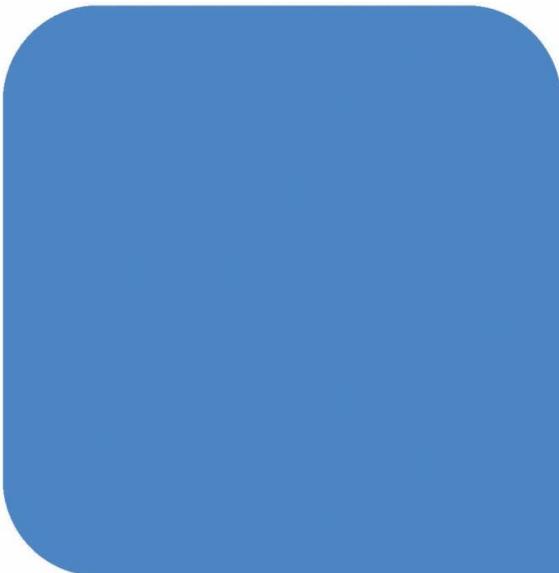
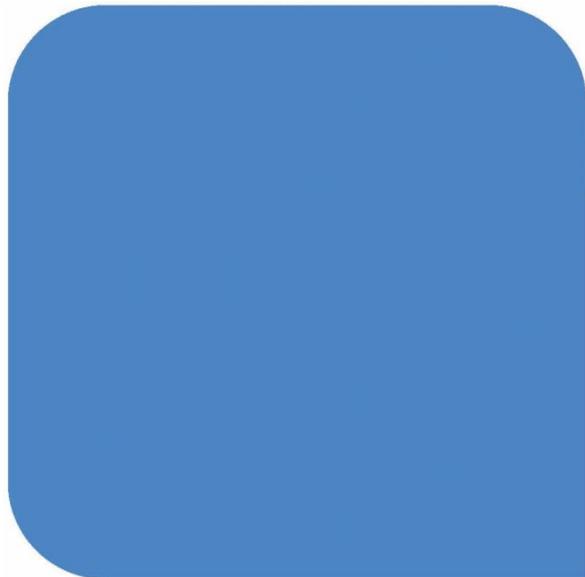


The involvement of users and carers in social work education: a practice bench marking study



The involvement of users and carers in social work education: a practice benchmarking study

Jan Wallcraft, Pete Fleischmann and Peter Schofield

First published in Great Britain in February 2012
By the Social Care Institute for Excellence
© SCIE 2012

All rights reserved

Written by Janet Wallcraft, Pete Fleischmann and Peter Schofield
This report is available online
www.scie.org.uk

Social Care Institute for Excellence
Fifth floor, 2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5BH
tel 0207 024 7650
fax 0207 024 7651

www.scie.org.uk

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Summary	4
Background	7
Aims of this study	8
Methods	8
Findings	11
Conclusions	33
Recommendations	35
Appendix 1: Figures and tables	36
Appendix 2: Letter sent by GSCC	44
References	45

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the General Social Care Council and The College of Social Work for funding the project. Thanks to Alison Faulkner for her support and comments on earlier drafts.

Summary

Background

Since 2002 higher education institutions (HEIs) have been required to develop service user and carer involvement (SUCI) throughout the design and delivery of degree programmes. This small-scale study aims to provide a benchmark of how practice is progressing across the 83 HEIs in England which offer the social work degree, and to support the development of guidance for social work educators.

Methods

Three data sources were examined for this study:

- two recent literature reviews and two recent user-led studies
- monitoring forms submitted by HEIs to the General Social Care Council (GSCC) in 2008/9
- interviews with 16 HEI programme managers/directors.

Limitations

- This small study does not include a comprehensive literature review.
- The monitoring forms submitted by the HEIs only cover one year: 2008/9. The forms are self-reports and have not been verified by a third party. Therefore they may not present an accurate picture of what is really happening on the ground.
- There may be potential for response bias – for example, HEIs may have reported higher numbers of users and carers and more extensive involvement because they are responding to their funder.
- The free text sections of the monitoring forms were likely to be used by the HEIs to highlight successes rather than report challenges.
- The interviewees were self-selecting and may represent the views of a group of people who are particularly committed to and passionate about SUCI.
- While giving some indications of the scope and scale of activity, the data tells us little about the quality and impact of SUCI.

Findings

Even when taking the limitations into consideration, progress across HEIs in SUCI does appear to be impressive. The following findings were seen to be significant.

- In 2008/9 SUCI was evident in most areas of the qualifying social work degree programme. The strongest areas were recruitment, selection and teaching. The weakest was assessment. In total, 5,862 service users and carers were reported to be involved.
- In the post-qualifying (PQ) programme the strongest areas of involvement were teaching, course design, quality assurance and development. Weaker areas were the recruitment and selection of candidates, formal assessment of practice competence and the assessment of written work.
- Thirty-eight per cent of HEIs reported that they had service user and/or carer involvement in five areas of PQ course provision. Seven institutions reported that they had service user involvement in all areas of PQ course provision. The total number of service users and carers involved was reported to be 947.
- The grant money administered by the GSCC supported some of the activity, however many institutions also supplemented this with their own resources.
- Paying service users and carers who are in receipt of benefits continues to be a challenging issue.
- Mostly anecdotal evidence indicates very high levels of student satisfaction with SUCI in teaching modules. In particular, students value how SUCI brings teaching alive and, in the safe environment of the classroom, narrows the gap between theory and practice.
- Anecdotally, most service users and carers involved in teaching enjoyed and valued their experience. Involvement empowers users and carers and helps them find their voice. It provides a model of good practice and channels views (and sometimes anger) into service improvement.
- Educators reported that SUCI was making a real difference, marking a shift to real participation and offering a different role for them as facilitators.
- The evidence shows positive changes in the perceptions of learners, service users and carers, as well as staff, and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. However, there is no evidence of this learning being transferred to practice, contributing to changes in organisational policy or directly benefiting service users and carers who receive social work interventions.

Conclusions

- The Department of Health (DH) and the GSCC directives on SUCI and its funding have ensured that it has developed rapidly since the new degree requirements were introduced. The evidence shows that SUCI has become an important factor in both qualifying and PQ education in social work. However, the overall picture is not consistent and there appears to be little evidence of good practice being shared across institutions.
- The development of good practice guidance for HEIs to support the implementation of SUCI is one of the ways to address the issue of inconsistency. It would be helpful for HEIs to have understanding of what is considered good practice and also for the minimum requirements for SUCI to be clearly set out.
- The involvement of service users is far more extensive than that of carers. However, some groups, such as children, young people and people with learning difficulties may not be extensively involved.
- The most common role for service users and carers in education remains presenting their personal stories as case studies or testimonies. However, they would like to be involved in more meaningful ways than this, in all aspects of teaching and learning. For example, in discussing social work practice and policy and in helping to produce individual course programmes and curricula.
- There are two different approaches to creating an infrastructure for involvement: either HEIs develop their own internal user and carer forum, often using the support grant to employ a co-ordinator; or they contract with an external organisation which provides user and carer involvement. Both seem to work well in practice although they may have different results in terms of empowerment and capacity-building.

Recommendations

- Further capacity-building for involvement would help to strengthen SUCI in the weaker areas such as assessment, programme management and programme review. This should be targeted at groups such as care-leavers and people with learning disabilities. Carers are a group that needs greater investment and support.

- SUCI methods that work well include case studies, role plays, audio-visual and other creative approaches that enable people who would not normally be confident in a classroom situation to take part.
- More robust methods of evaluating how HEIs use the support grant need to be developed.
- Effective mechanisms for sharing good practice also need to be developed. Social Work Education Participation (SWEP), the national user and carer forum, offers a useful platform for promoting and sharing good practice.
- A much more robust evidence base is required to find out what difference SUCI is making in the longer term. There is a need for systematic evaluation of the impact of SUCI on learning and practice. Service users and carers should be involved in designing research.

Background

Increase in SUCI

Since 2002, when HEIs were required to develop SUCI throughout the design and delivery of degree programmes there has been a notable increase in this approach. In 2003 the GSCC was given funding from the DH to amend social work degree programmes in order to support SUCI. Progress has been patchy (SCIE 2004, 2011). Following the publication of two reports exploring SUCI in social work education, SWEP was established as a national forum to share and promote good practice.

A SCIE report in 2011 (Sadd 2011) found that the most developed areas of participation are interviewing and selection, teaching and learning provision, assessment of students and preparation for practice learning. The least developed areas are design of the programme, placement settings, learning agreements and quality assurance. Although there is a widespread belief that SUCI in social work education has many benefits for students, social workers, service users and carers, there is little evidence for its effect on outcomes (Webber and Robinson 2011).

The grant made available to HEIs for SUCI is widely regarded as inadequate to ensure effective involvement (Sadd 2011). With the current pressure on available resources it is imperative that they be used to best effect.

There are currently 83 HEIs approved to provide the social work degree programme and 62 approved PQ course providers. With changes in the regulators taking place and the abolition of the GSCC in 2012, along with The College of Social Work

consultation on grants, now is a good time to review existing practice and propose recommendations for the future.

