



Post-qualifying Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors in Adult Social Care

Government Response

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Ministerial Foreword

Caroline Dinenage MP, Minister for Care



As Minister with responsibility for the adult social care workforce, it is a privilege to lead this work at such an important time for everyone who works in the care sector. If we are to grow and retain a quality social care workforce, we must ensure that collectively, we create a system where people are clear about the training and support they should be able to expect to enable them to do their job well.

As one of the few regulated professions in the care sector, social work remains an attractive career choice, with more than 4,000 students enrolling on to social work courses every year. Graduate schemes such as Think Ahead and Frontline continue to attract new people to the profession, while the introduction of a new Social Work Degree Apprenticeship provides a great opportunity for people wanting to qualify as social workers.

However, for newly qualified social workers entering the profession, there is often a lack of clarity about what happens next in terms of career development and progression. While the Approved Mental Health Professional and Best Interest Assessor roles offer social workers in adult services with nationally accredited statuses, these remain an exception. For those looking to develop their skills and capabilities, or to progress into other advanced practitioner roles, their choices are determined by what is offered at local or regional level.

That is why the Knowledge and Skills Statements are so important. Developed in partnership with social workers, employers, educators and people who use services, they set out clearly what is expected of social workers at key points in their career and ensure standards are applied consistently across the whole profession.

The Knowledge and Skills Statement for adult social workers at the end of their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment has been in place since March 2015. During this time, we have seen greater consistency in how employers are assessing social work practice, in turn helping improve recruitment, retention and performance management.

In developing this statement, we wanted to develop a similar approach to recognising capability for this critical role - this will help achieve consistency for adult social workers and enable organisations to see what actions they need to take to help social workers reach and maintain the right standard. The statement will also enable Higher Education Institutions and training providers to align their supervisor training and development programmes.

Post-qualifying Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors in Adult Social Care

This is an exciting time for social work, as we continue to deliver our programme of improvement across the whole profession. A focus on professional development, supervision and leadership is essential if we are to make best use of social workers' capabilities and deliver the best outcomes for people and those who care for them.

I look forward to continuing to work with all of you as we continue to shape and develop this crucial role.

Message from the Chief Social Worker for Adults (England)

Lyn Romeo



Looking back on my career, the one consistent element that made all the difference was the quality of supervision and practice development that I received - whether from my supervisor, peer-supervision, coaching, direct observation of my practice or, most importantly, feedback from the people with whom I worked, it all helped inform and deepen my practice.

High quality supervision is essential in supporting frontline social workers to think through the issues, dilemmas and the best interventions and approaches to people's situations. For this to be effective, those with responsibility for managing and supervising social workers need to demonstrate a high level of knowledge and expertise, to enable quality practice and be able to support and challenge decisions with other professionals - increasingly important as we move to multi-professional, integrated arrangements.

Recognising the knowledge and skills required to provide good practice supervision is a crucial component of any good organisational arrangement. Yet, while management approaches to supervision are widely understood and applied, critically reflective supervision - where social workers are encouraged to reflect on the relationships and personal interactions between the social worker and the person or family they are supporting and making sure they are using approaches that work - remains less well established.

The statement published with this response sets out, for the first time, the standard we expect a practice supervisor to meet, alongside an emphasis on critically-reflective supervision which is grounded in practice rather than process.

The consultation also outlined proposals for an assessment pathway for supervisors similar to that in place for social workers at the end of their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). We have already started to work with several employer partnerships to look at how we can apply the standards for supervisors, the impact on practice and performance management and the support needed to help make the system successful.

We also want to consolidate the ASYE programme across all adult settings, including health organisations, where take up has been slower. The consultation highlighted the additional support needed to help embed the ASYE and we will continue to work with Skills for Care who deliver the programme on behalf of government, to ensure all employers are

receiving the support they need to provide a high quality experience for their social workers.

Adult social work already has nationally accredited post-qualifying programmes for the roles of Approved Mental Health Professional and Best Interest Assessor (although these are not exclusive to social workers). More recently we have published knowledge, skills and capabilities in key areas, including social work with older people, people with learning disabilities and carers. Together with the standards for supervisors, these will help deliver a career pathway for social workers, from newly qualified to experienced professional and supervisory roles, accompanied by a clear structure for employers to enable their staff to reach and maintain the right standard.

In line with provisions in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, both this statement and the statement for the Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) will become the post-qualifying standards for all adult social workers at these levels.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to developing these standards and I look forward to working with you to create a model of supervision which supports critically-reflective practice and makes a real difference to people's lives.

