year ending 30 September 2016, 59.8 per cent (FTE) of child and family social workers leaving in the year had been in service less than 5 years. The average working life for social workers has been estimated as less than eight years (Curtis et al., 2010)⁷. This is comparable to 16 for a nurse and 25 for a doctor (Curtis et al., 2010).

The literature consistently identifies longstanding issues regarding the recruitment and retention of child and family social workers in England (SWTF, 2009; CfWi, 2012; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014; House of Commons Education Committee, 2016a). Widespread staffing shortages have long been identified, which have been recognised to compromise the quality of social work (SWTF, 2009; MacAlister et al. 2012). This, in turn, has been identified to lead to an increased reliance on agency workers to fill vacancies (MacAlister et al. 2012).

The reform of child and family social work in England

Social work education and practice in England has been subject to extensive reform over recent years. There have been major systemic changes to the training, recruitment and retention of child and family social workers, fundamentally altering the nature of initial education and ongoing training in the profession. This section will provide a brief overview of some of these changes, in order to provide the context for our assessment of transgender awareness in child and family social work education.

⁵ All workforce data sourced from DfE (2017) experimental statistics drawn from national and local information. Many statistics contained in this report are new data items. As such comparable data for previous years is generally unavailable.

⁶ Turnover rate = Number of child and family social workers leaving in year ending at 30 September / Number of child and family social workers at 30 September.

⁷ Refers to both children's and adult's services.

The regulation of child and family social workers in England

During the late 1990s social services in Great Britain was facing substantial criticism. Following an inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié (Laming, 2003), demand grew to professionalise social work. In 2001 the General Social Care Council (GSSC) was established as the first statutory regulator of social workers in England. Tasked with improving the quality of social care services, the GSSC implemented several wider-ranging reforms (GSSC, 2011). This included:

- establishing the first ever codes of practice for social care workers and employers;
- developing the Social Care Register;
- facilitating the establishment of the social work degree, and being responsible for the accreditation of institutions and qualifying courses;
- regulating the structure of post-qualifying courses via the establishment of the post-qualification framework.

In 2009 the Social Work Task Force (SWTF) was set up by the Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families to undertake a comprehensive review of frontline social work practice, and to make recommendations for improvement and reform across adult and children's services. In their final report the SWTF raised concerns that the social work degree in England did not sufficiently prepare students for practice (SWTF, 2009). As a result 15 recommendations were made. This included:

- the development of a reformed system of initial education and training;
- the establishment of an independent national college of social work;
- the creation of an Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) as the final stage in becoming a social worker.

In line with these recommendations the Social Work Reform Board (SWRB) was established in 2010, and the GSSC closed in 2012. As of August 2012 the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), formerly Health Professions Council, took over regulatory functions from the GSSC. Currently the HCPC is responsible for the accreditation of social work courses through the application of the Standards of Education and Training and Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers (HCPC, 2012; 2017⁸), as well as for the registration of social workers through the completion of an approved qualifying programme. Social workers are also required to undergo revalidation, where the HCPC assess fitness for continued practice.

In 2011 the SWRB, with extensive consultation, developed the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF). Divided into 9 sections, the PCF provides the overarching

⁸ The Standards for Proficiency for Social Workers in England recently underwent a review and public consultation.

professional standard and core capabilities expected of qualifying social workers, and represent the knowledge, skills and values that social workers are expected to obtain to practice effectively.

Following the SWTF recommendation that a national college should be in place to promote practice excellence, provide a national professional voice, and influence national and local policy, the College of Social Work (TCSW) was established in 2012, with the intention of playing a major role in helping the profession build its knowledge and expertise.

Between 2011 and 2015 three reviews were commissioned by Government which collectively described the mounting challenges faced by the child and family social work profession (Munro, 2011; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014; Narey, 2014). Together they outlined how initial social work education in England did not consistently prepare students for the challenges of the job, and how those already doing it too often lack the time, specialist skill and supervision needed to achieve real change for children and families (DfE, 2016a).

Within this context several key changes occurred. This included:

- The closure of TCSW in 2015.
- The appointment of two Chief Social Workers (one for child and family services, the other for adults'), and the development of new knowledge and skills statements for the social work profession
- The setting-up of a new fast-track qualifying programmes, Step-Up to Social Work in 2010 and Frontline in 2013.
- The launch of Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTP) in 2015.

In September 2015, improving the quality of child and family social workers and children's services was identified as a key reform priority for the Government. In January 2016 the Government announced a set of proposals to reform child and family social work (DfE, 2016b). Key elements of this reform included:

- The establishment of Social Work England, a new regulatory body for social work, focused on raising the quality of social work, education, training and practice in both children's and adult's social work. This would include the development of new professional standards for qualifying education and training, and new specialist standards for the continuous professional development of social workers.

- The introduction of a new National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) tasked with providing a consistent way of providing assurance that child and family social workers, supervisors and leaders have the knowledge and skills required for effective practice (DfE, 2017b).

Having provided a very brief overview of the changing regulatory framework of child and family social work in England, this review will provide a brief outline of its key impacts on the nature of social work education and training.

Initial social work education

Prior to 2003 the qualification route for social workers in England took the form a two-year diploma. In 2003 this was replaced with an undergraduate or postgraduate degree which covers social work for both adults and children (Department for Health, 2002). These degrees are currently delivered by more than 80 higher education institutions (HEIs), the majority of which provide undergraduate or postgraduate degrees in three and two year courses respectively. Having previously been the responsibility of the GSCC, today it is the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) that approves HEIs to deliver social work degrees, and grants approval for individual courses. Once established, this responsibility will transfer to the new regulator, Social Work England.

An ongoing issue regarding initial social work education is whether degrees should offer generalist or specialist pathways (Croisdale-Appleby, 2015; Narey, 2014; Trevithick, 2014). Both government commissioned reports, as well as the APSW and JUCSWEC support the idea that qualifying social work education should remain generic, with specialisms developing throughout a social workers career (APSW and JUCSWEC, 2014a; Croisdale-Appleby, 2015; Narey, 2014). Questions have been raised, however, as to whether the generic qualifying degree enables qualified social workers to practice in all contexts, and whether current provision should be supplemented by specialist qualifying degrees which would allow practitioners to hone their expertise (Staempfli et al., 2015).

As outlined by Narey (2011) and reiterated by DfE (2016b), the quality of qualifying social work courses is still thought to be highly variable, with some believed to be accepting poor calibre students, and of having limited focus on the skills and knowledge needed to be a social worker, as well as lacking high quality practice placements⁹. This has resulted in a number of recommendations, including:

⁹ Currently social work students undertake two placements of 70 (+ 30 skills days) and 100 days.

- Increasing the qualifying degree entry qualifications for social work¹⁰ (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014)
- More rigorous accreditation of social work courses (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016a)
- The better involvement of service users and employers in the qualifying courses educational activities (Croisdale-Appleby, 2014).

In light of these ongoing recommendations, two key changes were introduced. This included the expansion of qualifying routes' for social worker via fast track social work courses like Step Up to Social Work in 2010 and Frontline in 2013, as well as the introduction of Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs).

Fast-track social work courses

'Step Up to Social Work' is a full-time, employer-led postgraduate course with a child and family specialisation. With restricted entry to graduates, it has been designed to attract high calibre career changers to an intensive route into social work, with the aim of raising standards within the profession. Evaluations of the programme have demonstrated good outcomes in terms of completion rates, levels of achievement and the skills and knowledge of workers (Holmes et al., 2013; DfE, 2016a; Smith et al., 2013). Staempfli et al. (2015), however, identified no significant difference in outcomes between MA in Social Work and a MA in Step Up to Social Work in terms of key skills and capabilities.