The figures and tables relating to the data used in this study are gathered together in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

HEIs use of funding

Qualifying programmes

In 2008/9 the GSCC distributed to 90 HEIs a total of £900,000 provided by the DH (GSCC 2011: 50), as a contribution towards the costs of involving service users and carers in the degree programmes. Each received £10,000, including seven who were not yet providing social work degrees but were in the process of developing them, and were approved in 2009/10 (GSCC 2011: 6). HEIs are required to report to the GSCC precisely how these funds have been used. The highest single use was for salaries relating to SUCI development and to project workers (30 per cent), followed by fees paid to participants (28 per cent) (see Table 1). Some universities spent more than the allocated funds, though on average this worked out at only an additional £656.

PQ programmes

The GSCC distributed to 59 HEIs a total of £628,090 DH funding as a contribution towards the costs of involving service users and carers in the PQ framework (GSCC 2011: 84). The use of funds was broadly similar to that in the qualifying programmes, though a higher proportion went to salaries for project workers supporting SUCI (see Table 2).

Aims of this study

- To review existing evidence on good practice in SUCI within social work education.
- To examine current practice at the 83 approved HEIs.
- To review the existing evidence on SUCI in PQ programmes.
- To support the development of guidance for social work educators.

Methods

Data sources

Three basic methods were used for this benchmarking exercise.

The first was a review of literature identified by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), based on expert knowledge of the field. Second, GSCC's published reports of its routine monitoring of social work courses provided a large amount of baseline data, though most of this comes from 2008/9 because more recent data has not yet been published. Third, a sample of people with responsibility for managing the HEI grant for SUCI was interviewed by telephone.

Two recent literature reviews of SUCI were identified by SCIE. The review by Wallcraft (2010) examined 51 published and unpublished academic papers and reports related to SUCI in social work education and training, from the year 2000 onwards. The aim was to focus on what is known about how to carry out SUCI in PQ education and training, though since there was a lack of specific evidence on this, studies of SUCI in social work at the qualifying level were included as a basis from which to draw lessons.

Robinson and Webber's (2011) literature review was also concerned with the PQ level, but the main aim was to investigate what constitutes 'meaningful involvement' in PQ programmes. Like Wallcraft, this review found a scarcity of PQ-focused studies and included studies of SUCI at qualifying level. Twenty-nine studies of SUCI in social work were mapped against an evaluation framework which contains four levels of outcome relating to different stakeholders, including service users and carers, students and staff (see Table 3). Webber and Robinson's (2011) qualitative study of involvement in PQ programmes was also included as it offers further insight into meaningful involvement.

In addition to the two literature reviews, Sadd's (2011) small-scale focus group study, which was commissioned by SCIE to provide evidence for the importance and value of sustaining and improving SUCI in social work education, was also included. This provides a practical analysis framework of the domains of SUCI in social work, set out as a diagram (see Figure 1).

The GSCC data comes from two sources. The first is *A report on social work education: data pack* (2011). All HEIs running GSCC approved social work courses are obliged to provide self-evaluation data for the monitoring exercise, including information on SUCI. However, the data given in this report is numerical, not qualitative – i.e. the percentage of HEIs involving service users and carers in specific aspects of social work courses.

The second source is the monitoring forms themselves, which GSCC publish on their website. These forms give the actual figures for SUCI in each HEI. Further numerical

and qualitative information about SUCI was given in a free text box, although not all HEIs took advantage of this, and the free text data is variable in terms of its amount and detail.

For the current benchmarking exercise, all of the data in the annual monitoring forms relating to SUCI for the year 2008/9 was collated and summarised. This included:

- all the data on numbers of users and carers involved and what aspects of the degree they were active in (taken from the tick-box questions).
- all the free text responses related to SUCI.

Finally, the third source was a series of qualitative interviews with a convenience sample of 16 people with responsibility for managing the SUCI grant within HEIs. A number of people responded to a letter of invitation sent to all HEIs by the GSCC (see Appendix 2). Since time was short, interviews were carried out with the first 16 respondents with whom interviews could be set up quickly. Interviewees were invited to talk about how the grant had been used, how extensive SUCI was in their social work department and what they felt had been the impact.

This study brings together all three types of data and makes recommendations for taking forward good practice in SUCI within a changing environment.

Limitations

This is a small-scale study which does not include a comprehensive literature review. The monitoring forms submitted by the HEIs only cover one year, 2008/9. The forms are self-reports and have not been verified by a third party. Therefore they may not present an accurate picture of what is really happening on the ground. There may be potential for response bias – for example, HEIs may tend to report higher numbers of users and carers and more extensive involvement because they are reporting to their funding organisation. The free text sections of the monitoring forms were likely to be used by HEIs to highlight successes rather than report challenges. The interviewees were self-selecting and may represent the views of a group of people who are particularly committed to and passionate about SUCI.

While giving some indications of the scope and scale of activity, the data examined tells us little about the quality and impact of SUCI.

Analytic methods

Sadd (2011) refers to a ‘hub and spoke’ model of SUCI in social work education (see Figure 1). This model has been used, along with some of the findings in Sadd’s report, to create a framework for this study because it offers a graphic illustration of the GSCC’s expectations of SUCI.

Robinson and Webber’s (2011) review provides an evaluation framework (see Table 3) which sets out four levels of change. Level 1 is concerned with the perceptions of

stakeholders (levels of satisfaction and views on involvement), Level 2 is concerned with changes in attitudes and skills, Level 3 with changes in behaviour and practice, and Level 4 with benefits to service users and carers who receive social work services.

Robinson and Webber note that models of involvement fall into two types – *process-focused* and *outcome-focused*. In process models, evaluation is based on evidence of value to the participants. The authors found two main types of process model: *empowerment* and *partnership*. In empowerment models, the key outcomes are expected beforehand, or are identified via feedback from participants and wider communities. In partnership models the key outcomes are genuine partnership and power-sharing with staff. In contrast, outcome-focused models are more concerned with showing that SUCI adds value to social work education and improves results from social work interventions. In their subsequent paper (Webber and Robinson 2011) the authors argue that although these models are not mutually exclusive, they can present different challenges in terms of the types and numbers of service users and carers involved and their required levels of skill and experience.

Findings

This section covers the key findings from the literature search, the GSCC data and the interviews, using the domains set out in the model used by Sadd (2011).

SUCI statistics and tables

In general, the 2008/9 monitoring exercise (GSCC 2011) showed that SUCI was evident in most areas of provision of social work degrees in that year, with the strongest areas being recruitment and selection, and teaching. The weakest area was assessment (see Table 4). In total, across all the HEIs, 5,862 service users and carers were directly involved. Table 1 shows the percentages of HEIs which had each type of involvement. All HEIs had at least some involvement in teaching, with over 90 per cent involving service users and carers in recruitment and selection, course design and assessment. Figure 2 shows the average percentage of service users and carers involved who took part in each domain.

In the PQ area, the GSCC (2011) found the strongest areas of SUCI to be teaching, course design, quality assurance and development. Weaker areas were the recruitment and selection of candidates, formal assessment of practice competence and the assessment of written work (see Table). Thirty-eight per cent of HEIs had SUCI in five areas of PQ course provision and seven institutions had service user involvement in all areas of course provision. A total of 947 service users and carers (720 service users and 247 carers) were reported to have been involved directly in PQ courses across all HEIs.

Tables 1 and 2 show a breakdown of total expenditure in relation to numbers of service users and carers involved, salaries to project workers, fees and block

payments to service user and carer networks, and the range of distribution of these payments across the HEIs.

Finally, Figure 3 shows the numbers of service users and carers involved by each HEI, and Figure 4 shows the numbers involved in each domain.

SUCI methods at undergraduate level

This section looks at the methods of involvement in each domain, fleshing out the statistics above with more qualitative information about the types and models of involvement practised.

Student selection and recruitment

Eighteen HEIs and all 16 interviewees spoke about SUCI in recruitment and selection. Models included service users chairing group discussions on selection days:

Service users are actively involved in recruitment of new students. All applicants take part in a group discussion chaired by a service user. The service user provides a detailed assessment of each applicant under seven headings, e.g. 'ability to build on the views of others'. This contributes approximately a third of the marks for the interview and is therefore a significant part of the selection decision.

(HEI free text)

The following examples show a similar value-base:

One of our strengths is the involvement of students in the selection process as equal partners with service users and carers.

(HEI free text)

There is service user and carer involvement ordinarily in every interview, and when we score interviews, we try to form a consensus in the panel, and service users and carers have as much say as anyone else.

(Interviewee)

Process models based on values of empowerment and representativeness were indicated by the following:

The programme has two well established reference groups – one for adult service users and carers and one for children and young people who are service users or carers. Representatives from these, and other service users and carers have again been involved in interviewing and selecting both staff and students.

(HEI free text)

Two HEIs and two of the interviewees also talked about SUCI in the induction of new students, and again partnership was a key value:

To ensure that the principle of a meaningful partnership between all stakeholders in the programme is visible to students from the commencement of their studies, both service users/carers and employers play a key role in the annual induction of new students onto the programme.

(HEI free text)

Teaching and learning provision

Involvement in teaching is obviously a major aspect of SUCI in social work. However, Sadd's study (2011) found that the recounting of personal experiences is still a focus of much SUCI, despite the fact that the service users and carers who were consulted wanted to be involved in discussing theoretical perspectives such as the social model, empowerment and inclusion – particularly in the light of the personalisation agenda, adult safeguarding and issues of risk, rights, choice and control.