1. Introduction

Raising the quality of social work remains a priority for Ministers, the Chief Social Workers and the profession. The Department of Health and Social Care's [vision for social work with adults](#) (July 2016) set out our ambition to ensure that social workers are provided with the right knowledge, skills and capabilities to prepare them for the realities of frontline practice and that they are supported by an organisational context where excellent social work can flourish.

The Care Act 2014 repositioned social work at the heart of adult social care. Every day social workers work with legal complexities, risk, conflict and uncertainty, having to make professional judgements and decisions which meet the best interests of people and carers. Areas such as mental health, mental capacity and best interests will increasingly require all social workers to demonstrate their practice capability to address these issues effectively.

Government's clear vision is to develop a confident, skilled and capable profession which has received the best training; is supported through a clear, practice-based career pathway to enable progression from practitioner to supervisor to principal social worker or other senior practitioner or leadership roles; and has opportunities to specialise in key areas of practice and improve outcomes for people.

Knowledge and Skills Statements (KSS) are an essential tool in helping improve social work education, training and career development. They help ensure that standards are applied consistently across the profession, regardless of where social workers are based, helping further raise the confidence of and in, social workers and the vital work they do.

The [KSS for social workers at the end of their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment \(ASYE\)](#) was published in March 2015. While progress to embed the KSS has been mixed, nearly all local authorities and an increasing number of private, voluntary and independent organisations are now participating in the enhanced ASYE programme. However, if we are to successfully consolidate the ASYE across all adult social work settings, we need to ensure the programme of additional support continues to provide the right opportunities for employers to deliver a high-quality experience for their newly qualified social workers (NQSWs).

In her 2016/17 annual report, the Chief Social Worker promised to consult on a KSS and an assessment pathway for adult social work supervisors. This document responds to the feedback we received from our formal consultation on the KSS for practice supervisors, as well as on what further support may be needed to improve the ASYE programme.

We want to see a confident and competent profession which is at the forefront of delivering high quality social care outcomes for people and makes more efficient use of resources.

Collectively, we must do all we can to support local authorities and other employers of social workers to provide manageable workloads, quality supervision and sound organisational leadership and management. That is why government is investing in programmes to support social workers to undertake these critical roles.

Alongside this consultation, we also piloted a critically-reflective supervision training programme with two Social Work Teaching Partnerships. Delivered as part of a wider critical reflective practice programme for social workers at different leadership levels, the programme was delivered by Professor Jan Fook in the West London and Urban and Rural Teaching Partnerships, with support from Skills for Care. The training was aimed at equipping supervisors with the underpinning knowledge and skills of critical reflection, to enable them to reflect on their own supervisory practice and to apply when supervising social workers.

While it is too early to see what direct impact the course had on social work practice, evaluation of the programme indicates a positive impact in several areas, including: an increased confidence and understanding of critically reflective practice and how to integrate critical reflection into their own supervision practice; and how to lead, promote and embed critical reflective practice within their organisation.

We are working with Skills for Care and a small number of employer partnerships during 2018-19, to deliver a skills development pathway and a model of assessment which supports critically-reflective practice.

Section 2 of this document provides a summary of the consultation and overarching messages. Section 3 provides detailed responses to each question in the consultation.

2. Summary and overarching messages

From 27 November 2017 - 26 January 2018, the Department of Health and Social Care ("The Department") ran a consultation on a statement of knowledge and skills for social work supervisors in adult social care. The consultation asked people to consider:

- whether the right knowledge and skills have been identified (and at what level);
- the relationship between the KSS and the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF); and
- whether the proposed national requirements for assessment and accreditation of supervisors are appropriately designed and the time required for assessment.

Views were also sought on what more can be done to embed the KSS for social workers at the end of their ASYE.

We received 82 responses to the consultation, the majority of which were collected via the online Citizen Space portal. Staff from Skills for Care's Evidence and Impact team undertook the analysis of the consultation data on behalf of, and in conjunction with, the Department of Health and Social Care. Their staff adhere to the Market Research Society's code of conduct and have retained an impartial position in relation to this project. Of the 82 respondents, 62 responded in an individual capacity and 20 on behalf of an organisation. Of the individual responses, the majority (78%) were social workers in local authorities or NHS Trusts.

Table 1: Which of these best describes you/your profession?