'Frontline' was launched as a two year, fast-track graduate recruitment programme for child protection social work. A key element of Frontline is that trainees work as a qualified social worker in children's services, arguably addressing the divide between social work education and practice. Although evidence has been mixed on the merits of Frontline (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016a), an independent evaluation identified the programme to be introducing highly skilled practitioners into the workforce (Maxwell et al., 2016).

¹⁰ In 2014, that the proportion of A-level entrants to social work degrees, and with fewer than 240 UCAS points (the equivalent of 3 Cs at A level), was twice the proportion entering teaching or nursing (Narey, 2014).

Social work teaching partnerships

A teaching partnership is:

‘an accredited collaboration between HEI’s and employers which delivers high quality training for social work students and qualified practitioners and equips them to practise to specified standards in statutory settings’ (DfE, 2016b)

The purpose of these partnerships is to bring together local authorities, other social care and health organisations and HEI’s, and to raise the standards of entry into conventional social work programmes (DfE, 2016b). Evidence obtained by (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016b) suggests Social Work Teaching Partnerships raise and drive quality at multiple points in the system, including recruitment, training, induction and CPD.

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

In 2009 the Social Work Task Force recommended that initial education should culminate in a new supported and assessed first year in employment, to increase a newly-qualified social worker’s (NQSW) specialisation, and ensure NQSWs can develop their practice skills in a supported environment with reduced caseloads. This led to the creation of the ASYE programme. Linked to the Employer Standards and the Professional Capabilities Framework, the ASYE is voluntary for employers of child and family social workers, designed to help bridge the transition from initial qualification to practice.

As of 2016, 10,000 child and family social workers have been supported by the ASYE (DfE 2016b). In their review, Croisdale-Appleby (2014) identified a widespread view that the first year of post-qualification practice should take place in a supported environment such as provided in the ASYE. Several pieces of evidence submitted to the House of Commons Education Committee (2016a) suggested that the ASYE is an effective programme for new social workers. This led to a recommendation that the programme should be made mandatory (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016a). The quality of this programme, however, is thought to be somewhat variable, with standards fluctuating across local authorities (DfE, 2016b).

Continuous professional development and post-qualifying education

As defined by the BASW:

“Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is an on-going, planned learning and development process, which improves practice, contributes to life-long learning and enables career progression... CPD encompasses all learning as a social worker and

values the whole spectrum of learning activities, including professional supervision, peer group learning, placements, training programmes and higher level qualification”

There has been long-standing criticism around the quality of CPD in the social work profession, with concerns being raised regarding its consistency, effectiveness and ability to establish expectations around ongoing learning and development (SWTF, 2009; Croisdale-Appleby, 2014). Croisdale– Appleby (2014) therefore called for a new comprehensive continuous professional development framework for the profession

Following the closure of the General Social Care Council (GSCC) in 2013, post-qualifying social work is no longer regulated, with the exception of the Approved Mental Health Professionals training. Evidence of CPD, however, continues to provide the basis for re-registration for social workers in England with the HCPC. The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), previously owned by the College of Social Work, and now BASW, provide a professional development structure for social workers, and providers of post-qualifying courses can link to relevant levels in the PCF.

There is very little evidence on the nature and quality of CPD and post-qualifying education in the social work profession. The limited evidence available suggests that CPD takes a number of forms, such as in-house/workplace-based training as well as self-directed learning (Moriarty and Manthorpe, 2014). Baginsky et al. (2010) identified 81 per cent of social work survey respondents¹¹ had accessed internal or external training as part of their professional development.

Having now provided an overview of the key changes in the regulation of social work in England and its implication for social work education, this report will now outline relevant legislation and policy in regard to the transgender equality.

UK legislation and policy relating to transgender equality

In the UK only in the last 20 years have transgender people been offered protection under anti-discrimination legislation (Fish, 2012). Key policy and legislation include:

- 1999 Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations [which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975]
- 2004 Gender Recognition Act
- 2005 Gender Recognition (Exceptions to Offence of Disclosure) Order

¹¹ Sample of 1153 social workers working in Children Service Departments [63 percent], Departments for Adult Services [25 percent], departments that have merged the both sectors [two percent] and the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector [ten percent].

- 2008 Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations [which amended the Sex Discrimination Act 1975]

When equality legislation was consolidated, gender reassignment was one of the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010. This offers protection to anyone who intends to undergo, has undergone, or is undergoing any part of the gender reassignment process (with no requirement for a medical diagnosis). As part of the Equality Act 2010, public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people

Questions have previously been raised regarding the definition of 'gender reassignment' and the extent to which it sufficiently encompasses and therefore protects the wide range of gender variance that we could expect to find in the UK population. The Women and Equalities Committee report therefore called into question the extent to which the Equality Act protected transgender people who may not be seeking or have not yet sought, gender reassignment, medical or otherwise (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). The Women and Equalities Committee therefore recommended that the protected characteristic in respect of transgender people under the Equality Act should be amended to that of 'gender identity' (House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). The Government response to the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee rejected this recommendation, reiterating the coverage assigned by 'gender reassignment' (GEO, 2016)

In addition to these statutory duties, the social work profession is subject to a number of standards which make implicit reference to transgender equality. This includes:

- The Professional Capabilities Framework, which identifies the need for social workers to recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice (BASW, 2017).
- The Standards of Proficiency for Social Workers in England which affirm that social workers should be able to use practise to challenge and address the impact of discrimination, disadvantage and oppression (HCPC ,2012a).
- The Standards of Education and Training, which requires education providers to have equality and diversity policies in place, with indication as to how they will be implemented and monitored (HCPC, 2012b).
- The BASW Code of Ethics for Social Work, which outline social workers requirements to recognise diversity and challenge discrimination (BASW, 2012)

- Knowledge and Skills Statements for approved child and family practitioners which includes prioritising children's needs for emotional worth, stability and sense of belonging, including in regard to identity development (DfE, 2014b).
- Knowledge and Skill Statements for Practice Leaders and Practice Supervisors, which includes taking into account diversity and experiences of discrimination (DfE 2014c).

Having provided an overview of recent reform and its implications for initial and ongoing social work education, this review will now focus on the experiences of transgender people, as well as evidence on the awareness of transgender issues within the child and family social work profession.

Transgender people's experiences of social work in England

This section reviews the evidence on the experiences of transgender people in regard to child and family social work in England. Overall the review identified a significant lack of transgender-specific child and family, as well as general, social work research conducted in the UK. Of the limited evidence that was identified, all were small-scale studies or from narrative accounts; a common finding of transgender research (Davis, 2008; Fish, 2012; Hudson-Sharp and Metcalf, 2016). Although the review identified some studies that explored the experiences of the broader LGBT community in regard to social work, their usefulness is limited by them offering no direct or discernible insight into the transgender population. This review therefore reinforces the finding that transgender people have been almost entirely overlooked in social work theory and research (Fish, 2012).

What the limited evidence identified shows is that transgender people commonly report having poor experiences within social and care settings. Accounts of transgender peoples' experiences of services suggest many professionals lack appropriate information about transgender peoples' general needs (Hines, 2007), and that professionals can sometimes be insensitive to the needs of transgender service users, partly due to a failure to accept their acquired gender (Whittle et al., 2007). In line with this, transgender people report widespread transphobia within social and care settings (Alleyn and Jones, 2010).

Some evidence suggests childhood gender dysphoria remains poorly understood by social workers (Gregor, 2013; 2014; McBride, 2011). Correspondingly some studies describe parents and children often find themselves having to educate the professionals around them (Gregor et al., 2014). This creates not only a disconnect between services users', their families and professionals, but also means social workers can often be unaware of perspectives that seek to explain gender variance (Gregor 2013; 2014). This

is reflected in evidence put forward by Gregor et al. (2015), which describe local service providers differing in their assessment as to whether Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or regular social care services are the most appropriate referrals.