Thirty-three HEIs commented on this area, a number of them referring to specific modules where involvement was particularly important. Once again, process issues of empowerment and community involvement were seen to be important:

We had focus groups to plan content for good practice mental health modules with a specific focus on homelessness. This led to the creation of a well received teaching session on homelessness which was jointly run by a service user and [a] service user involvement worker from [the] Porch-Light agency. This proved an effective model of collaborative teaching and learning and is to be used as an exemplar teaching session as the programme develops its work in this area.

(HEI free text)

[There is a] consultation exercise within the diversity module in which students go out to meet service users and carers in the community to find out about their perspectives and priorities for social work practice.

(HEI free text)

The involvement of specific community groups (often focusing on young people and people with learning disabilities) was a particular concern raised by several HEIs:

Young people from the Rights and Participation Project present a half-day workshop looking at good practice in engaging children and young people in decision-making processes. The central role of children and young people ... is strongly reflected in the assessment criteria for this module.

(HEI free text)

The outcome goal of added value, based on the input of young people with specific experience, and of highly skilled and experienced user trainers, was demonstrated in the following quotes:

We use care-leavers in the law module ... its about getting students to understand the different dynamics of the legal process – if you take this decision there will be one set of outcomes, if that decision a different set of outcomes ... Those users and carers are fantastic at helping students understand the process dilemma.

(Interviewee)

[We engaged] an experienced consultant/trainer and service user ... with very good academic experience of the subject. Her lecture exploring 'Rights, Risk, Dignity and Choice – A Personal Narrative' included the experience of receiving direct payments ... This made an important contribution to the new undergraduate degree.

(Interviewee)

Interviewees talked about various models of involvement in teaching, ranging from personal experiences to devising case studies or role plays and then discussing these with students:

One service user does a regular slot on the social model of disability, and ... we have them talking about their own experiences of being on [the] receiving end of services.

(Interviewee)

As part of one module, service users/carers role-played a scenario with individual students. These interviews were videoed, students were given written feedback from the service user/carer on the interview and then had to provide their own reflections [on] the interview. This reflective analysis was jointly marked by the service user/carer and the tutor.

(Interviewee)

While SUCI is often widespread in teaching, some interviewees said that it is particularly valuable in modules relating to direct practice:

In [the] mental health module they participate as classroom teachers. Someone with experience of mental health problems and someone who is a carer for a person with mental health problems [will] work together on this, drawing out the differences and conflicts in their perspectives, which provides a very useful learning experience for students.

(Interviewee)

Production of teaching materials

In addition to direct teaching, a number of HEIs and interviewees talked about SUCI in relation to developing teaching materials. This provides an indirect form of involvement that may be attractive to those not able or willing to come into a classroom.

The products included web resources, case studies, dramas, DVDs, printed and audio-visual materials such as podcasts and digital narratives, academic work and publications:

The co-ordinator has worked with ... service users and carers to put together testimony – case studies [that] students are required to look at. Similarly she has worked with people on photo stories based on [their] lives, so they wouldn't necessarily come in and meet [students] face to face.

(Interviewee)

We developed a DVD resource recording young service users' perceptions of services and this is now used as an effective teaching resource.

(Interviewee)

Members work with students to produce creative artefacts which are used as teaching material on the social work programmes. These include film, drama, poetry, creative writing etc.

(Interviewee)

Service users and carers have been involved in conference presentations with academics in this country and have also been on one international exchange trip.

(Interviewee)

Involvement in student supervision

Lincoln University has developed a method of SUCI in student supervision called 'surgeries'. Students meet with users and carers on a one-to-one basis to discuss key issues in practice and academic work. They are encouraged to draw on expert knowledge from service users and carers, which they can quote as valid academic sources in their work.

Assessment of students

According to Wallcraft (2010), by 2005 most institutions said that they had some SUCI in the assessment of students' work. GSCC (2011) found little involvement in assessment design in 2008/9 but more in actual assessment such as observing and commenting on student presentations. The free text gave more detail about this, with 23 HEIs commenting on the use of SUCI in the assessment of students, particularly in the assessment of practice learning portfolios. The following two examples show how feedback from service users and carers is changing and improving assessment and providing evidence of students taking on service user and carer perspectives in their work:

A service user attends the practice assessment panel to make a report. This has helped us to focus more clearly on how students can evidence their understanding of service user/carer perspectives. We have developed a reflective assignment and ensured that students focus more clearly on their values/skills and underpinning knowledge throughout their practice learning portfolios. We have also included

questions for the practice assessment panel readers to enable them to feed back their assessment of the students' understanding of service user/carer perspectives.

(Interviewee)

Service users and carers have worked primarily on quality assurance of practice learning modules rather than direct assessment. This has worked well as HUB members have been able to identify evidence of good practice in portfolios and of students consciously working in partnership with service users and carers. The HUB has also contributed to the development of portfolios. One HUB member gave detailed comments on four portfolios at Level 3, indicating the reasons why he considered particular evidence to be useful in assessing students' understanding of service user perspectives. This has been used to inform students and practice assessors.

(Interviewee)

Preparation for practice learning

Wallcraft (2010) found examples of SUCI in practice education. The University of Plymouth used service user and carer conversations with students as an assessment tool for practice education. In the GSCC (2011) monitoring, six HEIs described how they involve service users and carers in preparing students to go on placement. On some courses it is routine to expect students to get feedback from service users and carers on their competence to practise, and this is a major form of involvement in assessment before, during and after placement:

It is a programme requirement that every student obtains feedback from service users or carers and that this is used by practice assessors in the assessment of practice competence ... Service users and carers also contribute to the formal quality assurance and assessment processes of the practice assessment panel.

(HEI free text)

An interviewee gave a further example:

One of the models is getting service users and carers to come in as students run through what might be a mock interview or set of communication processes. We use two groups: young people and people with learning disabilities who work regularly with a range of professional services, so we give them a voice and support to utilise that voice in saying whether people are ready for practice, and if not why not. If not

... they form part of a remedial plan ... for that student, so they might say 'she wasn't good at listening to us', so we know we have to work on active listening.

Provision of placement

Some student placements are being provided in voluntary sector organisations run by service users. Wallcraft (2010) found examples in Bath, Croydon and Luton. Some of the HEIs and interviewees mentioned ways in which service users and carers are involved in social work student placements:

We have two students on placement, to support them and help them to co-ordinate things. It gives the students experience of self-advocacy and setting up a self-help group.

(Interviewee: member of an independent service user organisation)

A pilot project to place students on placement directly with service users who are managing their own budgets has been evaluated and was reported on jointly by service users and academic staff at the Joint Social Work Education Conference, and was subject to an article in Community Care.

(HEI free text)

Strategic involvement: design of degree and quality assurance

At least some strategic involvement in course planning was found in 86 per cent of universities (Wallcraft 2010). Service users and carers were involved in the design of the social work degree, including consultation prior to developing the course, curriculum planning and producing course modules. Formal involvement in course management was found in 28 per cent of institutions, with service users and carers involved as members of course management boards and committees, while 67 per cent of HEIs reported SUCI in the monitoring and evaluation of courses (Wallcraft 2010).

Some examples of strategic involvement and quality assurance were given by the HEIs and interviewees:

[The] Open University [OU] [has] particularly valued the work of the service user and carer project group (comprising three people who use services and one carer). The group has been involved in a wide range of developmental activities: for example, reviewing our selection questions, practice learning paperwork and processes. This group has also contributed to the OU's UK strategy group which is monitoring and

developing service user and carer involvement across social work programmes in England, Scotland and Wales.

(HEI free text)

We are piloting a process where service users and carers are looking at and evaluating the module guide. The module leader felt that he didn't have enough elements of understanding of older people in this module, so he has broken down the module guide, and we are looking at learning outcomes, at what it covers and how it is worded. Two [service users/carers] are older people from a research group and one ... has been involved in the programme advisory group [for] a long time. It is an iterative process of programme development, before, during and after delivery.

(Interviewee)

Course validation is a specific strategic area where some HEIs have successfully involved service users and carers. Six HEIs and two interviewees talked about this. Here is an example:

The programme held a stakeholder consultation event in Feb 2009 to share ideas from students, service user and carer representatives, teaching staff and employers/placement providers. The meeting addressed a range of issues that fed into the re-approval of the course in July 2009, and was successful in engaging all the targeted group.

(HEI free text)

Logistics of SUCI

This section looks at the practical ways in which SUCI is implemented and supported, including different types of forum and arrangements for providing service user and carer input, capacity-building and training, and payment issues.

There are two basic mechanisms for SUCI – externally commissioned SUCI work through local organisations or independent consultants, or groups and forums set up within the HEI.

External agencies versus internal forums

In 2008/9, 12 per cent of the total GSCC support grant paid to all HEIs was spent on contracts to external user and carer networks to provide a range of services (see Table 1):

In conjunction with other institutions on Merseyside we've taken that element of the grant over to Focus – a forum for user and carer involvement for Merseyside and Cheshire. So they receive the whole of that money and if there is extra money that goes to them as well ... A lot of it will have to go for overheads, so Focus has a development worker to support the work and ensure excellent standards.

