

NASWE

For Every Child a Chance

Founded 1884

Occupational Group Funding Project

**DEVELOPING A QUALIFICATION AND
PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK FOR THE
EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE.**

Final Report

JUNE 2007

Occupational Group Funding 2006/7

Final Report

National Association of Social Workers in Education (NASWE)

This report is in three parts, firstly a summary of the project activities undertaken, followed by the draft qualification and progression framework then the full report of the training and development survey.

Background of the association.

NASWE was founded in 1884 and is the only association representing staff in the Education Welfare Service across all grades. The association also welcomes members from related fields such as learning mentors, home school liaison officers and attendance officers. The association is an unincorporated association. All funding comes either from membership fees, which are modest and reflect the pay scales of the majority of members or income generated from training and conference events. NASWE is 'managed' by a national council comprising specific officer posts and representatives from 11 regions across the UK. Officers work for the association on a voluntary basis, usually in their free time, or with the co-operation of employers. Although the association's current financial position is sound, in that there is a small surplus, there is not sufficient income to significantly increase current operating costs.

The project was managed by a sub group of the National Council comprising the President, Training & Development officer and General Secretary.

The Project

The project comprised three strands, all designed to build the associations capacity to inform and consult with members and to provide us with information to support us in influencing policy on the future development of the EWS.

Strand 1. (Mapping)

A postal survey was undertaken with a questionnaire to more than 300 NASWE members and a further 30 were involved in round table discussions at NASWE conference.

The survey which attracted 109 respondents has given us an up to date picture of existing qualifications held by the sector and elicited many comments from respondents about how they see the future. Information from this survey has also contributed to the second part of this strand, which was to draft a national

qualification and progression framework for the EWS, that links with current children's workforce developments.

The survey revealed a complex picture of a workforce with a wide range of qualifications and experience and variable access to training and development opportunities. It is significant also, that a large proportion of respondents hold no qualifications specific to or related to their occupation, an equally significant proportion hold professional social work qualifications or post graduate awards.

Feedback from respondents revealed strong support for a qualification and progression framework that supported greater flexibility within the children's workforce rather than an EWS specific award.

Draft qualifications framework and the full survey report are attached as appendix A and B.

Strand 2 (Consultation)

In addition to the survey and round table discussions the sector also had the opportunity to hear about this work and related LDSS projects at a training event in November and the annual NASWE conference in April 2007. NASWE training events are generally priced at breakeven in order to ensure that as many members as possible can attend with limited local training budgets. The small subsidy from the OG funding lessened the 'risk' and allowed us space to include consultation sessions in the programme.

Strand 3 (Dissemination)

This strand comprised two parts. Firstly, funding to develop the technical aspects of the site and secondly funding to support an officer to undertake an information search and populate the site.

The technical upgrade was completed relatively quickly once the specification was drawn up and an ITC consultancy commissioned to undertake the work.

Previously the NASWE website was developed with a very small amount of money which has come from our membership income. All ongoing work including uploading material, updating information etc is done voluntarily. This is manageable in terms of making piecemeal additions but in order to undertake a significant information search and prepare material for uploading we needed to second an officer to the task for a short period and therefore needed funding to recompense their employer. The website provides us with a cost effective method of keeping in touch with members and offering information to non-members. Training and development is a significant issue for the service and a

dedicated mini –site will provide a single point of information for members with links to other sites.

There have been some delays with this strand as the original secondment arrangements had to be renegotiated following a change in circumstances for the officer involved. Information gathering is now completed and is awaiting uploading onto the website.

The information trawl has revealed that in terms of specific EWS qualifications, apart from NVQ 4 LDSS there are just two awards we can identify; a higher education diploma from NTU and a higher education diploma from University of Lancaster. There are a significant number of providers now delivering the NVQ4 LDSS with some variation in charges. Other related awards include the rapidly developing foundation degree in children and young people’s services.

It is envisaged that we will continue to populate the website and to add some user feedback and give information regarding local initiatives as part of a members only service. We will also be developing the FAQ section of the website.

Conclusions

This initial round of OG funding has been invaluable to NASWE as a small membership association. Whilst there have been some difficulties in delivering to the original timescale, we should bear in mind the challenges of working with a group of people on an entirely voluntary basis, this was always a risky endeavour. We have never been short of ideas but this has enabled us to present a much stronger argument for a future funded training strategy, backed up by sound information and a framework that is coherent and has “fit” with current workforce developments. We believe it will support us in continuing to be the voice of EWS and play a useful part in determining its future development. In the absence of any other body to represent the sector we believe that this funding was essential and will provide us with a sound basis on which to continue our work.

Jacqui Newvell
General Secretary NASWE

DEVELOPING A QUALIFICATION AND PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK FOR THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

1 Introduction

This piece of work has been undertaken on behalf of the National Association of Social Workers in Education (NASWE) and funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

The aim was to research and develop a proposal for a framework for qualifications and career progression for both existing and new entrants to the education welfare service. In undertaking this report it has been important to take account of:

- the historical context
- the current position
- likely future development of the education welfare service in the context of the development of integrated children's services and the vision of education welfare services being part of both the social inclusion section of formal education services and the wider family of youth services
- the implications of the emerging integrated qualifications and progression frameworks for the children's workforce.