Evidence suggests transgender people experience discrimination within social work settings (Alleyn and Jones, 2010). This discrimination is thought to be reflected in the courts, which are argued to be influenced by case-workers who are biased against transgender parents (Alleyn and Jones, 2010). More specifically, evidence suggests transgender people have problems getting access to looked after children as potential foster or adoptive parents, in part due to LGBT identities still being falsely linked to paedophilia by some in wider society and the media (Ryrie et al. 2010).

Both domestic and international research suggests LGBT people hide their sexual orientation and/or gender identity when accessing public services. This is associated with concerns about confidentiality, worries about lower standards of care, concerns about the relevance of their disclosure, and fear of a negative and/or inappropriate response from service providers (Hines et al., 2007; Whittle et al., 2007; Willis et al., 2011). Evidence suggests fears around being exposed or 'outed' are particularly pertinent and complex for transgender people. Ryrie et al. (2010), for example, highlights how being 'outed' as transgender may lead to explorations of past life. Furthermore, Ryrie et al. (2010) identifies how decisions around visibility and disclosure to services are sometimes linked to the stage or nature of a transgender person's transition, and/or physical appearance. The experience of transitioning has also been identified as a barrier to engagement with and disclosure to services, due to physical and emotional fatigue (Ryrie et al., 2010). Evidence provided by Siverskog (2014) suggest these barriers can extend into later life, as transgender adults are likely to carry physical and mental scars from previously encountered transphobia.

In line with these experiences transgender people report significant gaps in services (Hines, 2007). As such, evidence identifies how transgender communities act as a vital social resource in supporting members whose needs are not being sufficiently met by health or social care providers (Hines, 2007; Willis et al., 2011). Within this context, Gregor et al. (2016) explores the role of social workers in supporting the transgender community, suggesting that the profession should be pivotal in providing a supportive framework to support young people and their families to explore issues around gender variance. Gregor et al. (2016) identifies how the threshold of this required knowledge could be relatively low, suggesting simply becoming conversant with the core issues surrounding gender identity can assist social workers in providing supportive services.

Some international research identifies other key traits that could provide more supportive social services for the transgender population. Holman and Goldberg (2006), for example, highlight the importance of ensuring the accessibility of services for

transgender people prior to referral. Similarly, Collazo et al. (2013) emphasise the importance of confidentiality, the use of gender-neutral language and/or language that reflects services users' own terminology, and the importance of clarifying the social worker's role.

Transgender awareness in social work education

The review identified a complete lack of specific evidence regarding the inclusion of transgender issues in social work education in England. The only partially-relevant studies that were identified were those that addressed the presence of heterosexism, and the subsequent minimal attention afforded to lesbian, gay and bisexual people within current provision (Logan and Kershaw, 1994; Fish, 2008). Bernard et al. (2014), for example, identified how a lack of attention afforded to minority group issues, and particular avoidance of sexual orientation in the curriculum, potentially prevent the development of mutual respect in the classroom that may well transpire into practice. These are findings that arguably may apply to the transgender population.

Some evidence reflected on the experiences of transgender people when in contact with social services signposted the need for a knowledge-base of good practice to be incorporated into the social work curriculum in order to combat the limited knowledge or training (Whittle et al., 2007). More broadly, Higgins et al. (2016) suggest that in the context of recent reform and the increasing emphasis on a limited-range of 'statutory'-type activities, such as meeting targets, completing assessments and obtaining information, social workers' ability to undertake more direct work with service users that could be more creative and empowering is severely limited.

There is a limited, but growing, body of international evidence that acknowledges transgender issues are absent from social work education in the United States, Canada and Australia (Craig et al., 2014; Martin et al, 2009; Scherrer and Woodford, 2013; Trevor and Boddy, 2013). For example, Erich et al. (2007)¹² identifies only 35 per cent of practicing social workers recalled content on transgender issues in textbooks, and only 20 per cent reported learning about issues related to transgender oppression. Similarly, Martin et al. (2009) identifies that within a random sample of schools of social work in the US, nearly a third of faculty perceived a low-level of transgender-specific knowledge and expertise in their schools¹³. Data collected by Austin et al. (2016)¹⁴ also suggests low levels of transgender inclusion in social work courses, with 65 per cent of surveyed

¹² Sample of 150 practicing social workers

¹³ Sample of 157 education providers.

¹⁴ Sample of 97 self-identifying transgender students.

students indicating that transgender issues are introduced into courses by students rather than lecturers.

Correspondingly, survey research from the US and Canada show academic faculties to have lower acceptance of covering 'transphobia' in social work education (US: 63 per cent; Canada: 72 per cent) when compared to 'heterosexism, homophobia and biphobia' (US: 90 per cent; Canada: 95 percent) (Fredrick-Goldsen et al., 2011). Evidence from the US also suggests that a lack of broad LGBTQ inclusion in social work education may be due to sexual orientation being ranked as less important than race, ethnicity and gender (Gezinski, 2009). This hierarchy could arguably also be applied to transgender issues. Furthermore, evidence from Austin et al. (2016) suggests that when transgender issues are covered they are frequently subsumed within the LGBT umbrella, therefore rendering them virtually invisible (Austin et al., 2016).

These notable gaps in social work education have been identified to result in social workers who are often uninformed or biased toward transgender and/or gender-variant clients (Enrich et al., 2007; Floyd and Gruber, 2011; Logie et al., 2007). Floyd and Gruber (2011)¹⁵ found social work students in the US identified transgender issues among the most challenging, with nearly 60 per cent citing strong moral concerns about working with this population, and nearly 70 per cent indicating they had little to no experience with or knowledge about transgender-specific issues. Erich et al. (2007) identified 66 per cent of surveyed social work practitioners reported having no or minimal knowledge of transgender-specific issues.

¹⁵ Sample of 147 social work students

Social work courses in England: a content analysis of transgender issues

This section of the report presents the findings of a content analysis of a sample of HCPC-approved social work course information provided by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England. It aims to provide a broad assessment of child and family social worker education in regard to gender identity, in order draw conclusions on its likely adequacy and consistency.

Sample description

The sample underpinning this analysis comprised of social work course content information from thirty-five different HEIs in England. Within each institution information was gathered from HCPC-accredited undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses. This typically comprised of module outlines and/or module course information. This information was gathered through a two-stage process. This first stage included the scoping of HEI's websites for publically available information on social work courses. The second was the direct contact of relevant HEI staff to request course information.

Due to a lack of standardisation and the varied quality of information, the findings of this section should not be used to infer definitive coverage of transgender issues within social work education. Rather what it provides is an indication of likely coverage, given the data limitations.

Summary of findings

This stage of the research originally intended to comprise of two stages: the first being the scanning of documentation for occurrences of pre-identified key words; the second was the development of a coding scheme to evaluate the quality of content. The analysis of social work course information, however, revealed very little explicit reference to gender identity issues, which inhibited moving onto the next stage of analysis. Of all the explored references, the phrase 'transgender' only appeared in the sampled course information 5 times. In almost all cases (4) this was in an appendix outlining the Professional Capability Framework.

Transgender issues may, however, be covered more implicitly, through references to broader issues such as equality and diversity, as well as anti-discriminatory principles and practices. Often these are included in the section on learning and skills outcomes for the course as a whole or a specific module, and typically directly reference the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF), as well as in the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency. Other times, but less regularly,

there are more specific references as to how equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice will be covered in the syllabus in the specific module.