(Interviewee)

This is regarded by some HEIs as a way of supporting the development of an independent service user and carer voice:

The college passes money to a local user organisation ... and they undertake the administration of involvement ... it saves the college from having to do it, which would be difficult, and it is good we can pay an organisation like that to do it, a way in which we can offer them support.

(Interviewee)

In the same year, 30 per cent of the total grant was spent on salaries for development workers employed by HEIs (see Table 1):

We have a Programme Advisory Group, [which] meets three times a year, it is a very passionate group, and holds us to account. Very good and assured. We have representatives of service users and carers in mental health, physical disability, learning disability [and] sight impairment.

(Interviewee)

An internal SUCI group is valued by some HEIs as a more direct relationship:

Our partnership with users and carers continues to develop, as the model of involvement via a direct relationship (rather than [being] mediated via an external agency) matures.

(HEI free text)

Capacity-building and training

A number of HEIs have endeavoured to support SUCI by providing training to develop expertise and confidence. As shown above, providing funding to external bodies is viewed as a means of capacity-building for local organisations, but skills are also developed within HEIs:

You have to put in a lot of time to enable involvement to happen, for example in supporting and training people – you can't expect them to just know how to do it ... I don't like to just drop them into things, assuming they can pick it up, I like to enable, support, train and monitor them.

(Interviewee)

As a result of training of this type, some service users and carers have joined the teaching staff:

Some users and carers who work for us regularly have taken on a formal status as associate tutors. They are interviewed for these roles. [This] gives them access to campus facilities such as the library. Not all will be associate tutors but those with substantial involvement ... are included in the associate tutor network.

(Interviewee)

Students may also need preparation for SUCI:

The other thing is to prepare the students well, how you define a session, so that the kinds of things that come up in discussion would be appropriate and ... service users [are] treated well.

(Interviewee)

In the first year with students we make it clear what we are doing and why we are doing it, they can kind of misunderstand this.

(Interviewee)

Use of the grant

A number of the interviewees talked about how they had used the grant money. Some spoke of it as having the role of 'pump-priming' involvement so that the institution was more likely to invest in SUCI, having seen the value of the work:

Without the pump-priming of the grant, we could not have appointed the project co-ordinator who has proved invaluable. We would not have been able to get the university to fund this post. Now it has been happening for a while it has generated its own momentum, and the university [is] happier about subsidising the work. It is an innovative model [in] which we have been able to demonstrate the value [of involvement]

(Interviewee)

We used it extensively ... right across programmes to support work we are doing with service users and carers, in a sense we used it to pump-prime activities, so we have invested more than that money, but it's been an important way of generating resources so that we can develop work.

(Interviewee)

The department first attempted to set up a user group in the late 1980s, but without formal support from the social work funding bodies the group never really worked. Because of the new initiatives from the General Social Care Council, which stipulate that all social work teaching must have user involvement, the group was relaunched with the full support of the teaching team.

(Interviewee)

The funding, along with the directives from the GSCC to carry out SUCI, have made institutions take involvement seriously:

The funding has been hugely important. It gets the university to recognise the importance and validity of service user involvement.

(Interviewee)

That money is important, it gives an infrastructure, there is a case for the university putting some in itself, but that money is well used.

(Interviewee)

Most of the interviewees wanted to stress that losing the grant was likely to have a very damaging effect on SUCI, resulting in a loss of momentum:

I am sure there will come a point when I am told that if the grant continues but doesn't cover everything we will ... have to stay within the grant, and if the grant is not there I am sure I would be seriously ring-fenced in terms of what I could do.

(Interviewee)

Several of the interviewees talked about the additional costs to institutions beyond what is covered by the grant:

There was overall £23K expenditure, and the GSCC funding was £7,400, so we spend much more than we receive.

(Interviewee)

We are not costing our staff time for setting up and supporting, and quite a bit of admin and associated costs, e.g. travel. If we want a big service-user day, it [involves] quite a bit of admin and the grant doesn't cover everything.

(Interviewee)

Some also spoke about the unpaid time service users and carers put in:

The funding is an understatement [of what SUCI costs]. Some people don't claim because of benefits.

(Interviewee)

There is a very exciting children's sub-group, a service user consultative group, a service user member organising this is raising funds, doing white elephant stalls, etc.

(Interviewee)

Payment for SUCI work

Paying service users and carers continues to be a difficult issue because of the numbers who are on benefits; however, some institutions provide good practice

examples which are quoted at length here because they may be useful to other organisations:

I get human resources to advise on contracts, and the faculty business manager [is] looking at faculty budgets, so it has involved a whole-system change, we've come a long way.

(Interviewee)

[The service user worker] spent considerable time during the year developing the infrastructure needed to involve service users and carers at the university, especially a payment and reimbursement policy for service users and carers. This involved seeking advice from a specialist in the area of paying and reimbursing people on benefits. We also took out a subscription to the Involvement Helpline [local Citizens Advice Bureau] which advises individuals about how involvement could affect their benefits. This detailed groundwork in 2008/9 meant that new service user/carer contributors, after appropriate advice from the Helpline, are now able to be paid directly into their bank accounts. This was a particularly innovative development and we are considering running a conference on this area to disseminate good practice in relation to infrastructure to support service user and carer involvement in courses.

(HEI free text)

As ever paying service users is the challenge ... we now have almost all service users and carers work[ing] on basically a visiting contract ... paid for work done, if they only do small pieces of work, but there are some who do much more substantial pieces of work and we tend to give them a six-month contract, and they claim until that money runs out and then we give them another contract.

(Interviewee)

Obviously we have had to do a lot of work with the group on the implications for their benefits. That is still a challenge. Some choose not to be paid, because of the impact on their benefits, they don't want to be subject to income tax and all the rest of it. So we pay their expenses and they give their time free. The majority now have come to an arrangement with their benefits people to declare what they are earning. We are very careful that we don't ... have them doing anything that is unlawful or against regulations. My colleague ... has developed good relations with the various local benefits people, who have been ... to the university [and visited] the service user group and the staff group [to talk] about what we should be doing and how to support people so they won't get into trouble with their benefits. It is still a stumbling block. It's been very helpful for people to know what they can and can't claim.

(Interviewee)

Outcomes of SUCI

This section looks at evidence of outcomes based on feedback and evaluations in the literature and reported by the GSCC (2011) and the interviewees. Following the model set out by Robinson and Webber (2011), for SUCI to be meaningful the purpose needs to be consciously decided, and the impacts or outcomes should be assessed or measured through feedback and evaluation. The main types of aims and outcomes are those related on the one hand to the *process* of SUCI and its impact on the stakeholders, and on the other to *changes* resulting from involvement – in particular, demonstrable long-term influence on social work practice and improved experiences and outcomes service users. The former is found through routine collection of feedback which happens on all courses, but the latter needs more sophisticated forms of evaluation and research.

Six of the HEIs reported that they had formally evaluated involvement or were in the process of this at the time of the 2008/9 review. Four of these were related to the PQ level (Nottingham Trent University, UCLAN, Universities of Brighton and Northumbria). Service users and carers were involved in developing evaluation methodologies in some cases:

The evaluation took the form of a whole day workshop in which students worked with service users and carers to discuss the value of involvement and consider ways of building on existing participation.

(HEI free text)

Outcomes at qualifying level: feedback from students

Social work students generally say that SUCI makes the teaching more real by linking theory to practice, and value having one-to-one conversations with service users and carers (Wallcraft 2010). Students appreciate the chance to work alongside service users and to learn from them. One example was a project at the University of Lincoln where young care-leavers decided to write letters saying what they wanted social workers to know. The letters were presented on PowerPoint to social work students, along with the young people's recorded voices reading the letters aloud. Student feedback showed they had been deeply affected by this presentation and that it had made them more determined to work in inclusive and non-oppressive ways.

The HEI free text data reports high levels of student satisfaction with involvement in modules, for instance:

The Year 3 module 'People Who Use Services and Carers', with the majority of sessions delivered by service users and carers, had very positive student feedback.

It is clear from our course reviews that students really value the learning they acquire from teaching sessions that include service users and carers.

Interviewees generally reinforced this message:

You see improved outcomes on modules, students get better marks when lectures are delivered by a range of people including university lecturers, practitioners and people who use services.

We did a small piece of research on students' perception and understanding of [the] impact of SUCI on the programme – incredibly positive and incredibly well received by students who would almost be up in arms if we took it away. They see it [as] adding depth, perception and appropriate scale to the teaching.

Aspects of SUCI which have been particularly valued by students include bringing teaching alive and narrowing the gap between theory and practice:

Every time we do something with students, the feedback is always positive. They say that getting the information 'straight from the horse's mouth' as it were, gives them a better insight into the needs of users.

(Interviewee)

The emphasis on social work values was also highlighted:

It is difficult to overstate how useful it is to have input from people who have significant life experiences of social services. The perspective that service users can bring on how our practice will impact on people's lives helps to entrench in the mind that we are not 'playing a game' or even 'testing a hypothesis' but instead trying to achieve a positive outcome for another human being.

(Interviewee)

Along with the importance of involving specific groups:

Young people who have experienced care ... have participated in teaching students specialising in the children and families elective and have delivered interactive workshops which the students gave positive feedback about.