Once agreed it is hoped that the framework will be used as the basis for a future funding application for a national strategy. It should also have value at a local level where children's services authorities are developing local training plans.

The report is structured as follows:

The Historical Context
The Current Situation
A Proposed Way Forward
Implementation Issues

2 The Historical Context

Education Welfare and Education Social Work have a long history, with NASWE itself having been formed in 1884.

The work has always included a focus on school attendance but has also included several other elements which have evolved over time and in various ways across different areas of the country. Most commonly education welfare has been seen as a branch of social work, with the same values and principles, but with a particular focus on the link between children, young people, their families and schools. As with mainstream social work the overall lack of clarity

on role and tasks has therefore been something of an issue but the specific role relating to school attendance does provide a clear and common focus.

As in many professions a relatively recent development has been the introduction of an assistant role, with some such staff being employed by local authorities and many others by individual schools.

In terms of qualifications there was a period when most local authorities saw their education welfare officers as social workers but many did not extend this to either requirements or support for people to achieve a social work qualification. Therefore many local authorities have not had a clear or consistent policy on qualification requirements or support for existing staff to achieve qualifications. This is highlighted in the recent survey of education welfare staff (see next section and appendix A).

This historical confusion has existed for over 30 years, since the Certificate in Education Welfare was discontinued in April 1976. An excellent report by the Local Government Training Board (LGTB) published in August 1974 anticipated that development, provided a clear analysis and vision and recommended that the appropriate training for Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) was 'social work training suitably structured to take account of the educational setting in which that role is performed'.

Sadly that recommendation and the others contained in the 1974 LGTB report were never implemented, leading to the confusing and inconsistent situation described above.

These comments apply to England. The position in other parts of the United Kingdom is different. The greatest contrast is in Northern Ireland where a social work qualification is the minimum requirement for an Education Welfare role. The benefits of such a clear approach are obvious, with a more highly professionalised service and much greater buy in from the employer.

The introduction of the Learning, Development and Support services (LDSS) National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 2003 has provided a further opportunity but, at the same time, created a further complication and even greater confusion about whether local authorities should expect or support their education welfare staff to achieve particular qualifications. The separately commissioned work on the use of APEL to allow individuals to fast track towards achievement of the NVQ also provides some insight into the issues involved.

The recent NASWE survey (appendix A) highlights very divergent attitudes towards the LDSS NVQ. For some it is a valuable qualification, the completion of which increased the individual's knowledge, skills and understanding. For others it is seen as being of little value, with no academic content, and the completion of which has been only about demonstrating competence, without people acquiring

new knowledge or skills. The difference in perceptions would seem to be partly about the inherent value that different people put on vocational qualifications but also influenced by the way in which the qualification and any supporting learning programme are delivered in different areas.

TOPSS (England) undertook some work in 2004 looking at the issues involved in the training and qualification of Education Welfare Officers and identified some of the key matters that required attention. A report, including recommendations, was passed to the newly established CWDC in April 2005. Although not an immediate priority for the new organisation CWDC has recognised that education welfare is one of the occupational groups that require work to establish a clear approach to training, qualifications and career progression. This has led to the CWDC support for this current piece of work.

From this understanding of the history there are three clear requirements for any future qualifications framework. Firstly, any proposal has to be very clear, specific and unambiguous. Secondly there has to be an appropriate training element linked to or as part of achievement of a qualification so that understanding, knowledge and skills are enhanced, thereby enabling individuals to maximise the effectiveness of their work and their contribution to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. Thirdly, any new framework must be both accepted and fully implemented by employers, with adequate resources allocated to support implementation.

3 The Current Situation

The recent NASWE survey of local authorities and NASWE members confirms the confusion that currently exists. The full report of the survey is included in appendix A. Further comments made in workshops at the NASWE conference in April 2007 have also contributed to the overall picture and informed thinking about the best way forward.

Key points from the survey are:

109 respondents identified 23 different qualifications they held (see table 3 of appendix for full details). These included unspecified A levels, degrees and masters level qualifications and 20 vocational, professional or academic qualifications that included an element relating to work with children or young people. Of these the greatest number (26%) held a professional social work qualification. This contrasts with the 1974 LGTB research which showed that only 1.5% of Education Welfare Officers held a social work qualification at that time. Thus it can be seen that the LGTB recommendation to move towards establishing the social work qualification as the norm has had a significant but nevertheless limited impact.

In the recent NASWE survey, of the qualifications recognised by employers, the social work qualification (37%) and the LDSS level 4 NVQ (32%) were by far the most common. Many employers recognised more than one qualification. In addition, smaller numbers also recognised youth work and teaching qualifications, relevant or any degree level education and any HE qualification. Most respondents stated that recognised qualifications did not result in enhanced pay. There were a small number of exceptions where there were entry level qualifications and qualifications required for progression.