Table One: Frequency of words associated with transgender issues in HEI social work courses

| Term | Frequency |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| “transgender” | 0 |
| “trans” | 5 |
| “gender identity” | 0 |
| “gender variance” | 0 |
| “gender dysphoria” | 0 |
| “gender non-conforming” | 0 |
| “transphobia” | 0 |
| “transphobic” | 0 |
| “equality” | 112 |
| “diversity” | 105 |
| “anti-discriminatory” | 33 |

Findings from qualitative research

The third stage of this report presents findings drawn on new evidence collected via semi-structured, telephone interviews with four key groups of respondents. This includes:

- Three key stakeholders in regard to education and training in the social work profession in England: the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), the Association of Professors of Social Work (APSW), and the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC).
- Two key transgender support organisation: Mermaids and the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIREs).
- Seven Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that provide qualifying courses in social work.
- Ten representatives of child and family social work teams working within Local Authorities across England.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via telephone, audio recorded with participants' permission and transcribed verbatim. Data collected was analysed using a framework approach¹⁶. Interviews were conducted between February and March 2017, and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.

Stakeholder respondents were purposively sampled to provide an overview of the consistency and adequacy of social work education, as well as insight into the experiences of transgender people. We aimed for the sample of HEI's and local authorities to be geographically representative, and to represent the diversity of social work education in England. Respondents therefore included all current pathways into child and family social work, including generic and 'fast-track' courses, as well as institutions currently part of formal Social Work Teaching Partnerships (SWTPs). These respondents have been anonymised.

Due to its qualitative nature the value of our empirical research is its ability to provide insight into a broad range of views on transgender awareness in child and family social work education. Therefore, while our research shows the range and diversity of views

¹⁶ This entailed coding the data of the separate research groups into themes and issues. Some of these were predetermined ones, embodied in the discussion guides and main areas of questioning, while others emerged from the interviews. The codes and groups developed in the analysis of data formed the analytical framework of this research, and were used to structure the findings of this report

and experiences among those interviewed, they may not necessarily reflect the views of the wider population. The following findings should therefore be considered within the context of the research's strengths and limitations.

Transgender people's experiences of child and family social work in England

In line with the evidence identified in our review, transgender stakeholders described the growing prevalence of gender variance within the UK. This was indicated through a significant increase in people making use of support services, as well as growth in the number of people seeking specialist care.

"This is on the rise, there are more and more young people who actually feel brave enough to talk about this and parents who are reaching out for support... we've seen a rise of 460% in the number of calls and emails that we've had." [Mermaids]

"This is a recent explosion of numbers. The growth in the number of under 18s coming for specialist care was 42% in the year to 31 March 2017 and even higher in the previous year, when it was 104%." [GIRES]

Despite this, all representatives of local authorities who took part in the research described gender variance as an issue that their services rarely encountered. Out of the ten local authorities interviewed, five described having direct or indirect experience with gender variant services users. This ranged from the responding individual working with a transgender young person as part of their own caseload, currently or in the past, to a general awareness of a gender variant person being in contact with their service. In line with this interviewees across local authorities and HEIs consistently referred to gender variance as a minority issue.

"I think there's two hundred and thirty children who are looked after, and I've got one and he's the only one." [Local Authority]

In line with the evidence identified in our earlier review, stakeholders described transgender people as having poor experiences when in contact with child and family social services. This included social workers behaving in prejudicial manner, labelling parental support of gender variance as abuse, failing to recognise the risks associated with unsupportive home environments, and making uninformed judgements around the acceptance of gender variance.

"Parents have reported numerous incidents of social workers judging their parenting and support of a trans child. One example being if you allow your child

to live like this, then you're going to encourage bullying, it means you're putting them at risk... What they don't understand is that we know categorically from research that kids and teens who are supported to explore are actually far better off in terms of mental health illness, depression and anxiety, anorexia, etc."

[Mermaids]

These accounts were, however, offset with some more positive experiences. This included social workers playing a key role in family mediation, being a resource of information, facilitating treatment pathways and support, tackling local discrimination, as well as more generally ensuring the interests of children and young persons are best promoted. In line with the previously identified literature, transgender stakeholders recognised social workers as playing a potentially crucial role in the support of transgender people and their families. In line with this, a number of respondents reiterated the role of child and family social workers in supporting transgender young people. These stressed that while gender identity is not a social work issue in itself, the vulnerabilities that often surround transgender experiences, in combination with initial reasons for service involvement, make the role of social workers incredibly important.

"It's getting that balance correct that you want to be helpful and supportive if parents or carers aren't responding positively then there may well be a need for the social worker to do something around that, In itself, a child questioning their gender identity isn't a social worker's issue, and I think that needs to be recognised." [Higher Education Institution]

"Amongst the trans children in the population there's only a very small number that will come the way of social workers. But, nevertheless, it is likely these young people will be in particularly vulnerable situations, so they're exploring their gender identity in the context of having parents perhaps with mental health or drug issues, potentially in situations of abuse and neglect and so on." [Professor Gillian Schofield from APSW]

Transgender awareness amongst child and family social workers

Without undertaking survey research with a statistically representative sample of child and family social workers in England, we cannot know with complete certainty the extent to which this population possesses an awareness of transgender issues. On the basis of the range and diversity of views and experiences collected, however, what our research does provide is good indication that child and family social workers' knowledge of transgender issues is likely very mixed.

[Interviewer] *“Do you feel social work as a profession has a sufficient understanding of gender identity and gender variance?”*

“I don’t know of any studies that have looked at that. It would be a useful survey to do, but I suspect there’s a mixture” [JUCSWEC]

Some respondents, across interview groups, frequently described child and family social workers as having minimal awareness of transgender issues.

“I feel quite ashamed to admit that I think the awareness is generally across the partnership, probably on the low end” [Higher Education Institution]

“I don’t think that many [social workers] have come with what I would call a well-developed knowledge either of sexual identity or of transgender issues” [Local Authority]

“I would expect there might not be specialised knowledge about what kind of issues might be particularly faced by a child who is questioning their gender identity, what kind of resources, what kind of services and what kind of responses” [Higher Education Institution]

Others, however, identified pockets of expertise, whereby social workers demonstrated highly specialised knowledge. In these incidences respondents expressed confidence in their graduates and staff to not only provide sufficient support to gender variant service users, but also engender change within the profession.

“Not only apply it in practice, but be confident to articulate the issues, perhaps with colleagues who trained a long time ago, or who don’t have the same current, up to date awareness. So to influence the culture of how social work services are delivered, as well as having confidence in their skills to work with any individuals where [gender identity] might be an issue” [Higher Education Institution]

Some respondents described variations in child and family social workers’ awareness of transgender issues according to certain characteristics. Firstly, as expected, those who had previously had the opportunity to work with transgender service users were described as having greater awareness.

“For those where they’ve encountered service users who are transgender, I think there would obviously be a different understanding and awareness. Not necessarily a difference in practice but at least they’d have a different consciousness” [Higher Education Institution]

Secondly, some respondents suggested that candidates from Fast-Track programmes may have greater awareness, due to their education and training being more practice and placement orientated, and the increased likelihood of working with transgender service users.

“Step-up candidates, they’re immersed in the practice... just because they’re in practice there is a greater chance that they would come across [gender variance].”
[Local Authority]

Thirdly, social workers working within certain settings where transgender service users are more likely to be engaged were expected to have greater awareness.

“There’s certain areas of work where you are much more likely to need to have that awareness than others and maybe that ought to be a priority in those areas of work. For example if you were going to work in a CAMHS clinic as a social worker, you are very likely to come across children, young people, who are raising questions about their own gender identity.” [Local Authority]

“I would have thought certain social workers in some environments may have a deeper understanding depending on the groups that they are dealing with. I guess in specialist services or in charities or tertiary sector services, where perhaps they have more contact with people from that particular community.” [HCPC]

Fourthly, possible variations were suggested around different age groups of social workers, and amongst those with more ‘traditional’ views who may be less susceptible to developing an awareness of transgender issues.