(HEI free text)

The HEI free text contributions also mentioned the value of one-to-one learning support:

Any student who had identified a practice issue could access the independent view of a service user or carer to help [them] move forward with the issue. Although only small numbers were involved, students found the experience invaluable and it is intended to expand on this in the current academic year.

The free text also praised the assessment methods used:

Students each present to an academic and a service user/carer and practitioner colleague evidence of their readiness for practice and understanding of codes of practice. This has been excellently reviewed by students and stakeholders.

Student feedback on communication and carers' issues, quoted by interviewees, was also positive:

This was one of the most interesting and informative sessions so far. It was useful to be able to ask questions and develop some understanding of how to phrase questions to service users. It gave a good overview of a possible real situation we may face as social workers.

I thought it was very useful to have carers' insight and I felt by hearing about their experiences it made the things I had been reading and learning more real.

Outcomes at qualifying level: feedback from service users and carers

Wallcraft (2010) found that most service users and carers involved in teaching enjoyed and valued their experience. Some said it had increased their confidence and self-esteem. Service users feel SUCI is a step towards giving them more say and control in services. Some carers hoped to contribute to improving services and be recognised as equal partners in caring. Both groups felt they could make a difference by giving students a new perspective early in their career, and believed they could improve the content of new modules. Young care-leavers appreciated being allowed to teach social workers. Sadd (2011) found that SUCI empowers carers and helps them find a voice. It provides a model of good practice through supportive involvement and channels views (and sometimes anger) into service improvement.

HEIs and interviewees also reported that service users and carers generally feel they are doing worthwhile work and making a real difference by influencing the social workers of the future. Most feel heard and respected, have gained skills and confidence by doing the work, and enjoy doing it:

One thing service users value, some have not had good service use experiences, [they are] coming in and seeing where social workers are starting from, recognis[ing] the struggles, but also seeing that there are some OK people here who are going to make good practitioners, and having an influence in that.

(Interviewee)

The young carers say that they have fun on the campus at Bath and that it is interesting for them to visit.

(HEI free text)

I believe that the experience of being a social work user can give an insight to students that they can't get from books and lectures, unless the lecturers themselves have first-hand experience. They can learn that every case is different and they need to treat them as an equal.

(Service user quoted by interviewee)

Involvement can have an impact on the lives of service users and carers:

... the impact [of being involved] was quite significant, and more than anything it promotes their social inclusion. Lots of people I interviewed had become excluded as a result of their medical or social condition. As a result of becoming involved, they had started to pick up other opportunities, either career opportunities or educational opportunities.

(Interviewee)

Most of the service users and carers find the monthly meeting boosts their confidence ... it has huge impact on us. Therapeutic is [the] wrong word, but it restores confidence.

(Interviewee)

Outcomes at qualifying level: feedback from staff

Teaching staff felt that SUCI was making a difference in its shift to real participation, and was offering a view of a different role for themselves as facilitators (Wallcraft 2010). Some saw it as a chance to help develop social work practitioners who will be a positive force for change. Others said that they saw students gain increased knowledge, skills and confidence, an understanding of the diversity of experiences and perspectives, and of the relevance of social work values in guiding their thinking, behaviour and communication skills. SUCI was seen as bringing reality and real-life examples and introducing notions of complexity. Sadd's work (2011) indicates that SUCI helps lecturers keep up to date with practice and highlights where they need to improve their knowledge and value base (e.g. in issues such as personalisation). Some interviewees talked about the positive impact of SUCI on their own work and that of other staff in their institution:

We as staff have learned a great deal, it has helped us work more creatively with the experience we have, with our own experiences.

(Interviewee)

As a tutor I am still taken by surprise, I mean there are critical moments when I find myself learning something I was previously unaware of, so my education still continues and you realise you can never say we get things right really, you haven't really, it requires a lot of work.

(Interviewee)

General comments on the value of SUCI

Some institutions demonstrated an emphasis on the importance of process as a way to instil social work values in students:

We aim to model the kind of practice that we anticipate that students will continue in qualified practice – i.e. a model of collaboration, participation and partnership working.

(HEI free text)

One HEI comment referred to SUCI as providing a model for other disciplines:

The social work course continues to demonstrate excellent practice in the way service users and carers are involved in the programme. This experience has been drawn upon by colleagues in the School of Health to develop similar involvement strategies.

(HEI free text)

An interviewee also mentioned the wider influence of social work SUCI in their institution:

in terms of social work [SUCI] is embedded right across the programme ... more professional programmes are buying into it.

Evidence of the impact of SUCI at qualifying level

Robinson and Webber (2011) describe outcome-focused models as those concerned with showing that involvement adds value to social work education and improves results from social work interventions. A longer-term impact of SUCI on courses can be demonstrated by actual changes in what is taught and by the provision of new teaching materials. Wallcraft (2010) found examples of the impact

of SUCI such as involvement of service users and carers in developing a new social work degree at Birmingham University and a new course in SUCI at Staffordshire University. Relatively small but practical changes which add value to social work education are shown in the following examples:

Modules which had service user involvement included those regarding adolescence and understanding mental distress. This experience was evaluated by the course delivery team and its key messages can now be built on in terms of devising the programme's operational and ethical guidelines to revise and develop teaching and learning practices.

(HEI free text)

It's improved the quality of [the] programme, because service users are slightly outside the programme, they are critical friends, will ... tell us if things are not fair ... [they are] not afraid to speak out, they are very good advocates for students and justice. The programme has improved because we keep having to explain why we do things.

(Interviewee)

The section on production of teaching materials above gives examples of value added to courses through the provision of web resources, case study material, DVDs of service user experience and so on, plus academic work in partnership between service users and carers and academic staff. Further examples of SUCI adding value to social work courses include the following:

As a result of the work my colleague has done with Palgrave publishers, Palgrave are working with the service user/carer group to produce a series of films to use as social work resources for their series of social work textbooks. So, for [a] relatively small amount of money, £7,500 I think, that is a huge amount of work.

(Interviewee)

Using the Robinson and Webber (2011) evaluation model (Table 3), the evidence shows changes at Level 1 (perceptions of learners, service users, carers and staff), and Level 2 (modification in attitudes and perceptions and acquisition of knowledge and skills). However, there is no evidence for change at Levels 3 and 4 of the model (changes in the behaviour and practice of social workers and benefits to service

users and carers) which could be attributed to SUCI. Seeking evidence of this would require a different type of research carried out over a longer period.

SUCI at PQ level

As Webber and Robinson (2011: 4) state, students at the PQ level have different needs from those at qualifying level: 'The fact that students usually have at least three years' social work experience suggests that aspects of the involvement strategy will need to be different from that in qualifying social work education'. Their study was based on interviews with 29 stakeholders in PQ social work education, including service users and carers, PQ students, their employers or managers and PQ programme leaders and lecturers. It found that many participants believe that service users and carers working at PQ level may need to be more experienced, knowledgeable and well briefed. They tended to prefer consistent, long-term involvement from a small group of service users and carers: 'Long-term involvement enabled [service user and carer trainers] to gain respect as co-workers in the university department and a full understanding of the programme that enhanced the quality of their contribution' (p.8).

On the other hand, some contributors to the Webber and Robinson study were more inclined to the empowerment model, preferring to see equal access to involvement by a diverse range of service users and carers. They argued that less experienced service users and carers could make a valuable contribution to PQ training given sufficient investment in training and support, and saw no significant difference in SUCI at PQ level compared to qualifying level. The HEI free text revealed a range of views:

[We have around] 70 MA students on placement and in order to pass assessment of practice each would have to have had feedback from ... service users in their placement portfolio.

We delivered for the first time to the MA first year the RICH module, which had been designed jointly by six members of the teaching staff and six service users and carers. This module also had extensive involvement of service users and carers in its delivery.

We are currently undertaking an evaluation of the contribution service users have made to our PQ programmes. This research has been funded by GSCC.

Outcomes

The problems of establishing any reliable outcomes of SUCI at qualifying level are similarly found at PQ level. Webber and Robinson (2011: 16) state that it is only possible to 'surmise the extent to which involvement in advanced social work education is meaningful', and argue that social work should focus on devising strategies to produce high-quality evidence relating to SUCI, with clarity about the purpose and outcomes sought.

One study, quoted in Wallcraft (2010), was based at Anglia Ruskin University. It was a retrospective study of masters students (all experienced social work practitioners in employment) who had completed modules in social work with substantial SUCI. Twenty-six people (out of 41) returned questionnaires and 10 were interviewed. Most believed that SUCI had had a positive influence on their practice, changing their attitudes and leading to more collaborative working with service users. Many had put into practice user-focused initiatives as a consequence of their studies. The research concluded that SUCI at PQ level can motivate practitioners to change their practice in innovative ways.

Conclusions

This study has looked at evidence of how SUCI in social work education is being carried out at HEIs in an attempt to benchmark current practice.

The DH and GSCC directives on involvement and the accompanying funding have ensured that the ad hoc arrangements for involvement have been consolidated, widened and built upon over the years.

Taking the limitations detailed in the methods section into consideration, progress across HEIs in SUCI does appear to be impressive and substantial.

The data examined shows that SUCI has become embedded in both qualifying and PQ education in social work, at all levels, from the validation of new programmes, to the recruitment of students, to assessment, to programme review and to re-validation.

It is clear however that the involvement of service *users* is far more extensive than that of *carers* (see Tables 4 and 5).