It is clear that many of those currently working as Education Welfare Officers do not hold one of the two main qualifications identified above. A significant proportion would appear to have no qualification that includes a specific focus on working with children, young people and families. The historic trend for a significant proportion of EWOs to be recruited from former police and armed forces personnel appears to have changed to an extent, with an increase in graduate entrants, who may have significantly different career expectations. This is in addition to those completing the social work degree who choose a career in education welfare.

The link between qualifications and pay is also very variable. Some areas (a minority) pay Education Welfare Officers on social work scales, whether or not an individual holds a social work qualification. Others pay lower scales but offer enhancements for recognised qualifications. Others still have lower scales but with no provision for enhancements linked to qualifications. This is therefore another area of major confusion and inconsistency. For some staff without qualifications paid at social work or equivalent rates there is little incentive to undertake a qualification and also little prospect of job mobility or progression, given most opportunities would require a relevant qualification. This would appear to be one factor contributing to greater stability in the education welfare workforce as compared to mainstream social work. There is also frustration and a disincentive for many of those undertaking or considering the LDSS NVQ level 4, where they will not receive any financial reward for successful completion.

The survey and workshops also identified a very inconsistent, but overall low level of investment in training and qualifications of education welfare staff. Access to in-house and external training opportunities is very variable, with limited budgets that are often unfavourable when compared to those of social care or other parts of education or children's services.

For those undertaking social work or NVQ qualifications there is a very variable approach by employers in terms of financial support and time allowed.

NASWE has also undertaken work to identify courses and qualifications that have been developed specifically for education welfare staff or where the marketing includes such staff. This has revealed a significant number of courses around the country that do not provide a logical or comprehensive spread, with

most being developed and marketed by colleges and universities in an ad hoc way, with limited reference to or involvement of employers. There are some specific examples, particularly in the Midlands and the North East where programmes have been developed at least partly in response to local employer requirements. Although these do not lead to nationally recognised qualifications the content is clearly valued by many as helping develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of those who complete.

For those staff who are social work qualified, many do not have access to the post qualification framework and, in any case, there is currently no specific pathway for EWOs.

To summarise, the current position is perhaps best described as very unclear and confusing and therefore definitely not in the best interests of those working in education welfare services or, even more importantly, those children, young people and families the services support. Therefore the current position confirms the need for clarity, consistency, employer support and training opportunities that develop individuals' knowledge, skills and understanding.

4 A Proposed Way Forward

To some extent the development of a qualifications framework is dependent on the way education welfare services will evolve within the wider development of integrated children's services. It is also clear that the development of common induction, the common core of skills and knowledge and the integrated qualifications framework are all highly relevant as education welfare staff never operate in isolation from other services and this feature should only increase with the full implementation of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda.

Key points from the NASWE survey are as follows:

- There is strong support for a nationally recognised qualification and progression route for the EWS.
- The NVQ LDSS is gaining recognition; whilst there are many reservations there is support for it to be the starting qualification for the EWS.
- There is support for the idea of widening the LDSS family to support greater recognition and flexibility.
- The workforce is very diverse and as such will represent a challenge to a simple progression route, with the accreditation of prior experiential learning being an important issue.
- Lack of resources including training infrastructure is a significant barrier to progression.

- Currently, there are few incentives for staff to gain qualifications if these are not recognised with enhanced pay.
- EWS provide a valuable family support service to children and families and a significant proportion hold a recognised professional qualification. In terms of workforce planning there is potential which perhaps need exploring, for a much more effective use of this pool of staff within the ECM delivery framework.

These views are consistent with the analysis above and any proposal needs to take account of and address the various points made.

The proposal below tries to do that and, at the same time, offer an outline that is both consistent with and informs the thinking around the development of the integrated qualifications framework.

The proposal is summarised in the diagram below but further detailed explanation follows:

PROPOSED EDUCATION WELFARE QUALIFICATION AND PROGRESSION FRAMEWORK					
TITLE	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	TARGET QUALIFICATION	Management Option	Examples of Pathways In	Examples of Pathways Out
		Induction Programme		◀	▶
		▼			
Education Welfare Assistant	Not Specified	L3 LDSS		Volunteer Support Role	Teaching Assistant
		▼			
Education Welfare Officer level 1	Relevant L3 Qualification (minimum)	L4 LDSS/Foundation Degree		Teaching Assistant Residential Care Worker	Learning Mentor Teacher Training Connexions Adviser
		▼			
Education Welfare Officer level 2 Education Social Worker	L4 LDSS or HSC (minimum)	Relevant Degree		Learning Mentor Connexions Adviser Social Worker	Social Worker
		▼	▼		
Senior Education Welfare Officer	Relevant Degree	PQ Framework	Management Qualification	Senior Social Worker	Children's Services Manager
		▼	▼		
Children's Services Manager	Post Qualifying or Management Qualification	Higher Level Management Qualification			Senior management roles in a range of services
		▼	▼		
(Director of Children's Services)					

Induction: A structured programme that enables new entrants to meet the CWDC induction standards. The recently updated Learning Mentor induction programme has core units that have been developed and tested for wider use and would seem to provide the basis for a shared induction programme that is suitable for education welfare roles. There is a need to develop the relevant specialist units and it is recommended that this be done as soon as possible.