“I kind of wonder whether there’s a split. You know older social workers ... I think among young people, students have said “we want to do a workshop around non-binary people’s identities as well as Trans”. That’s among that student population, particularly the mainstream student population of 18-21 year olds” [Higher Education Institution]

“Social workers who sometimes have more traditional views and sometimes struggle with these issues. Our stance has always been we work with people to develop their social work values. If they aren’t able to work with people then that would be an issue in terms of fitness to practice, as any other issue would be.”
[Higher Education Institution]

Transgender awareness in social worker education and training

In line with respondents' views on child and family social workers' awareness of transgender issues, education and training in this area was frequently described by respondents as variable, yet largely deficient. Very few social workers were thought to have specific education or training in relation to transgender issues, at qualifying or post-qualifying level.

"I think much to my shame, I have to say that I can't think of any, well there is no specific teaching, workshops, lectures, that explore the needs of transgender or gender variant population." [Higher Education Institution]

This was also identified to permeate into processes of recruitment:

"We would always ask about anti-oppressive practice, anti-discriminatory practice, there tends to be a sort of passing reference about gender but only on a very superficial way... there's certainly nothing specific about gender identity." [Local Authority]

Of the education and training that was described respondents identified a tendency for transgender issues to be subsumed under the LGBT umbrella. This led to a lack of specificity in education, and often confusion between issues around sexual orientation and gender identity.

"I think that they'll have something about LGBT and do it on a wider, but I would say it's often sort of lesbian, gay and bisexual, rather than the trans." [Local Authority]

"I think that's not terribly helpful either because it puts them all into one category and actually they have different issues and the groups you tend to have seem to club them altogether." [Local Authority]

Social workers who identified themselves as having minimal education and training on transgender issues described undertaking their own research in order to better support gender variant young people and their families. These social workers, however, subsequently considered themselves to be practicing under a deficit model, at times to the detriment of services users.

"I spent a lot of Googling I have to say... unfortunately for [service user] it's very trial and error, some things will work, some things won't work, but yeah, no unfortunately the internet's been my main port of call." [Local Authority]

“I know this from personal experience, that we’ve got one young person who’s looked after who is going through a transition, and so for the staff who’ve been working with that young person they themselves have sort of done some research and we’ve had some advice, but that’s been very much about that young person as opposed to a broader approach in terms of training to the whole staff group.”
[Local Authority]

Equipping social workers with the skills to do independent research was frequently described by HEIs and local authorities as a fundamental part of social worker education. By ensuring social workers develop research skills was described as ensuring social workers have the skills and capabilities to address all eventualities that may occur in practice.

“What we equip them with is to do independent research and develop and to find out how to learn about [gender variance]. This is absolutely the same for autism; so we reference autism as a thing that comes up, are we going to spend half a day on it? No. And I guarantee to you every single one of these social workers are going to encounter autism probably in their first year, but we are not covering it.”
[Higher Education Institution]

“A good social worker will have the skills to find out what they need to find out in order to give a balanced assessment. So the more we improve social work skills in all areas, it would include [gender variance] as well.” [Local Authority]

However, as our review identified, the evidence base on transgender issues is poor, particularly within the context of social work. This raises questions around the extent to which such an approach can facilitate sufficient awareness and knowledge of transgender issues, and therefore underpin good practice. Furthermore local authorities who took part in this research described having to cut subscriptions to resources as a result of recent austerity, arguably preventing some social workers from accessing even the minimal amount of research currently available.

“As a social worker these are some tools you can use or this is some information that would be helpful. No. I don’t think there’s anything very specific, although I haven’t trawled it so I don’t know whether Research in Practice do have anything.”
[Local Authority]

“Putting my old local authority hat on, one of the problems of course is money all the time, it comes back to money and when you’re having to cut back on things you’ll end up cutting back on things like subscriptions to resources like Research in Practice.” [Local Authority]

In incidences where child and family social workers’ awareness of transgender issues were considered to be low, the values, ethics and anti-oppressive principles that underpin

social work education in England were frequently thought to, at the very least, provide sufficient basis for good practice.

“That’s why we put such an emphasis on anti-oppressive practice, generally; so that students are equipped to deal with the whole range of marginalised oppressed communities they are likely to encounter” [Higher Education Institution]

The extent to which upholding these values adequately prepares child and family social workers was, however, questioned by some respondents. Some thought this was just the beginning of understanding transgender issues, and subsequently the ability to support gender variant service users and their families.

“I do think the social workers, we all have a value base and we all do this job because of the values that we strongly hold and they are about equality and giving people opportunities and increasing their expectations of life and making them reach their full potential, but they are very starting blocks to understanding some of the issues” [Local Authority]

“If you think about anti-oppressive practice it’s not just about values. It’s also what you do and what you know and how you challenge and how you work with people’s opinion... I think that you can’t do that unless you are very clear about the groups that you are working with” [Higher Education Institution]

Within this context, the Association of Professors of Social Work suggested transgender awareness is an area in need of future development across the profession.

[Interviewer]: *“Would you suggest [gender variance] is an issue where there is a need for additional resources and education?”*

“I think almost certainly, yes, I mean for somebody like myself, in child and family social work for a long time, I’m currently researching LGBTQ young people in care and learning about a lot of new issues as well as a new language sometimes, and I think that’s quite challenging, so I’m sure it’s very challenging for a new social worker as well” [Professor Gillian Schofield from APSW]

Despite the widely held view amongst respondents that social work education and training in regard to transgender issues was largely deficient, some evidence of good practice was identified. Examples include:

- Service user-led sessions on transgender issues, led by a transgender person.
- Covering transgender issues in regard to equality law
- Sessions on effective communication with children, including coverage of transgender issues.
- Teaching on child development, including gender variance

- ASYE training on sexual and gender identity.
- Outsourced specialist training within LA's CPD in regard to referrals and treatment.
- Safeguarding, with particular reference to vulnerabilities associated with gender variance.

Within HEIs and local authorities that exhibited good practice in the education of social workers in regard to transgender issues, a number of key drivers could be identified. This included a broader culture of trans-inclusiveness that not only instilled receptiveness amongst students to learn about transgender issues, but also provide an inclusive environment for transgender staff and students.

“Our strategy here has been to not simply think about the content of what we teach, but the context in what we teach. So for a long time there has been a solid movement around trans awareness within the university.” [Higher Education Institution]

This also included HEIs and local authorities having both personal and professional connections that facilitated the inclusion of transgender awareness in their education and training. This varied from individuals, to LGBT support groups, to the presence of broader, more formalised multi-agency programmes.

“So we run a working with diversity teaching unit and that is taught in the BA and the MA qualifying programme, and within that unit we have a service user led session which is run by a trans person.” [Higher Education Institution]

“There's a multi-agency programme – and I know that the multi-agency trainer has recently commissioned [gender identity specialist] to provide a training course for us on that issue.” [Local Authority]

Transgender services users actively campaigning for services to address their needs were also identified as a key driver.

“I think one of the things that has brought transgender as an agenda, if you like, into social work is actually about the participant groups of children and young people who have had to shout either within children in care councils or participation groups maybe through things like CAHMs services or school services about their needs not being met.” [Local Authority]

In line with this, respondents who described good links between HEIs and local authorities described stronger processes of collective learning and engagement for transgender people. This included the presence of formal teaching partnerships

“We don't have a service user and carer groups as such but we have involved people with experience of services and we kind of ask them about the course and

talk to them about development. Some of them are involved in bits of teaching so we do ask them and then we have annual course reviews” [Higher Education Institution]

The presence of academics with particular expertise and interest in LGBT equality was also common when identifying examples of good practice.

“I think it's partly to do with lecturer interests in the issue. I mean what I would say is we would always have covered gender but it's maybe the kind of transgender issues and gender variance area what has changed” [Higher Education Institution]

“Talking to us, myself, you're going to hear greater awareness than you might hear across the whole sector, but that depends a great deal on the members of staff at each social work institution” [Higher Education Institution]

The role of professional standards

As identified by our earlier review, social work education and practice in England is subject to a number of standards set out by various stakeholders. This makes for a complex process when determining the nature and content of social work education and training.