Options	Number	Percentage
Social Worker	29	47%
Social Work consultant/supervisor	18	29%
University/HEI	2	3%
Local Authority employee	1	2%
Health professional	1	2%
Student	1	2%
Voluntary and Community sector	1	2%
Other	9	15%
TOTAL	62	100%

Half of individual respondents came from the South (London, South East or South West), a quarter came from the North (Yorkshire and Humber, North East or North West) and a quarter from the Midlands (East Midlands, West Midlands or the Eastern region). The majority of respondents (87%) described themselves as White.

This Response takes in to consideration the responses received as part of the formal consultation. The Response aims to provide: firstly, a summary of overarching messages and key themes identified from the consultation; and secondly, an overview of general issues and trends identified in each of the consultation questions.

Many of the responses received contained detailed comments and a range of views and suggestions for things that people would like to see either added or removed from the statement. This response does not attempt to analyse these in great depth or respond to each suggestion made. Rather, the response provides a synopsis of consultation feedback and information received for each of the questions, including what we heard, what we've done and if appropriate, what we've not done and our reasons for this, including alternative approaches, where relevant. Where changes have been suggested which are already covered in other relevant professional standards or frameworks, these are highlighted in the Response.

Key messages

Overall, responses were positive, with the majority welcoming the KSS for practice supervisors. The main issues raised were in relation to **language**, including the need to strengthen or clarify elements of the statement and simplify and refine the statement to avoid repetition and duplication.

There was a mix of views as to the **minimum level** for a practice supervisor - while nearly 39% of respondents felt that an "experienced" social worker was appropriate, a quarter (26%) wanted "advanced" level and a third favoured a flexible approach according to the individual's experience and readiness.

The majority of respondents favoured an **assessment and accreditation system** similar to that in place for the ASYE. Views were divided on how long this process should take, with nearly half (43%) suggesting a 12-month timeframe as suitable.

Respondents wanted more clarity on the relationship between the **KSS and the Professional Capabilities Statement (PCF)** to enable effective performance management and career progression.

While most responses (73%) agreed that the **KSS for social workers at the end of the ASYE** covers everything a social worker at this stage of their career should know or be

able to do, we received many additional comments, both on the KSS and the additional support required to deliver a quality ASYE programme.

3. Detailed summary of consultation responses and government's response

What we asked

The consultation asked six questions relating to the draft KSS for practice supervisors:

1. Do you agree or disagree that the KSS covers everything a practice supervisor needs to know and be able to do?
2. What is the minimum level you feel a Practice Supervisor should be working at? (Experienced/Advanced/Flexible)
3. In your opinion, do you feel that the nine statements in the KSS align with the Experienced/Advanced/Flexible minimum level for a practice supervisor to operate?
4. Do you feel that an assessment and accreditation system similar to that used in the Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) could be used for practice supervisors?
5. If you were to complete an assessment and accreditation process, over what time period do you feel the process should take place?
6. What else would help supervisors in their social work progression and development?

The consultation asked two questions relating to the KSS for social workers at the end of the Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE):

7. Do you agree that the KSS for the Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) covers everything a social worker should know and be able to do?
8. What additional support is needed to deliver a high-quality experience for those undertaking the ASYE programme?

This section addresses each of these in turn.

Knowledge and Skills Statement for Practice Supervisors

Question 1

Q1 Do you agree or disagree that the KSS covers everything a practice supervisor needs to know and be able to do?

Table 2: Summary of responses to Question 1

Options	Number	Percentage
Agree	68	83%
Don't know	9	11%
Disagree	5	6%
TOTAL	5	100%

What we heard

While the majority (83%) of respondents agreed that the KSS sets out what a practice supervisor in adult services needs to know and do, half (49%) chose to provide further information in the commentary section to explain their answer. The majority of comments made were in relation to the language in the KSS, including use of jargon and acronyms, where things were missing from the statement or needed greater emphasis or clarification. The prescriptive nature of some of the statements was noted by some respondents (e.g. 'social workers should,' 'social workers must,' etc).

Concerns were raised about the use of the term 'British Values' - while this was acknowledged as a key part of the government's integration agenda for schools, their inclusion was not felt to be appropriate in an adult social work context.

Several challenges were identified by respondents to ensure the KSS is fully embedded and reflects the reality of practice, including a greater emphasis on balancing and assessing risk and effective use of financial and other resources to achieve best outcomes within organisational constraints. Queries were raised about how the KSS will apply in different organisational contexts, for example where the supervisor is not the line manager or is not a social worker and potential legal implications for organisations to provide additional professional supervision. Respondents also queried whether further support would be required in addition to the KSS, to assess the quality and consistency of supervision.