NVQ 3 LDSS: This should be the first level qualification for education welfare staff, aimed at those in an assistant level role. It is recognised that the review of National Occupational Standards (NOS) will address some of the concerns about the present qualification, ensure common core compliance and maximise the common elements. It is recommended that it should become a requirement that all new entrants commence the qualification within six months of appointment, to be completed within the following 12 months. The underpinning knowledge for this NVQ begins with the induction process. The way in which the remaining knowledge and skills development are provided should be a matter for local determination, although the potential to commission certificated programmes with academic credit that feed into other qualifications such as foundation degrees is worth further consideration.

NVQ 4 LDSS: This should be the second level qualification for education welfare staff, aimed at those who are new entrants to the officer role and existing staff who do not wish to progress to more senior roles. It should become the minimum level requirement for all those employed as Education Welfare Officer roles, with an expectation that new appointees commence the qualification within six months of appointment and should complete within the following 18 months. In the longer term the aim should be to make the level 4 an entry requirement but this is not considered to be realistic in the near future.

There is a need to offer programmes with underpinning knowledge and skill development that support achievement of the qualification. This could be through foundation degrees (see the Nottingham Trent University paper) or other programmes commissioned by employers on a regional basis, given the likely scale of places required. Alternatively it would be possible to commission a national programme as in youth justice (albeit at a lower level) and for Connexions, although the links to the NOS must be explicit and drive the content of the programme. Once again the separately commissioned work on the use of APEL to allow individuals to fast track towards achievement of the NVQ provides some insight into the issues involved.

There should be an expectation that existing EWOs without this level of qualification should undertake the NVQ within a three year period but, for such staff, there should be flexible programmes that give credit for previous training and experience and concentrate on filling identified gaps and the formal

assessment of competence. For some such staff it will be more appropriate that they commence the next level graduate qualification (see next section).

Professional Graduate Level Qualification: This should be the third level qualification linked to the idea of a level 2 Education Welfare Officer. It should include but not be restricted to the social work degree, particularly as other degree level qualifications are developed. It is hoped and strongly recommended that, within the integrated qualifications framework, all such qualifications provide a clear pathway from the relevant level 4 NVQs, with maximum credit for previous learning and experience. Within the agreed range of professional qualifications it will be important that there are specialist modules that relate to the education welfare role.

It is recommended that employers develop pay frameworks that recognise the concept of two levels of Education Welfare Officer, based on the achievement of the required qualification.

Post Qualifying (PQ) Frameworks

The overall numbers of EWOs does not justify a separate qualification at PQ level and a pathway within the social work qualifying framework is therefore suggested as the preferred route. However, as the suggested professional qualification framework outlined above is not restricted to the social work qualification there will need to be a flexibility about access to the PQ framework that does not currently exist. It is suggested that this is a highly desirable development in any case and important to the realisation of the wider Every Child Matters agenda.

Across the full range of children's services it is hoped that the integrated qualifications framework will allow and encourage people to access a wide range of post-graduate programmes that contribute to recognised professional frameworks and ongoing registration requirements. A modular approach, with shared modules of study that can count towards various qualifications is highly desirable to support integrated working and positive outcomes for children and young people.

Two examples of how progression might work for an individual once the integrated qualifications framework is in place are included in appendix C.

Implementation Issues

The stark lessons of the 1974 LGTB piece of work must be taken into account when considering how to implement the proposed framework. The benefits of the clarity of approach developed for some other groups (e.g. Connexions Advisers) also need to be recognised if the longstanding issues of a lack of clarity, consistency and resources are to be addressed positively.

Support from employers is clearly crucial in this regard. Therefore CWDC, NASWE and others will need to engage with the key stakeholders as a priority and strongly promote the framework and its benefits. Examples of a clear relationship between qualifications and pay scales will be useful and these should be commended to employers.

It will also be important to explain and promote the new framework with existing education welfare staff. Realistic timescales and arrangements need to be put in place to allow for assimilation. There are positive examples and also lessons from the work to implement protection of title for social workers.

Full implementation of the framework also depends on the ongoing review of NOS and the successful realisation of the integrated qualifications framework. It is hoped and expected that every effort will be made to maximise the scope of core units, to allow full use of credits from previous training, experience and qualifications and the provision of a clear progression from the level 4 LDSS NVQ into relevant professional qualifications. Until these things are all in place (i.e. by 2010) it will only be possible to have partial implementation, with a clear understanding by all of the direction of travel. This will also allow both employers and individuals to review their current situation and plan ahead accordingly.