“One of the challenges we face is we are regulated by the HCPC. We also have to abide by the Quality Assurance Agency and the benchmark statements for social work education. We have to meet the quality and standards requirements of the university, we have to respond to workforce development needs of the local community. We have to fill our places. We have to argue for resources to teach social workers” [JUCSWEC]

The HCPC validation process for qualifying social work education in England sets standards and outcomes in terms of equality and diversity, but does not prescribe content or process.

“I mean obviously there'll be differences in how [HEIs] deliver their training but our ethos around the standards is supposed to be it doesn't matter how you get there, as long as you get there and you meet the standards and the outcome is delivered. So yes, not specific to trans issues.” [HCPC]

“For the qualifying programme there is a HCPC revalidation process and that gives quite a clear idea of what needs to be in the course in terms of overall structure, I mean it's not terribly specific on content.” [Higher Education Institution]

This non-prescribed approach to curriculum content and the integration of standards of values and ethics into qualifying education was identified as an important issue by social work stakeholders. The closure of the College of Social Work was described as creating a lack of specificity in regard to the detail of social work courses, and the provision of guidance regarding professional values and ethics.

“With the College of Social Work disappearing there is the question of curriculum and what is going to be required to be taught regarding transgender issues. Our regulator the HCPC does have a certain quality assurance role but the detail of teaching still needs to be established nationally, as the Chief Social Workers are doing with the Knowledge and Skills Statements.” [Professor Gillian Schofield from APSW]

This non-prescriptive regulation of the social work profession therefore, despite setting standards for anti-discriminatory practice, currently arguably leaves NQSW’s open to not having sufficient awareness of transgender issue, at least until post-qualification.

“You want people who are discrimination minded in terms of making sure they don’t discriminate and challenging discrimination and social justice, and thinking about the needs of the people they’re working with. But it might be that very, very specific needs, specific groups get picked up later in post-qualifying CPD or mandatory training from their employer.” [HCPC]

However, given that post-qualifying education is currently not regulated, and that CPD-dependent registration renewal does not specify particular knowledge, the likelihood that an awareness of transgender issues will be developed at this stage seems uncertain.

“So the GSCC used to have a fairly light-touch role in [post-qualifying education], so they had a post-qualifying framework which set out kind of levels and areas and aims as post-qualifying training in social work. And then nominally I think recognised causes against it. That is not normally a role that regulators do across the piece, it’s normally something that a professional body or college would do. Which obviously now no longer, well partly exists in the profession.” [HCPC]

“[registration renewal] is very much about the outcomes of learning so they don’t prescribe that they need to do learning in certain areas or in certain subjects. They require that you have to undertake CPD, keep a record of it, try and make that sure that your CPD can benefit your practice and those that you work with.” [HCPC]

Barriers to improving transgender awareness in child and family social work

Linked to current regulatory framework of the child and family social work profession, respondents across stakeholder groups described several reasons as to why transgender issues are unlikely to feature within post-qualifying education. First and foremost, transgender issues were often described as low priority due to low incidence.

“[Gender variance] is estimated to affect 1% of the population, and high numbers of those affected are not visible. The chances are that if you are professional working in any of these fields, you won’t come across it very often, so prioritising something that is experienced by support agencies infrequently creates the ethos that this is not a strong priority” [Mermaids]

“From a senior management point of view I think you’d have to have some buy-in and some, they’d have to accept the relevance and importance of it because sometimes they can say well [gender variance] is not a priority.” [Local Authority]

As such, other more pertinent training issues were described as consistently taking priority, often in response to arising core safeguarding issues.

“I would say we generally go through phases. I know that sounds awful, so you had FGM, you had CSE. I would say there’s a lot more radicalisation, we’ve all had radicalisation training and I think they do go with themes of the time, and it is often as a response to something rather than pre-sought out.” [Local Authority]

Furthermore, a decline in resources was consistently described by local authorities as a fundamental barrier to investing in training to promote transgender awareness.

“So it is about prevalence and it’s about money, you know. We’re struggling to provide the training on all the bigger topics that people are more likely to come across as it is, without narrowing quite expensive training into more minority areas.” [Local Authority]

This ties back to the reliance of personal and professional connections to facilitate the inclusion of transgender awareness in social worker education and training.

“We’re all in the period of austerity, we don’t have the luxury of lots and lots of money to afford the training that we would want to do... We have expertise within the organisation and so therefore are able to look at ourselves in order to supply some of that training. You can’t do that with [gender variance] and so because there isn’t expertise around in terms of the organisation so you are constantly buying that in and that is limited, we just don’t have the money” [Local Authority]

A feature that was associated with the low-prioritisation of gender variance and resource constraints was the subsuming of transgender issues into broader LGB education and training.

“Even though I understand the issues are linked but very different for LGB and trans young people, nevertheless I suspect [Local Authorities] would look at that gender question to be linked to broader questions that they may feel they could spare their workforce to attend.” [Higher Education Institution]

As identified earlier, this has been linked to confusion around the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity amongst some social workers. Accordingly, respondents from social stakeholders and HEI’s suggested transgender issues should remain separate to ensure sufficient understanding and knowledge.

“Even at the qualifying level I think it’s a matter of how these issues can sit alongside and be integrated with others without getting lost. Because if trans issues just appear in a long list of diversity issues, people may leave the courses not appropriately equipped to deal with them.” [Professor Gillian Schofield from APSW]

“[Lecturers] had a big debate about whether or not to include transgender and decided against just because it is a one-day workshop and they wanted to ensure that they covered in sufficient depth. So they didn’t go for breadth, they went for depth of understanding.” [Higher Education Institution]

Nevertheless, respondents described barriers to ensuring sufficient time was spent on gender variance in an already crowded, and constantly evolving, curriculum.

“But I think that everybody would agree that even the three year BA or the two year MA programme you’re trying to pack on awful lot in in terms of teaching because obviously you’re going to be out on placement for so much of the time, your actual hours of teaching are really quite constrained so actually, how to do that efficiently and make sure issues are covered is an ongoing challenge.” [Higher Education Institution]

“For me the struggle is always what to prioritise within a curriculum that is ever-changing and is increasingly crowded you know with the kind of policy change and having to respond to that. There’s always the dilemma for us, an emphasis on providing foundational knowledge and skills and awareness that then is tailored to the needs of very specific populations” [Higher Education Institution]

Related to this, several HEI’s speculated as to whether Fast-Track social work courses are too condensed, and therefore questioned whether they provide their students

sufficient time to develop an understanding of fundamental principles of anti-oppressive practice, let alone specific knowledge of gender variance.

“My professional experience leads me to suspect that because [Fast Track] programmes are so condensed, I am not even sure there is the same emphasis on values and values in practice i.e. anti-oppressive practice. I don’t know where there would be time in the curriculum to give attention to those areas.” [Higher Education Institution]

“Our problem is, and it’s a problem I think for all social work courses, but perhaps even more so for Step Up, is that the amount of content that we have to get through with the students in such a short amount of time. It does mean that you will get a certain level of “and we need to think about this”, but possibly not as developed as you would like it to be really.” [Higher Education Institution]

In response to these concerns many respondents described it as important to embed gender variance across the whole curriculum.

“Well, I think in relation to the issue of how far it’s practical for [social work courses] to devote that much time for it when it’s a relatively small group, I’d say that if you can try and embed those issues across the curriculum, then they can be relevant in all teaching, and they don’t necessarily have to take up that much time” [Higher Education Institution]

Promoting transgender awareness in child and family social work

When discussing the ways in which the child and family social work profession could improve awareness and knowledge of gender variance, several key components were identified. The first was instilling leadership. Due to the current low prioritisation of gender variance within the profession, leadership was identified to be crucial in not only raising the profile of transgender awareness, but also engendering change.