Feedback and evaluation of SUCI has been examined, using the Robinson and Webber framework (see Table 3). This shows that students highly value the input of

service users and carers, and that those who are involved gain from the experience. However, the evidence is confined to Levels 1 and 2 only.

It can be demonstrated that SUCI has an impact on teaching and learning, and a number of modules and teaching materials have been created, shaped and informed directly by service user and carer experience. SUCI in developing teaching materials is experienced as empowering by those involved and is considered to be beneficial by staff and students in terms of continually updated and relevant material. SUCI in practice learning is another way in which the social work values of empowerment and partnership are modelled.

The most common role for both service users and carers in education remains presenting their personal stories as case studies or testimonies. However, it is clear that they would like to be involved in more meaningful ways in all aspects of teaching and learning, such as discussing social work practice and policy and co-producing individual course programmes and curricula.

The two different approaches to creating an infrastructure for involvement – internal forums and external contracts – both seem to work well in practice, although they may have different results in terms of empowerment and capacity-building. Forums within an institution may develop an influence beyond social work, while on the other hand giving funds to independent community organisations can enable them to grow and have more impact. Involving community groups in developing modules and teaching materials makes a difference to what is taught and creates direct links to that community.

The development of good practice guidance for HEIs to support the implementation of SUCI is one of the ways to address the issue of inconsistency. It would be helpful for HEIs to have understanding of what is considered good practice and also for the minimum requirements for SUCI to be clearly set out.

Payment and reimbursement of expenses still presents problems, but some institutions have developed workable methods by developing relations with local Citizens Advice Bureaus and benefits offices, as well as involving their own finance and human resources departments. Other institutions could learn valuable lessons from these examples.

Robinson and Webber (2011) identified two different models or purposes for SUCI – the process-focused model and the outcome-focused model. The process-focused model, which encompasses values of empowerment and partnership, can be used to present an argument that successful SUCI in selection, recruitment and induction of students, and provision of teaching, supervision and assessment, on an equal basis with staff, demonstrates to students the underlying social work values of equality and meaningful partnership. This may be expected to have a long-term impact on practice, but there is currently no outcome research to demonstrate this.

Recommendations

Capacity-building could help to strengthen SUCI in the weaker areas such as assessment, programme management and programme review. This should be targeted to groups such as care-leavers and people with learning disabilities. Carers also need greater investment and support. Good practice in working with these groups has been demonstrated in some areas and that can be built upon. SUCI techniques that work well include innovative methods of developing teaching resources and the use of case studies, role plays, audio-visual and other creative tools which enable people who would not be confident in a classroom situation to take part.

SUCI at the PQ level may require more highly qualified and specialised service users and carers with a clear brief about what the students need. However, there is a counter-argument that investment in capacity-building could develop sufficient skills in a wide and diverse range of service users and carers, enabling them to work with PQ students.

The evidence available demonstrates that SUCI is much valued by stakeholders but that alone is not enough to protect its continuation if the support grant is reduced or removed. A more robust evidence base is required to discover what difference SUCI is making in the longer term and more robust methods of evaluating how HEIs use the support grant need to be developed. As Webber and Robinson (2011) have argued, there is a need for systematic evaluation of the impact of SUCI on learning and practice at qualifying and PQ levels. Service users and carers should be involved in designing this research. There is also a need to ensure clarity about the *purpose* of involvement which would make it easier to evaluate its success or otherwise.

Outcome research on SUCI should include the impact on service users and carers, as well as on students, of the process of involvement in terms of self-development, skills, confidence and empowerment. Some research is urgently needed to follow SUCI through to the wider world and examine its long-term impact on social workers in practice and on organisational policies, to establish whether or not SUCI makes a difference ultimately to the experience of service users.

Appendix 1: Figures and tables

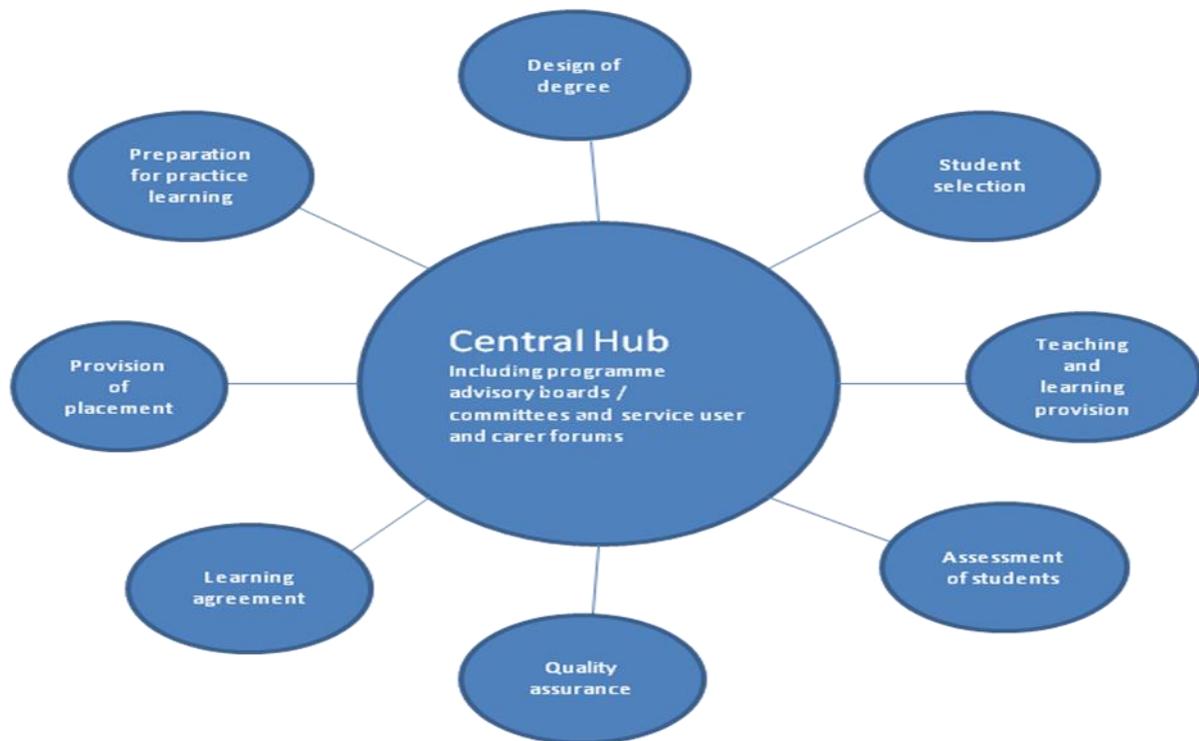


Figure 1 Hub and spoke model of SUCI in social work education (SADD 2011)