Achieving agreement on the detail of a framework will be an important step but means little without full implementation. Therefore, once finalised, the communication of the detail and the expectations will need to be given priority and done in a way which engages senior managers, supervisors and practitioners and stimulates them into taking the appropriate actions.

There are clearly major resource implications involved in the implementation of the proposed framework and it is recommended that, once a framework is agreed in principle, that further work is undertaken to scope and cost this over a five year period. Some of these costs can then be included in a bid for occupational group funding.

5 Summary

After many years and several attempts to create a clear qualification and progression framework for the education welfare service a variety of factors now

combine to present the best ever opportunity to achieve this. There is a clear will to agree and implement arrangements that will meet the needs of the service, the individuals working within it and the children, young people and their families the service supports. All this will be done within the context of the development of integrated services and the Every Child Matters agenda. In this way education welfare and the individuals working within the service will be able to maximise their contribution to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Report prepared for NASWE by David Leay, Children's Workforce Development Consultant,

June 2007

Report of the survey of Education Welfare Staff on training, progression and qualification.

Background

As part of a CWDC (Occupational Group Funding) project NASWE surveyed Education Welfare staff on training, qualification and progression issues to inform other work undertaken as part of the project by a workforce development consultant to draft a framework for qualification and progression route for the EWS that is consistent with developments across the children's workforce and addresses the common core.

1. The Sample

In total 109 responses, representing 29 local authorities, were received from those working in the Education Welfare Sector. They were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix 1). There were a range of grades represented, including service managers, managers and those with a supervisory role, and front line staff. NASWE is a UK wide association and the survey went to around 400 members in the four nations. That data has been included but represents a very small part of the sample with just 4 respondents who were not from English local authorities.

Table 1. Breakdown of job roles among EWS respondents

Job Role	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Service Manager	11	9%
Manager/supervisory role	39	36%
Front line practitioner	59	55%

2. Range of qualifications held by respondents

The most commonly held qualification was a recognised social work award. More than a third of respondents were educated at degree or post-graduate level. Qualifications held by respondents were extensive in terms of range and subject although the majority could be regarded as relevant or related to the job role.

Of the 29 respondents holding a social work qualification, 16 of those are in management or senior management positions which may indicate there has been a past link between and social work qualification and progression.

Around 20% of respondents either stated that they held no qualifications or left the question unanswered. Responses by some indicate that there may have been some

confusion over the question as although it specifically asked about professional qualifications many responded by including academic and vocational awards. Table 2 shows the range of qualifications held and the proportion of respondents. Many respondents, particularly graduates, held more than one qualification.

Table 2. Range of qualifications held by EWS respondents

Type of Qualification	No of holders	%
Professional social work (DipSW, CQSW, CSS, Degree)	29	26.6%
None or none stated	20	18.3%
Degree	16	14.7%
PG Certificate in Education.	10	9.2%
Masters Degree	7	6.4%
Cert/Dip. Management Studies or ILAM	7	6.4%
Therapeutic Awards (Counselling, Family Therapy)	5	4.6%
NVQ 4 LDSS	5	4.6%
NVQ level 3 or 4 (not LDSS)	5	4.6%
Certificate in Youth & Community Studies	4	3.7%
Nursing (General & Mental Health)	4	3.7%
Diploma in Education Welfare studies	3	2.8%
Certificate in Education	2	1.8%
Diploma in Education	2	1.8%
Connexions Diploma	1	0.9%
Diploma in Youth Work	1	0.9%
Post Qualifying Awards (Social Work)	1	0.9%
Certificate in Education Welfare Studies	1	0.9%
Certificate in Play	1	0.9%
Certificate in Residential Care	1	0.9%
BTEC award in welfare studies	1	0.9%
A- Levels	1	0.9%
NNEB (Nursery Nursing)	1	0.9%
No. of Respondents	109	100.0%

3. Qualifications recognised by employers

Although respondents were generally able to list qualifications that were recognised by their employer, they were not always clear that this resulted in additional pay; many clearly stated that they did not. There were a small number of exceptions where there were entry level qualifications and qualifications required for progression. More than

11% either left the question unanswered or stated 'none'. A further 5.5% specifically stated that they were unsure.

Table 3 shows the range of qualifications recognised by employers in the sample.

Table 3. Range of awards recognised by respondents employers

Qualification	Respondents	%
Dip SW/CQSW Degree in SW, degree in CYP services	40	36.7%
NVQ4 LDSS	35	32.1%
Teaching, Youth work	6	5.5%
Relevant degree	5	4.6%
Diploma in welfare	2	1.8%
Any HE award	1	0.9%
MA	1	0.9%
Any degree	2	1.8%
None or none stated	13	11.9%
Don't know or unsure	6	5.5%

Two qualifications are overwhelmingly represented; social work and the NVQ 4 Learning Development and Support Services (LDSS). Forty respondents said their authority recognised qualified social work status and 35 recognised NVQ 4 LDSS. Many recognised more than one qualification. In addition, smaller numbers also recognised youth work and teaching qualifications, relevant or any degree level education and any higher education award.