Respondents felt that clearer links were needed with the PCF (especially in relation to values and ethics); the KSS for child and family practice supervisors (to acknowledge 0-25 services for those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) and Practice Development Educator Standards (PDES), to increase the robustness of the KSS.

What we are doing

We have **strengthened the opening sentence** in the statement to reflect the critical importance of the social work skills, knowledge and values required for the practice supervisor role.

We have **amended the reference to British Values** to emphasise the link to social work values and values and principles in the KSS of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities. This is also consistent with statutory guidance for child and family social workers (Working Together to Safeguard Children - Department for Education, July 2018)

We acknowledge the need to ensure the KSS is **relevant and accessible** to other professions who work alongside social workers, as well as those with care and support needs and the wider public. We have reviewed the statement to make sure any jargon and acronyms are simplified and clearly explained in footnotes where necessary. We have also included a glossary at the end of the KSS which explains the terminology used.

We have **refined and merged what was KSS 6 with KSS 2** to remove repetition and duplication.

We have strengthened emphasis on the need for practice supervisors to provide **appropriate risk assessment and enablement advice** when dealing with complexity, particularly in the context of integration and the development of care plans which are jointly owned with the person using services.

We have added a reference to the need for practice supervisors to consider **financial and other resources** when supporting social workers to achieve best outcomes for people and their carers.

We have included a reference to the **impact of different relationships** on the effectiveness of social workers' practice, including people and their carers and other professionals.

We have made it clear that this statement is for social work supervisors, not those from another profession who may be supervising social workers in an integrated team or social work supervisors of other professionals. Responsibility for ensuring that social workers receive professional, reflective social work supervision rests with employers.

Respondents felt that more emphasis and clarification was needed on the different **teaching methods** a supervisor should use and when to employ them. The KSS states the importance of learning theory and when different teaching approaches should be applied. However, we acknowledge that more information would be helpful and we will include further guidance on teaching methods as part of the next phase of work to deliver a skills development and assessment pathway for practice supervisors.

Respondents also felt that there was overlap **between KSS 3 ("Developing excellent social workers") and KSS 8 ("assuring good social work practice and development")**. We have noted the need to avoid duplication in the KSS and have reviewed these sections to make clear the distinction between providing learning and development opportunities to enhance social workers' capabilities (KSS 3) and ensuring effective methods and processes are in place to support effective practice (KSS 8).

Questions 2 and 3

Q2. What is the minimum level you feel a Practice Supervisor should be working at? (Experienced/Advanced/Flexible)

Q3. In your opinion, do you feel that the nine statements in the KSS align with the Experienced/Advanced/Flexible minimum level for a practice supervisor to operate?

Table 3: Summary of responses to Question 2

Options	Number	Percentage
Experienced social worker	32	39%
Advanced social worker	21	26%
Flexible according to experience and readiness	29	35%
TOTAL	82	100%

What we heard

Two-fifths (39%) of respondents felt that the minimum level a practice supervisor should be working at was 'Experienced social worker.' However, a quarter (26%) opted for 'Advanced social worker,' while a third (35%) felt it should be 'flexible according to experience and readiness.'

Respondents who had answered either Experienced or Advanced were then asked whether the nine statements in the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) aligned with this level. Of those who responded, the majority felt the KSS aligned with their selected PCF level. A small number of respondents who felt they didn't align or were unsure, made further comments regarding the relationship between the KSS and the PCF. Of these respondents, the main issue cited was the need to further align the two documents, for example around performance management, which is included in the KSS but is not explicit in the PCF.

Other comments made related to whether the supervisor role would be a dedicated/standalone role or in addition to other roles and responsibilities and how relevant aspects of the KSS are to everyday practice, e.g. influencing deployment and practice governance.

Respondents also noted the importance of ensuring the KSS achieved the right balance between a task-focused/managerial approach to supervision and a reflective, leadership style to enable efficient day-to-day functioning.

What we are doing

We note that most respondents agreed that an 'Experienced social worker' should be the minimum level required for a practice supervisor to operate. We have therefore specified that supervisors should be performing at this level of capability against the KSS; that they will have over two years post-qualifying practice experience and have achieved at least one of either PEPS 1 and 2, Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) or Best Interest Assessor (BIA) status.