“[Gender variance] needs some sort of either leadership or someone committed to making sure that things happen. I think it has to be, the profile has to be raised because I don’t think it will happen otherwise really it just won’t... I just don’t think it’s there on the agenda at the moment to be honest” [Local Authority]

The type of leadership that was described as being most valuable was that from the Department for Education, and Chief Social Workers.

“I think including an awareness of gender, a wider awareness of gender identity, getting those steer from the DfE... it's a strong push for the profession” [Higher Education Institution]

“I think it would be fairly important for the chief social workers to endorse improvement of trans awareness. That would motivate a number of other things” [JUCSWEC]

Another key component of promoting awareness of transgender issues within the profession was that transgender people should be included in all forms of education and training. This principle of incorporating the lived experience of service users into education and training was one that was well received by participants.

“I think that there should be visible trans people who are willing to talk to supporting professionals to increase understanding of what it's actually like” [Mermaids]

“I suppose for me the most powerful training that I've ever been on is when you have a person there who's been through that experience” [Local Authority]

This suggestion, however, is one made in recognition of transgender peoples' visibility in social work currently being very poor.

“The visibility of trans people in social work is very, very poor, so I couldn't give you examples myself of either people's experience of services, or of trans people in lecturing” [Higher Education Institution]

Underlining work to promote the inclusion of transgender people in the child and family social work profession was therefore thought to be beneficial.

Another key suggestion was multi-agency working. Due to the multi-faceted and complex nature of gender variance, multi-agency working was thought to be of crucial importance to ensure best practice. Integrating specialist voluntary agencies into this multi-agency perspective was described as particularly important, as they were thought to often have a wealth of experience and expertise to best support gender variant people.

“I don't think single agency training is going to be particularly useful really to be honest, because it's a multi-faceted issue isn't it and it's a complex issue and everybody needs to understand it and understand the terminology and understand the complexity and everything on the same level, and then work out how you're best going to support a young person and their family as well.” [Local Authority]

“So a lot of the time you get information that comes through or you'll hear about voluntary agencies offering support, but you don't ever really get a lot about how

they're supporting children experiencing identity. And actually maybe that might be the way forward, is actually for voluntary agencies to link in more with Local Authorities." [Local Authority]

Another key issue when discussing the promotion of transgender awareness within the child and family social work profession was where to best target development and resources. Some suggested within initial, qualifying education, in order to build the foundation knowledge in which social workers can develop best, informed practice.

"So you know if we are to really change attitudes and you are aiming for the sort of more pervasive change across the profession, that's why we are thinking we should target qualifying training." [Higher Education Institution]

The issue as to where teaching around gender variance would best fit, however, caused some concerns.

"My concern is that it will be located purely in the child mental health category or in safeguarding in relation to bullying in schools and so on. And that's fine. That's important, but it's important that it's not just developed from that perspective... simply becoming familiar how we talk in a non-binary gendered way is also important." [JUCSWEC]

Another suggestion was targeting development within the ASYE. The ASYE was identified by respondents as providing NQSWs with the core skills that bridged the gap that may occur between study and practice. The ASYE was therefore identified as a prime opportunity to provide NQSWs with the knowledge and practical skills to support transgender service users within their setting, and to obtain a level of detail perhaps lacking in initial, generic social work education.

"The first year, the ASYE year, would probably be a very good pitch for social workers to learn more detail." [Local Authority]

Similarly, more targeted post-qualifying education in accordance with the specialist roles child and family' social workers may undertake was also recognised as an option.

"I think when social workers operate in more specialist roles then there needs to be specialist training. So, for example, if you're working in a fostering team you need to have additional training and insight about how you would assess a trans applicant to become a foster carer, for example." [Higher Education Institution]

As might be expected, respondents offered multiple recommendations as to where development and resources could or should be targeted. As such, there was an underlying consensus that transgender awareness should be an issue that permeates

and features across social workers' lifelong learning, as well as across pathways and cohorts.

“Well I suppose really it should permeate throughout really shouldn't it I think, I think in the training in universities, or at Step Up, or wherever social workers are being trained.” [Local Authority]

Developing resources to promote transgender awareness

In addition to raising questions as to where social workers' could best develop their understanding and knowledge of gender variance, respondents also explored the format through which education and training could best take. Given the size of the child and family social work workforce, e-learning as part of CPD within local authorities was considered an important option. This was thought to address the issue of scale, as well as ensure all social workers, at whatever point in their career, would achieve some form of knowledge and awareness.

“About 35,000 people are in social work and engage with child and family. To give them all face to face training is a major task, which is why we initially provided e-learning to raise their awareness of gender variance in children and adolescents” [GIRES]

“You can provide training at the initial point of entry to the profession, about 5,000 people join each year, but there will still be a huge number of people already there and that's why e-learning for them can have a major role to play.” [GIRES]

Questions were raised, however, as to whether e-learning could provide the depth of knowledge required to best support gender variant service users and their families. Furthermore, some respondents were cynical as to whether non-mandatory e-learning would receive sufficient uptake.

“I think e-learning is okay if you've got to know a procedure or something but I think when you're dealing with really complex human issues I'm not convinced. I think the thing I would say you would get from that is some awareness raising on a very sort of superficial level and that might be about it” [Local Authority]

“The trouble with CPD is that not everybody accesses that, you know the old trope that there's a whole swathe of social workers who don't pick up a book or undertake much in the way of additional training once they've got their qualification” [Local Authority]

Respondents also suggested the development of practical reference resources, such as toolkits and good practice guides. These resources were thought best to be social work

specific, in order to provide services with the means and tools to best support services users.

“That’s why guidance is important, because we work so that only a few of us will develop practice experience of this.” [Local Authority]

“That would be quite useful; some assessment tools. Maybe some structured kind of questionnaires that would be helpful. You know the right kind of questions to ask. I think those sorts of things would be useful in terms of as an assessment tool.”
[Local Authority]

This led to suggestions of a local or national repository that both local authorities and HEIs could make use of.

“I am wondering whether a toolkit of some sort for social work educators could be developed so that it wasn't just teaching and learning materials videos, case scenarios, but you know it also included practical exercises that had been tested and were seen to be very fruitful. You know if we could have that sort of repository somewhere that educators could draw on I think that would be really, really helpful.” [Higher Education Institution]

“So where do social workers look for information at the point when they, for example, become responsible for a trans young person in care have to advise foster carers? Can Local Authorities identify knowledgeable members of staff to act as consultants, or, nationally, are there websites where social workers can get balanced, helpful and social work orientated information and advice?” [Professor Gillian Schofield from APSW]

However, questions were raised as to whether the development of arguably static resources can sufficiently provide social workers with the skills and expertise to support gender variant service users.

“If you're wanting to educate social workers in this particular area it has to be something that's ongoing. So it has to be a conversation that's not going to be had sporadically or a resource that you're only going to tap into that then at some point becomes not up to date.” [Local Authority]

In light of these concerns, and in recognition of the pockets of expertise that can be found across England, many respondents saw benefit in establishing reflexive and dynamic networks to share resources and training to help facilitate and spread awareness and knowledge, as well as build good practice across multiple agencies.

“Now what I get a sense of, actually, from talking to professionals is that there are sort of pockets of expertise that are developing within Local Authorities where

people have come across the issues in practice and have thought very hard about them and built a local network.... So I suppose it's about thinking about how to use those networks to generate training that would be more widely available and that would be able to be offered” [Higher Education Institution]

“I think it’s about pulling together resources to guide support professionals in their duty of care, to highlight good practice and reduce poor practice. We have numerous toolkits and online links and resources for agencies dealing with young people, including a link to the GIRES training, produced in association with the Royal College of GPs. Not only does this training give CPD points, it also has personal accounts of what it means to be trans in an accessible and informative approach. So there are resources available already that agencies supporting professionals can disseminate” [Mermaids]

This type of co-ordination was thought to avoid the trapping of expertise with individuals and within localities.