Table 4. Respondents' perceptions as to how well existing qualifications and access to training equip them for their job.

	No of respondents	% of total
Completely	10	14%
Very Well	34	46%
Reasonably well	28	38%
Not at all	2	3%
Did not respond	20	27%

Twenty respondents left this question unanswered so it is difficult to determine the significance of the lack of response. Of those that did, 60% believe themselves to be completely or very well equipped for their job. Further examination of the data reveals that of those who believe they are completely or very well equipped, by far the most

commonly held qualification is the DipSW or equivalent. Of the 29 qualified social workers, 24 considered themselves to be completely or very well equipped by their qualification. Those holding a teaching qualification were the next most likely with 10 respondents to be completely or very well equipped. However there are a small number with both qualifications and it is not possible to disaggregate. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this as the NVQ LDSS is as yet largely untested and with only 5 holders in the survey, 2 felt it to be completely or very well equipped and one reasonably. But with so few holders it would be difficult to compare. The NVQ LDSS was subject to many comments both from survey respondents and those involved in consultation round tables. See later section.

4. Local planning and access to training and qualifications

Access to training and development opportunities at local authority level is patchy and inconsistent; a number of local authorities were either accessing NVQ4 or planning to. There are also localised initiatives, for example the Diploma in Education Welfare delivered by Nottingham Trent University and the Certificate and Diploma in Higher Education in Education Welfare Studies delivered by the University of the West of England (UWE) which is no longer available, and a diploma from Lancaster University linked to their NVQ 4 LDSS route. It is concerning that such a high number of respondents seemed unclear as to what was happening in their area, this may be due to its perceived complexity or simply poor communication within the EWS.

A small number of English authorities offer access to professional social work training but this is very limited because of budget constraints. Northern Ireland practitioners now require professional social work qualification at entry and existing staff members are given access to training. With this comes registration with the regulatory body and a requirement for and access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Attempts to deliver NVQ4 LDSS have been hampered by two factors; lack of a training infrastructure and lack of consistent funding to develop a planned programme for staff.

Some respondents mentioned general CPD opportunities within their service but most then added that these were subject to budgetary constraints. Although not covered in the survey, only one put CPD in the context of staff appraisal schemes.

5. Comments from respondents

This section is compiled from comments from survey respondents and a further 30 practitioners involved in the consultation round table events at the NASWE annual conference. Only a small number of respondents chose not to make suggestions. The comments are organised in 5 main topic areas.

- Access and resources
- NVQ LDSS
- Social work training
- Integrated working
- Degree and post graduate level qualifications

Access and resources

Issues about lack of access and resources are reflected in discussions in all the main topic areas. There were also comments from respondents highlighting their frustration with the continued uncertainty and lack of national strategy within the sector. In addition to the funding problem, the scope for time off from work to study and the lack of financial recognition when studies have been completed were issues.

No information has been given us about training although I think the NVQ is available we would have to do it in our own time and this is not possible for me. Time off would make it better

Possibly a course that can be studied in our own time, as it is very difficult to get any time off during the working day to complete assignments

There is not enough funding to ensure that staff can take time away from the workplace so even if officially time off for study is given people just end up doing extra hours to keep on top of things. Teachers get funding for cover staff why can't this be done for support staff as well?

NVQ 4 Learning Development & Support Services (LDSS)

Although there are obviously very few holders of the award because of its recent development, according to the respondents, it has become, along with professional social work qualification, one of the most commonly recognised awards by employers. Where respondents have been able to give information about training and development opportunities in their areas, developments on delivering NVQ LDSS are by far the most common.

There were many comments on LDSS, some supportive, some less enthusiastic but with many supporting it as a starting point for the EWS practitioner.

Many of the comments against NVQ LDSS come from those who already hold higher-level qualifications and see it as a retrograde step. Another more concerning issue is that whilst the NVQ 4 LDSS is seen as a useful measure of competence, it is not developmental or challenging or at a high enough level.

Although the NVQ4 LDSS appears to be gaining recognition by employers, many practitioners have reservations about its status and value. Others felt NVQ LDSS was a good starting point for a service, which should be aspiring to higher-level academic/professional qualifications. There was also concern that NVQ level 4 was not at a high enough level to give EWOs the same professional respect as those they work alongside.

With the units of the NVQ I have done, the emphasis has definitely been on affirming rather than developing, which is my fundamental problem with it. There

is an element of reflection built in, but I see little element of 'moving on'. There is certainly no additional or expanding reading expected. The time seems to be taken by gathering paperwork and getting your head round the painful requirements of a NVQ

I'm doing the NVQ now and it is hard work without proper time out and with no financial reward at the end. Not sure how I could recommend this to others!