While most respondents agreed that the statement aligned with the PCF, there is still some confusion around the relationship between the two frameworks. We will undertake further work with the employer partnerships to establish interdependencies between the two and what further resources and guidance is needed to meet the needs of adult social workers.

We expect the practice supervisor to be a dedicated role, in recognition of its importance in overseeing and governing social work practice, including reviewing cases. A dedicated supervisor will be expected to have the relevant capacity for the role, but within a post which may also include other tasks or responsibilities, e.g. managing complex cases.

Employers should ensure that organisational arrangements are in place to support dedicated supervisor roles, including oversight by Principal Social Workers (PSWs), alongside other arrangements to support supervisor capacity and capability. We are working with employers and the profession to identify what further support is needed to ensure effective implementation of the KSS.

What we are not doing

We have not made any further changes to the level at which the statement is set. The KSS is designed to build on and enhance the PCF and should be used in conjunction both with the PCF - i.e. to set expectations for the minimum level required for a practice supervisor - and the organisation's performance management processes. Similarly, while there should be general alignment, some elements of the KSS will go further than the 'experienced' level, as appropriate for a first-line management role, recognising that not all experienced social workers want to move into managerial or supervisory roles.

Questions 4, 5 and 6

Q4. Do you feel that an assessment and accreditation system similar to that used in the Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) could be used for practice supervisors?

Q5. If you were to complete an assessment and accreditation process, over what time period do you feel the process should take place?

Q6. What else would help supervisors in their social work progression and development?

Table 4: Summary of responses to Question 4

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	73%
No	13	16%
Don't know	9	11%
TOTAL	82	100%

What we heard

Three-quarters (73%) of respondents felt agreed that a system similar to that of the ASYE could be used for practice supervisors; one in six (16%) did not agree that this would be appropriate and one in ten (11%) were unsure.

Views were mixed on the appropriate time-period over which an assessment and accreditation process should take place. Just over two-fifths (43%) of respondents felt that 12 months would be appropriate, whilst three in ten (29%) felt 6 months would be preferable. A smaller number (10%) of respondents wanted to see a timeframe of 24 months, while one in six (18%) felt that no time period should be specified.

Respondents representing organisations were more likely to favour a shorter time period compared to individual respondents (35% compared to 27%). Conversely, individual respondents were more likely to favour not having a set timeframe than those from an organisation (21% compared to 10%).

Respondents who favoured a shorter time period were concerned that additional assessment could prove burdensome and that placing a defined time-period of 6 or 12 months would be challenging. Respondents also felt that the aspirational elements of the

KSS need to be clearly defined to ensure we deliver an assessment and accreditation system which is meaningful and robust.

The majority (84%) of respondents offered suggestions of things they felt would help social work supervisors in their career progression and development. These included the importance of regular, up-to-date training and development programmes, including PEPs 1 and 2 (24 mentions), with a minority wanting Practice Educator to be a mandatory qualification. Commitment and support for the role from senior managers and employers was considered vital by a fifth of those responding, including recognition of the importance of supervision to practice quality and staff retention.

Other comments made included the need for protected time and reduced workloads to support supervisors to do the job effectively and enable critical reflection and reflexive supervision (16 mentions); and peer support, shadowing and mentoring schemes at regional and national level (16 mentions).

A small number (13) of comments were made in relation to continuous professional development (CPD) and direct observations, with some respondents noting that a robust and supportive appraisal system linked to CPD was more effective than a formal assessment system.

Respondents raised several queries concerning how the KSS will be applied, including implications for performance management, for example, where a supervisor fails to meet the standard. Funding was also mentioned by a small number of respondents who felt that investment similar to the ASYE would be required to enable effective implementation.

While 12 months was felt to be the optimum period for assessment, we recognise that the system will need to remain flexible, to allow more experienced social workers to demonstrate capability in a shorter timeframe where appropriate.

What we are doing

We have worked closely with the sector to ensure that the KSS does not place any additional financial pressures or burdens on social workers and other staff in adult social care.

As with the KSS for ASYE, the KSS for practice supervisors is not mandatory and will not affect a social worker's registration. However, organisations should ensure that systems are in place to address any issues where a social worker does not meet the required standard. We are working closely with Skills for Care and the employer partnerships to assess how the standards for practice supervisors will apply, including the impact on practice and performance management and the materials and support needed to help make the system successful.