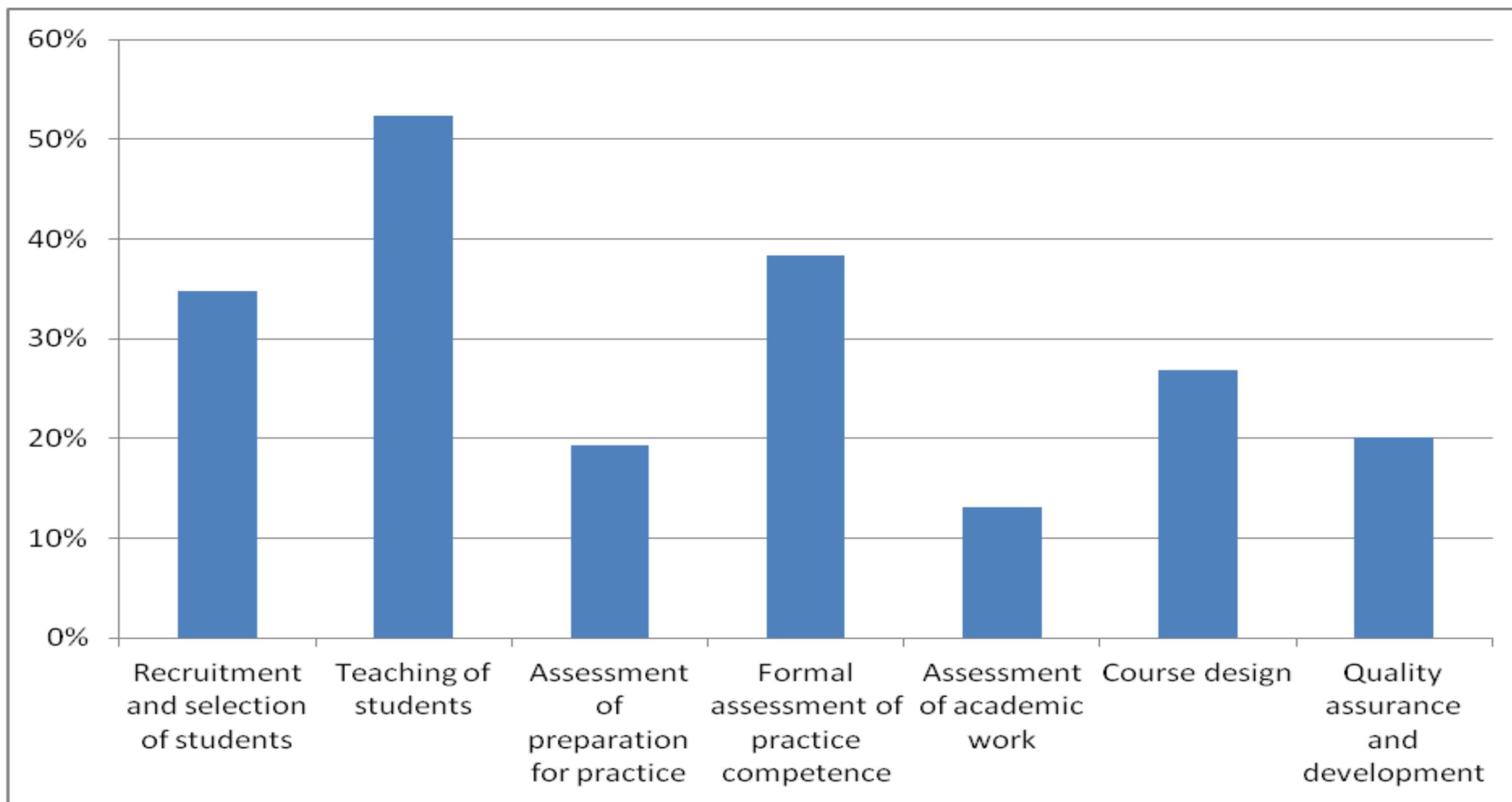


Figure 2 Average percentage of service users/carers involved in each type of activity

Please note that this and the following figures have been set up to print on A3 paper for ease of reading

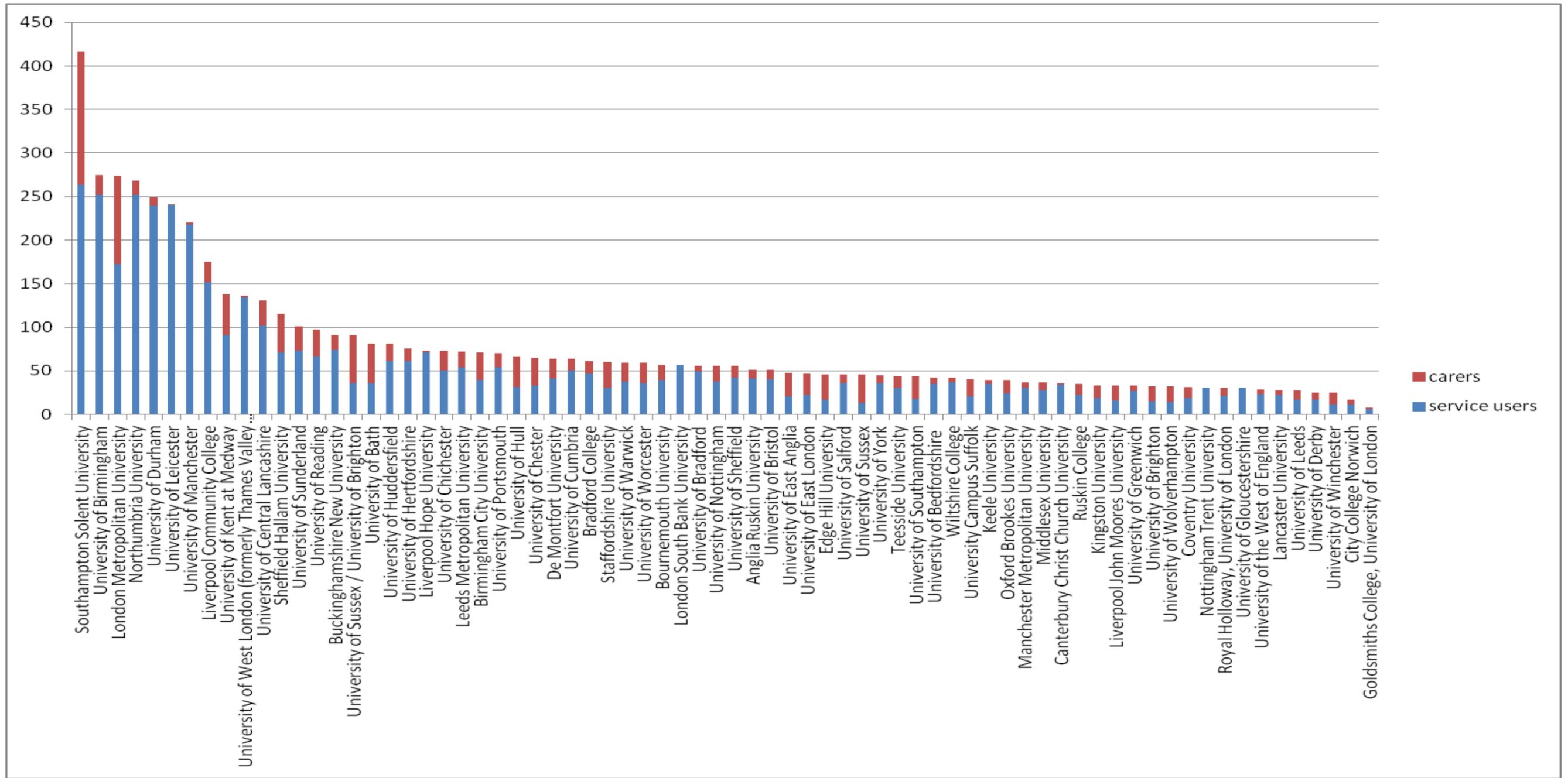


Figure 3 SUCI by HEI

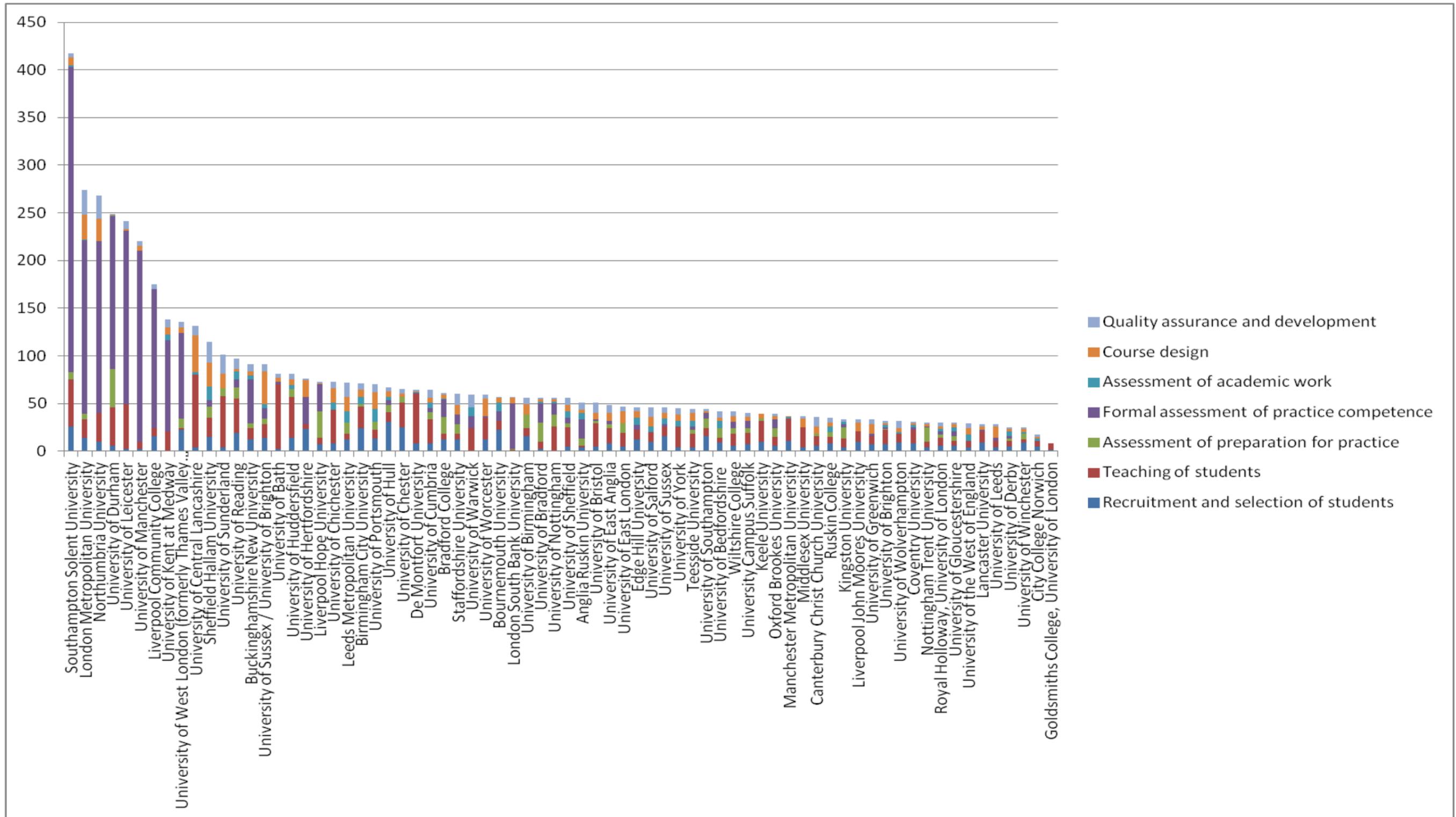


Figure 4 SUCI by domain type

Table 1 Use of DH funding on SUCI at qualifying level, 2008/9 (GSCC 2011)