“That’s part of the problem, you need all of the workforce to be aware that this is something they need to be engaging with rather than it being a specialist person on Trans issues, or LGBT issues within the workforce just as years ago there was that whole argument you didn’t want the BME practitioner to be seen as the residue of expertise in all issues of ethnicity.” [Higher Education Institution]

The role of Principal Social Workers was thought to be potentially useful in this process; through tapping into networks and co-ordinating activities at a local, regional and national level.

Conclusion

The overall finding of this research is that transgender awareness is an area in need of development within the child and family social work profession, with the evidence clearly indicating a demand for additional training materials. The findings of the rapid evidence review, content analysis and primary research contained in this report demonstrate that although there is some evidence of good education, training and practice within the profession, it is inconsistent. This results in transgender and otherwise gender variant service users and their families having poor experiences and subsequent gaps in service provision.

Given the identification of pockets of expertise in regard to transgender issues in the social work profession, progress would arguably likely to be achieved simply by sharing resources already developed. Nevertheless, many of these resources are suggested to be non-social work specific. To develop resources that are social work specific would seem favourable, given the vital role child and family social workers have in the supporting transgender or otherwise gender variant children and young people, and their families.

Underpinning this recommendation, however, is the finding that the evidence base on the nature of and experiences of the transgender population continues to be poor; hampered by data and sampling difficulties in regard to gender identity. The lack of transgender-specific social work research deprives the profession of an evidence base on which to develop best practice, as is the case generally with transgender service provision. Broader investment in better understanding the experiences of the transgender population would therefore seem of crucial importance in order to ensure the needs of this often vulnerable group are sufficiently met.

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Appendix One: Scoping Review Research Protocol

This review aims to provide a synthesis of existing evidence on trans awareness in child and family social worker education. The protocol will therefore be designed to broadly identify literature that:

- provides an account of the child and family social work workforce in England.
- establishes the nature of child and family social worker education. This includes initial education as well as ongoing training.
- provides an insight into the content of social worker education in regard to gender identity.

Search process and methods

Literature searches will be undertaken using pre-determined protocol, and will use a wide range of databases and search engines. This will be supplemented by the manual searching of key organisations' websites likely to hold relevant information.

Bibliographies of publications identified to be relevant will also be searched to ensure maximum coverage.

The review will take a systematic approach, scoping and critically reviewing published and unpublished literature from 2000 onwards. Although the focus of the review will be on child and family social workers in England, it will cover evidence from the entire UK and its constituent parts, as well as will draw on international research where relevant. The findings of the review will be presented as a stand-alone document, from which the subsequent primary research will make reference. This document will provide a synthesis of the existing evidence base, including reflections on evidence gaps and quality.

Given the expectation of a limited amount of evidence in this area, our approach will use broad terminology to identify as much literature as possible, which will then more selectively identified prior to inclusion in the final report. Given this review seeks to provide an account of the child and family social work workforce and education generally prior to focusing on awareness of gender identity, terms associated with the social work profession will be used as the basis of our search strategy. Terms associated with trans awareness will then be applied as secondary.

The search process will variously use Boolean operators to ensure its focus. Depending on the engines' search technology, appropriate and proportionate approaches will be used to reduce the number of irrelevant hits (e.g. eliminating historical and literary literature). This search process will largely take an iterative approach, working within the

confines of each search engine/database and their technology to find the most effective approach.

Main search terms

| |
|--|
| “social work” “child and family social work” “child and family social work” “children and family” “child and families” “social worker” “social worker education” “social services” “social worker training” |
| AND |
| “England” “United Kingdom” “Scotland” “Wales” and “Northern Ireland” “Britain” |
| AND |
| “trans” “transgender” “gender identity” “gender variance” “gender dysphoria” “LGBT” “LGB&T” “LGBTQ” “gender non-conforming” “non-binary” “cis” “cis-gender” “transsexual ¹⁷ ” “transphobia” “transphobic” |

Broad inclusion criteria

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Geography | Research (wholly or in part) conducted in relation to the UK or parts of the UK. |
| Timescale | Published (or disseminated) from 2000 onwards |
| Publication Status | Published or pending publication, including working papers |
| Language | English |
| Research Method | None prescribed. |

Search engine/database

| |
|---|
| International Bibliography of Social Sciences |
| JSTOR |
| British Education Index |
| DawsonEra |
| Education Resource Information Centre |

¹⁷ The terms ‘*transsexual*’ is now often considered inappropriate, and is likely only to be seen in legal and medical documents. This term however is included as means to ensure full coverage.

| |
|--|
| Google Scholar |
| Academic Search Complete |
| Scopus |
| Informaworld |
| IngentaConnect |
| Public Information Online |
| Sage Journals Online |
| Scopus |
| Social Policy and Practice |
| Web of Science |
| Social Care Online |
| Social Science Research Network (SSRN) |
| UKOP |
| Web of Knowledge |

Other Organisations

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Government departments | <p>Department for Education Government Equalities Office DfE DCLG DoH Research in Practice Skills For Care Social Work Teaching Partnerships</p> |
| Research Institutes/ departments | <p>Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies - University of Leeds http://www.gender-studies.leeds.ac.uk/research/ Centre for Education and Inclusion Research – LGB&T Wellbeing Sheffield Hallam University http://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ceir/our-expertise/LGB&T-wellbeing Kings College London – LGB&T Mental Health Research Group http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ioppn/depts/psychology/research/ResearchGroupings/LGB&T-Mental-Health.aspx NATCEN – Sexual Orientation Stream http://www.natcen.ac.uk/our-research/categories/equality-diversity/sexual-orientation/ LGB&TQ Research at UCL http://www.ucl.ac.uk/LGB&Tq-research/research/current LGB&T Queer Life Research Hub – The University of Brighton http://arts.brighton.ac.uk/projects/LGB&T</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Stakeholders in social work education | HCPC ADCS JUCSWEC APSW GSCC BASW |
| Transgender support organisations | Stonewall Press for Change GIRES Mermaids Gendered Intelligence The Gender Identity Trust |
| Other | EHRC Equality Challenge Unit |

Specific academic journals

- International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership
- Child Development
- Journal of Marriage and Family
- Trauma, Violence, and Abuse
- Child Maltreatment
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Social Policy and Administration
- Social Service Review
- Family Relations
- Health and Social Care in the Community
- British Journal of Social Work
- Journal of Social Policy
- Research on Social Work Practice
- Children and Youth Services Review
- Children and Society
- child and family Social Work
- Journal of Social Work Education
- Journal of Teaching in Social Work
- Social Work Education
- Journal of Social Work
- Journal of Community Psychology

- International Journal of Social Welfare
- International Social Work
- Families in Society
- Social Work
- Qualitative Social Work
- Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal
- Health and Social Work
- Child Abuse Review
- Journal of Social Work Practice
- European Journal of Social Work
- Social Work in Health Care
- Clinical Social Work Journal
- Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work
- Social Work Research
- Social Work with Groups
- Administration in Social Work
- Journal of Social Service Research

Once relevant literature is identified a two-staged sift process will be conducted. The first sift will assess relevance specifically to the child and family social work profession, and to transgender issues where appropriate, and will be based on title and abstract / summary. The second sift of those will be based on the full document. Here literature will be assessed according to its relevance and quality. This will include a consideration of reported findings, as well as on the underlying research processes and evidence upon which they were based. This will include an assessment of:

- Whether there is an explicit account of the research process, including design and methods and analysis of data.
- Whether the methods are appropriate and reliable.
- Whether data is of good quality.
- Whether findings are reliable, credible and clearly related to the evidence, e.g. no obvious ideological bias.

The content of literature meeting the second stage relevance and quality criteria will be analysed and included in the final review.



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