It is becoming clear that if the wealth of knowledge that exists within the EWS community is to be effectively used in the future of the children's workforce, staff need a comprehensive qualification and career structure. The LDSS is a good starting point for entry-level staff but it is not the same as a professional qualification that imparts a sound ethical grounding.

As a service manager I am unconvinced that the NVQ has added much value to my staff and does not equip them with the kind of professional skills needed to handle the complex needs of families in crisis. Increasingly social workers are being pulled away from families in need referring cases back to us as simply attendance issues which we are clear are symptoms of much wider issues.

Perhaps it would be better to widen the scope of the LDSS to include HSSWs, Careers and others working in schools to make this the standard qualification.

Professional social work qualifications.

These are the most commonly held awards and along with LDSS are the most commonly recognised awards by employers. There is very strong support both by holders and unqualified respondents and a desire for access to the new social work degree. Access to post qualifying training was rare among respondents and this appears to be due to traditional funding routes going via social care with qualified education staff unable to access resources. The social work qualification is still widely seen as a valued and relevant qualification by many. Whether this is because of perceived relevance or historical recognition and familiarity cannot be determined.

Social work qualification whilst doing the job, which, as you know, is already available – this way more EWOs could become professionally qualified and be able to transfer skills as appropriate

Over the years we have been dogged by the issue of EWO/ESW work and its relationship to the personal social services and how this has impacted on the appropriate qualification for the job. CIS/Core skills may help. BA social work leads to a beginning practice competence in social work and is the only, along with its equivalents professional qualification which guarantees GSCC registration- enough said!

Staff should all be social work qualified and CPD should reflect on-going changes in legislation policy and practice.

Specialism or integration?

Whilst there was some support for retaining a specialist EWS award both at frontline and management grades, more respondents were keen to see qualification and progression routes that had greater currency across the children's workforce.

The commonest themes highlighted by respondents relate to the need for a clear progression route that is consistent, flexible and nationally recognised.

I would love to see a position where we had a diploma/degree in Children's Services, and not a DipSW, NVQ etc. Similar to the structure that nurses have i.e. they all have a core base that allows them to do one level of generic nursing (or in Children's Services e.g. family work) and then they can go further and specialise (social work, Education welfare, early years etc).

A qualifications Framework which take into account other qualifications and experience and allows employees to take courses in relevant missing areas would appear to be a good way to get a varied and open minded senior management in our service.

It would be good to see a comprehensive qualification structure for all education professionals including teachers, youth workers, education social workers, Careers advisors, learning mentors and home school support workers. The core skills are very similar so common modules would allow individual or modular qualifications at different levels and more transfer between careers. Better still just have one qualification with specialist PQ elements.

I'm not sure if the EWS needs to have it's own qualification as I think it is a social work function. There should be a national structure that recognises the value of professional training.

Working in partnership with social care to ensure qualification routes are transferable and relevant

I believe that any notion that the EWS should remain as an isolated profession is obsolete and fails to recognise the rapid developments in integrated qualifications. The overwhelming priority is to avoid 'dumbing down' the EWS by setting the qualification benchmark at NVQ4 level rather than dip HE level as it has historically been or better still degree level.

The Government should stop throwing out new initiatives like Connexions and consolidate the good practice going on. A recognised professional qualification at degree level for all informal educators and education support staff with specialist modules for specific posts would simplify the mess and give staff the opportunity to work in a range of specialisms without going back to stage one.

Degree and post graduate qualifications

There was a very strong view that those working in EWS should aspire to at least a degree level qualification. Those already holding a degree were also keen for there to be post graduate opportunities.

If the pastoral workers within the emerging extended schools are to have any credibility they must have access to a degree level qualification. This does not have to be specifically an EWS qualification it could be generic with specialist PQ routes in attendance, mentoring, careers guidance or youth justice.

I feel that a degree should be the minimum to aim for but the NVQ is a step in the right direction.

I'm confused as to why we are being encouraged to work towards a qualification that is of less value than we already have. Why not have a degree/MA option for social workers, youth workers and the like as an alternative. .

I can support the LDSS as a minimum standard for transferability across the country but feel we should push for the DipSW or perhaps a new qualification at degree level as the ultimate standard.

I'm not interested in the LDSS as I already have a professional qualification and I don't think it is worth the investment as it would not increase my salary. For me an MA that included the elements for strategic management of the EWS would be far more worthwhile

Having a degree already makes me feel that an NVQ would be a waste of time - can't someone offer an MA in EWS management

I think that the NVQ is fine as an introduction but it does not have any proper academic foundation. There is no supervised practice and not enough opportunity to link theory to practice. I feel that a degree should be the minimum to aim for but the NVQ is a step in the right direction.

There is a tension between academic and professional qualifications with not all degrees that are relevant counting towards professional status. One route could be to accredit experience alongside an academic degree provided there is a sufficient level of supervision and assessment of the fieldwork.