What we are not doing

The Department for Education are introducing a National Assessment and Accreditation System (NAAS) for child and family social workers. We are not proposing to introduce a NAAS-type approach for adult social work - however, government's ambition is to deliver a consistent approach to practice supervision which recognises its role in sustaining practice excellence and improving outcomes for people.

Social Work England, the new, bespoke regulator for the social work profession taking responsibility from the current regulator, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), will already have a role in approving post-qualifying courses for Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) and Best Interest Assessors (BIA). In time, we would expect the regulator to take responsibility for accrediting and endorsing post-qualifying programmes, including new and existing development programmes for supervisors.

Questions 7 and 8

Knowledge and Skills Statement for social workers at the end of their Assessed Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)

Q7. Do you agree that the KSS for the ASYE covers everything a social worker should know and be able to do?

Q8. What additional support is needed to deliver a high quality experience for those undertaking the ASYE programme?

Table 5: Summary of responses to Question 7

Options	Number	Percentage
Agree	59	72%
Not sure	18	22%
Disagree	5	6%
TOTAL	82	100%

What we heard

Three-quarters (72%) of respondents agreed that the KSS for social workers at the end of their ASYE covered everything a social worker should know and be able to do, 6% disagreed that it does and a fifth (22%) were unsure. A third (34%) of respondents provided additional comments to explain their answer.

Respondents made several suggestions for things they felt were missing or needed greater emphasis in the statement, including the skills required for court work and safeguarding; the role trusted assessors play in social work practice; the importance of strengths-based practice and the need for the social workers to demonstrate personal and professional resilience and autonomy.

Many respondents cited the importance of the organisational context in enabling a good quality ASYE programme, including the need for good quality practice supervision and consistency in how the KSS is applied.

What we heard

Table 6: Summary of responses to Question 8*

Options	Number	Percentage
Ensuring the ASYE and KSS are embedded throughout the culture and policies of the organisation	52	74%
Improved assessor capability	51	73%
Greater clarity around link between KSS and the PCF to inform social workers' career progression	50	71%
Including the KSS in reflective supervision and all learning and development activities	46	66%
More support from senior leaders	40	57%
Making the KSS a requirement for job descriptions and performance management structures	38	54%
Linking the KSS with professional social work registration	37	53%
Less paperwork	32	46%

* 60 respondents answered this question

The final question asked respondents to choose from a list of things that could potentially further enhance the ASYE programme for NQSWs. Of those who answered this question, three-quarters (74%) felt that the KSS should be embedded in the organisation's culture and policies and that the capability of assessors needed to improve (73%). Greater clarity between the KSS & PCF to support career progression was cited by 71% of respondents.

Two-thirds (66%) of respondents felt that the KSS should be included in reflective supervision and all learning and development activities and more than half (57%) that more support from senior leaders would be helpful. 44% wanted the KSS to be a requirement for job descriptions and performance management, while 53% wanted to see the KSS linked to a social worker's professional registration. A reduction in paperwork was cited by 46% of respondents.

What we are doing

Ensuring sufficiency and capability of assessors is a key issue and vital to applying standards consistently at local, regional and national level. Our work with the employer partnerships will consider what impact wider workforce issues may have on assessor capacity and further guidance and support for employers to develop assessor capability - including a requirement for assessors to meet the supervisor standards - as part of workforce planning arrangements.

We know that the relationship between the PCF and the KSS remains an issue for some local authorities, where integrating the KSS into their performance management systems alongside the PCF has been challenging.

We do not see the PCF and KSS as operating in isolation to each other - rather, the statements are designed to build upon and enhance the PCF. However, as this consultation made clear, the KSS for ASYE and practice supervisors will become the post-qualifying standards against which adult social workers will be assessed.

We will work with Skills for Care to review the KSS and national employer support programme in light of this consultation, to help further embed the ASYE and deliver a quality experience for all newly qualified social workers.

4. Next steps

Government is pleased that a range of individuals and organisations took part in the consultation, including social workers, those who use services and those who educate, employ, represent and work alongside them. The fact that so many respondents chose to give more detailed contributions to the proposed statement was particularly welcomed and has helped shape and inform the content.

We have reflected carefully on all the responses received and have published the definitive statement of knowledge and skills or post-qualifying standards for social work supervisors in adult services, alongside this government response.

The government will now work with social workers and employers to introduce a knowledge and skills development pathway and evaluation process for social work supervisors in all adult settings, including health, the private, voluntary and independent sector, as well as local authorities.