<i>Use</i>	<i>%</i>
Salaries for development/project workers for strategy	30
Fees for service user and carer participation	28
Expenses to support service user and carer involvement	13
Block payments to existing service user carer networks to provide a range of services to the course	12
Infrastructure support (e.g. admin, IT, accommodation, meetings)	11
Training of service users, carers and others	3
Production/purchase of service user and carer-led teaching materials	2
Other	1
Total	100

Table 2 Use of DH funding for SUCI at PQ level, 2008/9 (GSCC 2011)

<i>Use</i>	<i>%</i>
Salaries for dedicated development/project workers to co-ordinate and support the strategy	42
Fees for service user and carer participation	14
Block payments through contracts to existing service user carer networks to provide a range of services to the course	10
Infrastructure support (e.g. admin, IT, accommodation, meetings)	10
Production/purchase of service user- and carer-led teaching materials	8
Training of service users, carers and others	5
Expenses to support service user and carer involvement	4
Other	6
Total	100

Table 3 Framework for evaluation of educational programmes (Robinson and Webber 2011)

Level 1a	Learner perceptions	Students' views on their learning experience and satisfaction with the training
Level 1b	Service user or carer perceptions	Service user or carer views on their involvement experience
Level 1c	Staff perceptions	Staff views on involving service users or carers
Level 2a	Modification in attitudes and perceptions	A measured change in attitudes or perceptions towards service users or carers, their problems, needs, circumstances or care
Level 2b	Acquisition of knowledge and skills	A measured change in understanding the concepts, procedures and principles of working with service users or carers, and the acquisition of thinking/problem-solving, assessment and intervention skills
Level 3a	Changes in behaviour	Observation of whether the newly-acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes are evident in the practice of the social worker
Level 3b	Changes in organisational practice	Observation of wider changes in the organisation and the delivery of care attributable to SUCI in an educational programme
Level 4	Benefits to users and carers	Assessment as to whether there is a tangible difference to the wellbeing and quality of life of service users or carers who receive social work services

Table 4 Service user, carer and employer participation in course provision by areas of provision at qualifying level, 2008/9 (GSCC 2011)

	Institutions involving service users	% of institutions	Institutions involving carers	% of institutions	Institutions involving employers	% of institutions
Recruitment and selection of students	81	92%	66	75%	78	89%
Teaching of students	86	97%	71	81%	83	94%
Assessment of preparation for practice	57	65%	41	47%	72	82%
Formal assessment of practice competence	64	73%	42	48%	85	97%
Assessment of academic work	47	53%	36	41%	48	55%
Course design	79	90%	58	66%	82	93%
Quality assurance and development	78	89%	53	60%	85	97%

Table 5 Service user and carer participation in PQ courses by area of provision, 2008/9 (GSCC 2011)

	<i>Institutions involving service users</i>	%	<i>Institutions involving carers</i>	%
Recruitment and selection of candidates	29	27	18	16
Teaching of students	96	85	62	55
Formal assessment of practice competence	52	46	37	33
Assessment of written work	33	29	20	18
Course design	87	77	62	55
Quality assurance and development	84	74	60	53

Appendix 2: Letter sent by GSCC

The Programme Director, HEI

Dear

Re: Involvement of service users and carers in social work education – a benchmarking study

I am asking your help and co-operation in an exercise to benchmark progress on involving service users and carers in social work education, at qualifying and post-qualifying level.

SCIE (the Social Care Institute for Excellence) is carrying out a short review of what has been achieved so far and what problems have arisen.

The project researcher, Dr Janet Wallcraft, would like to carry out a short telephone interview (15 minutes) with HEI programme managers such as yourself or a designated staff member who can talk about:

- 1 How has the user/carer involvement element of the support grant been used?
- 2 How extensive is service user and carer involvement in education in your institution?
- 3 What is your view about how well this involvement is working (quality, impact, people's experiences of involving or being involved)?

These interviews will need to be carried out in the **first half of November (1–19)** to meet a tight timetable.

Please contact Dr Janet Wallcraft (email jwallcraft@yahoo.com) if you (or a representative) are willing to be interviewed, giving a contact email or telephone number for her to arrange a suitable time to talk.

Your co-operation could provide vital information on involvement – e.g. *is it making a difference, and what needs to change to make it more effective?*

Yours sincerely

References

GSCC (General Social Care Council) (2011) *A report on social work education in England: data pack*, Rugby: GSCC.

Robinson, K. and Webber, M. (2011) 'Models and effectiveness of service user and carer involvement in social work education: a literature review' (unpublished).

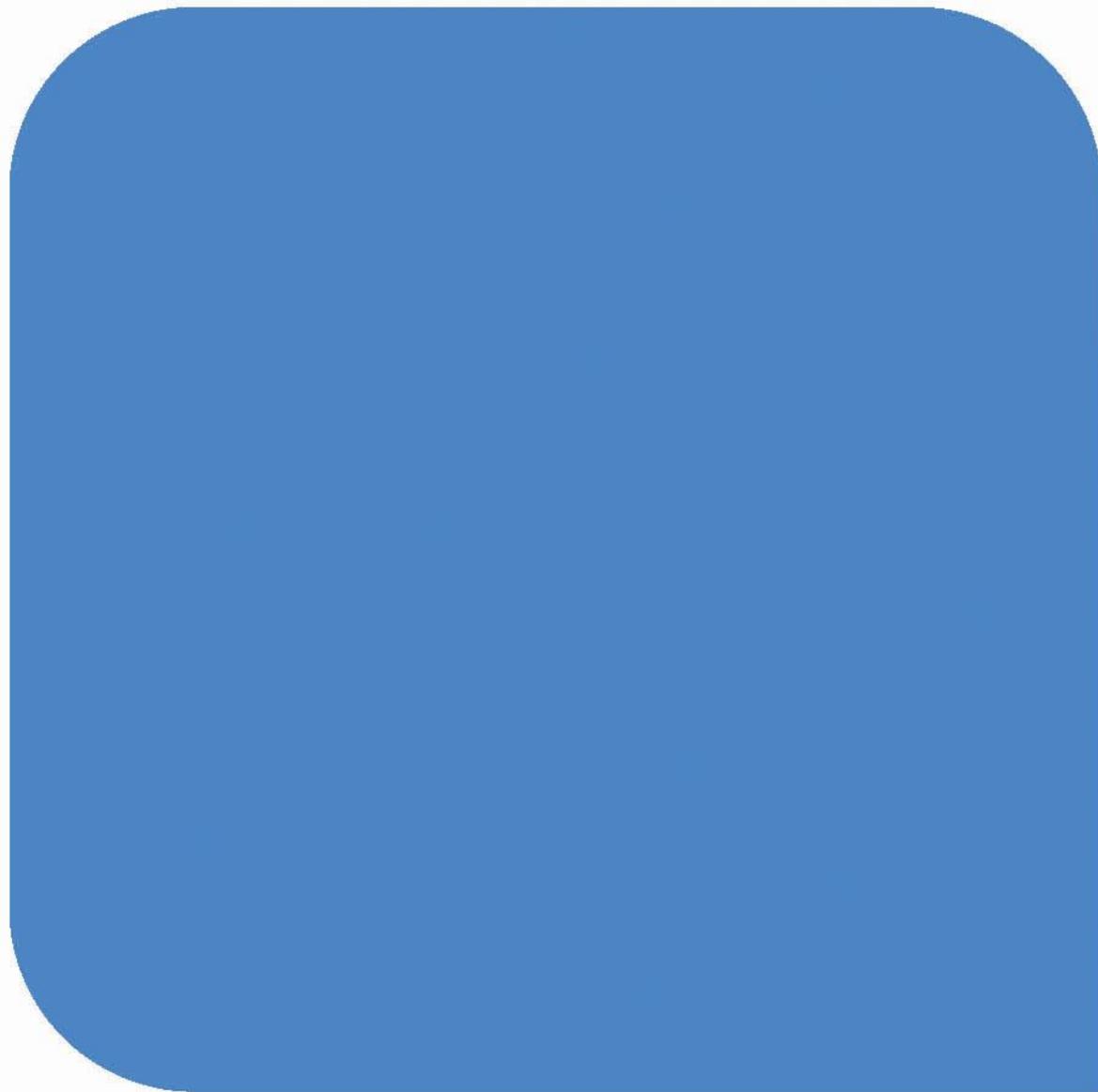
Sadd, J. (2011) *'We are more than our story': service user and carer participation in social work education*, London: SCIE.

Swain, J. and French, S. (2000) 'Towards an affirmation model of disability', *Disability & Society*, no 15, pp 569–582.

Wallcraft, J. (2010) 'How can social work students at the PQ level be supported in their learning? Placing the needs of service users and carers at the centre of their practice and development', Cambridge: Anglia Ruskin University (unpublished).

Webber, M. and Robinson, K. (2011) The meaningful involvement of service users and carers in advanced-level post-qualifying social work education: a qualitative study, *British Journal of Social Work*

FEBRUARY 2012



Social Care Institute for Excellence
Fifth floor, 2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5BH
tel 0207 024 7650
fax 0207 024 7651

www.scie.org.uk