6. Management and supervisory training

Although this issue was not addressed directly in the survey there are a very small number of respondents who hold management qualifications. Just 7 (17%) of respondents in service manager and management and supervisor roles held a recognised management qualification. A professional social work qualification is held by 16 (39%) and other professional qualifications, such as teaching and youth work by 7 (17%) of respondents in management roles. There were a small number of comments

relating to management training, some saw it as a progression issue; others felt that there should be a specific EWS management qualification. Those who currently hold management qualifications hold generic management qualifications, including Diploma and Certificate in Management Studies (DMS, CMS).

7. Available qualifications specific to EWS

As part of NASWE's web site development, we have been gathering information on qualification routes available to EWS staff. There are a few specific EWS higher education awards that are regional initiatives. For example NTU working with the East Midlands consortium of EWS have a higher education diploma in Education Welfare. The University of Lancaster offer a higher education diploma alongside their NVQ 4 LDSS course.

More widespread is the delivery of LDSS. This varied with local authorities either buying in services from training providers or working in partnership with Connexions and Learning Mentors. There have been some comments on the varying quality of the underpinning knowledge inputs to the LDSS and there is also considerable variation in fees, which may reflect differing levels of contact time with candidates. NASWE will be posting information and sign posting to providers on it's website.

Another initiative, developed by DfES is the National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance (NPSLA-BA).

The NPSL-BA provides leadership training in behaviour and attendance. The emphasis of the programme will be on developing leadership skills and participants will be expected to have experience in the field of behaviour and attendance and be motivated to work in a self-supported group. Participants will be expected to gather evidence towards a DfES completion certificate in NPSLBA. If appropriate participants may have their work accredited as a Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ) or gain credits towards a Master's level qualification. The VRQ is available through City and Guilds at levels 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework.

Summary and conclusions

- There is strong support for a nationally recognised qualification and progression route for the EWS.
- The NVQ LDSS is gaining recognition. Whilst there are many reservations, there is support for it to be the starting qualification for the EWS.
- There is support for the idea of widening the LDSS family to support greater recognition and flexibility.
- The workforce is very diverse and as such will represent a challenge to a simple progression route and accreditation of prior experiential learning being an important issue.

- Lack of resources including training infrastructure is a significant barrier to progression
- Despite 'joining up', access to children's services training budget is not common and social work qualified staff are denied access to PQ opportunities.
- Currently, there are few incentives for staff to gain qualifications if these are not recognised with enhanced pay.
- EWS provide a valuable family support service to children and families and a significant proportion hold a recognised professional qualification. In terms of workforce planning, there is potential which perhaps need exploring, for a much more effective use of this pool of staff within the ECM delivery framework.

Jacqui Newvell & Andy Winton
NASWE

June 2007

**Education Welfare Qualification Framework
Practitioner Survey**

Name (optional)		Authority:	
Are you a:			
Front line practitioner	Specialist practitioner	Manager /supervisor	Service manager
What professional qualifications do you hold?			
Does your employer recognize this qualification with enhanced pay? Yes / No			
What year did you receive this qualification/s, and what was the awarding institution?			
Does your current qualification/access to CPD equip you for your job?			
Not at all	Reasonably well	Very well	Completely
What other qualifications does your authority recognize if any?			
Are you aware of any qualifications or continuing professional development opportunities that are being offered, or being planned in your area?			
Do you have access to these? Yes / No			
What suggestions do you have for the future development of a qualifications framework?			

Thank you for completing this survey. Please return in the envelope provided.

Possible progression examples once an appropriate integrated qualifications framework is in place.

Example 1

Janice is a parent with 2 small children, who was previously an administrative assistant. She has always enjoyed being with children and signs up with her local school as a parent helper.

After a couple of years an opportunity arises to become a teaching assistant and Janice is the successful applicant. Three years on and she has completed her TA NVQ when she sees an advertisement for an Education Welfare Officer (level 1), based in the local comprehensive school and, once again, she is the successful applicant. She then completes the level 4 LDSS NVQ, which only requires her to undertake the units that she has not completed previously.

Two years later she undertakes a professional social work qualification (education welfare pathway) to become a level 2 EWO. Again she gets maximum credit for her previous experience and training towards this qualification within the IQF arrangements.

Three years after that she moves to a mainstream social work role as a senior practitioner but returns to an education welfare management role four years later.

Example 2

Jon became an EWO eight years ago after leaving the army. He has no relevant qualification but an obvious talent for the job and is highly valued by his colleagues and the families he works with.

Whilst Jon enjoys his work he is frustrated that, without relevant qualifications, he has no opportunity for career progression. He is also aware that, under the new progression/qualification framework he must complete at least the LDSS level 4 NVQ within the next 3 years.

In discussion with his manager Jon signs up for a combined foundation degree/ NVQ 4 programme - he completes this successfully and, in the process gains the confidence to continue to a full degree level professional qualification.

After this Jon soon progresses to a management position and has a further series of promotions within his local authority's children's services directorate, eventually becoming Director of Children's Services within ten years.