



# Developing social workers' digital capabilities. Webinar 9 December 2019



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institute for excellence

# BASW

The professional association for  
social work and social workers

# Denise and Ruth







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**About the project**  
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# What is the issue?



All health and care professions need to develop their digital skills and confidence in practice



Healthcare professions have development support from Health Education England and the NHS:  
*Building a digitally ready workforce*



Social work also needs dedicated support; research, guidance, capabilities statement, resources

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# The social worker digital capabilities project

- **Commissioned by NHS Digital and Health Education England**
- **To provide a briefing, a statement of capabilities for social workers and learning resources**
- **To engage widely with the workforce and with stakeholders**
- **To be driven by what people using services tell us about the potential and risks of digital technologies and digital skills in social work**

The question: What are the biggest digital issues for social work practice and how do we solve them?



## Jordan Wosik – Care Leaver advisor to the project

- In this day and age we can shop online, vote, book holidays, book cabs, take out bank loans and even mortgages and order food. But contacting your social worker digitally can still be really difficult. Instead we have to take out time out of our day – including travel time - to go see the social worker which is hard when you have a full-time job or in full time school. The current arrangement makes service users feel like their time doesn't matter. But it doesn't have to be that way.

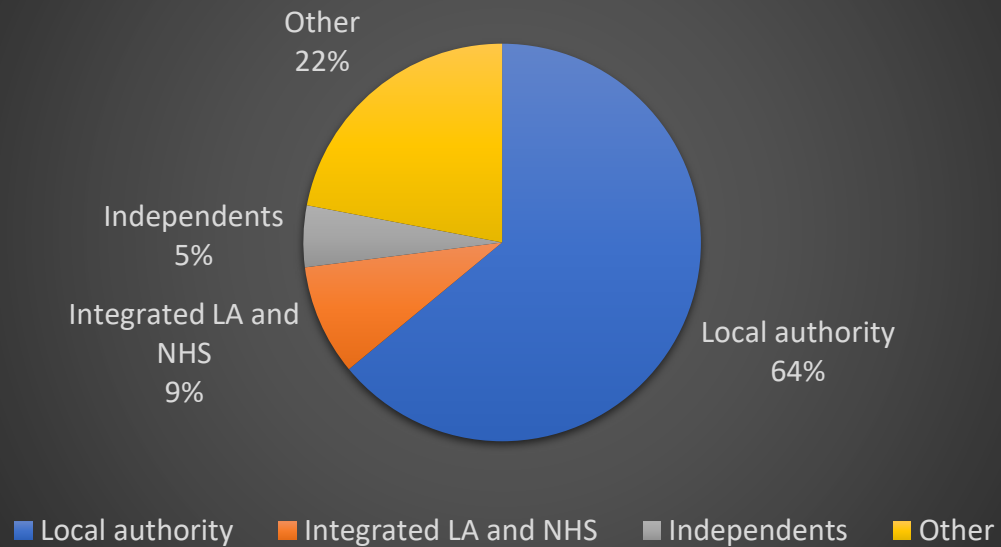


# Survey 2019

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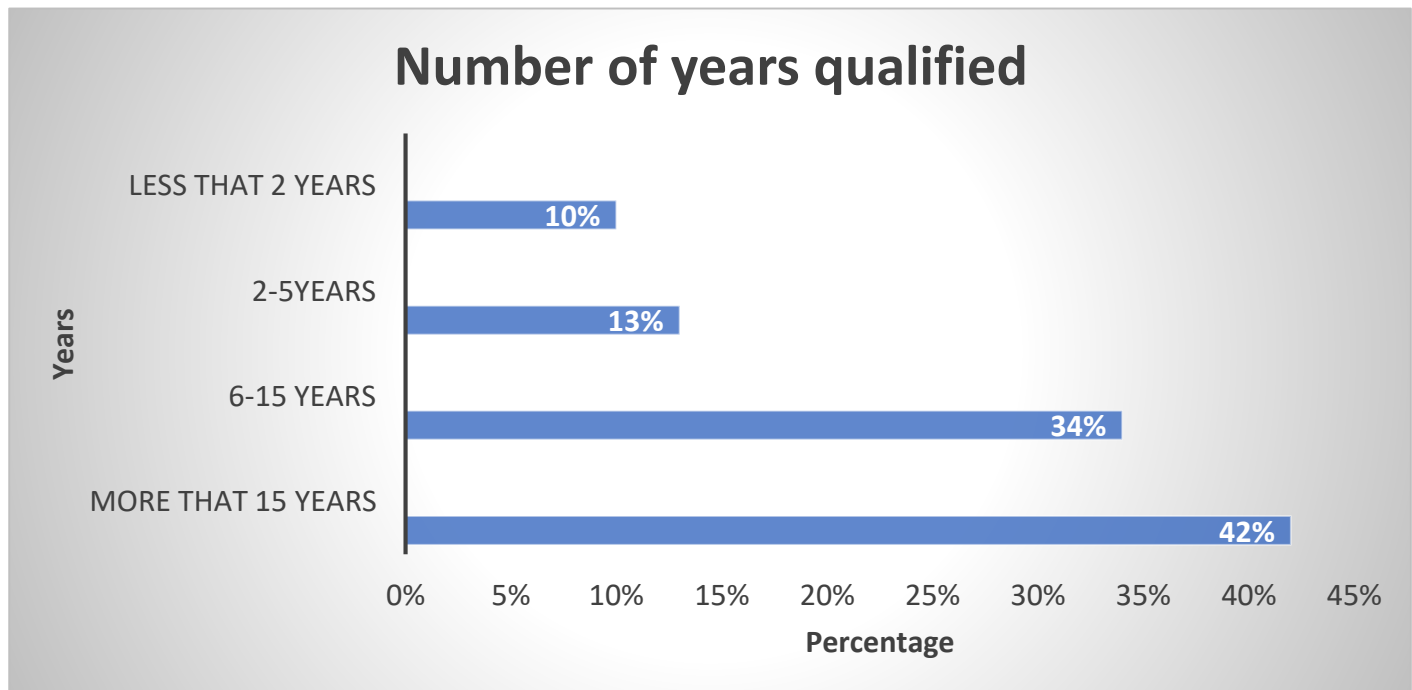
## Respondents - employment



# Who responded?

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# What would a better digital technology do?

Streamline process/reduce duplication	71%
Improve integration and information sharing	50%
Enable better communication between pros and people using services	44%
Enable better risk management through better access to records	36%
Make assessments quicker, more efficient	29%

# Usefulness of qualifying social work training in digital skills

Very helpful	2%
Helpful	9%
Neither helpful nor unhelpful	37%
Unhelpful	26%
Very unhelpful	25%



# Best ways to raise awareness and promote good practice with social workers? (tick all that apply)

Ensure access to relevant and regular training	64%
Clear and accessible digital capabilities guidance	64%
Ensure social work supervisors, leaders and managers understand social workers' digital requirements	61%
Produce guidance for employers on the importance of digital capabilities for social workers and how to improve skills and confidence	60%
Emphasise digi capabilities in qualifying training	53%
Include awareness in ASYE	53%
Create 'digital champions' in orgs and localities	45%
Create supervision and other practice guidance to embed digital capabilities in teams and organisations	43%

# Examples of good practice

- Referral for technology enabled care for individual living in extra care - falls sensor and chair alarm linked up to support workers pager system to reduce length of lay on floor if person has a fall.
- When children and families struggle to engage, the use of text and Skype can help initiate contact, which can lead to 1:1 interactions.
- The development of themed audit tools and spreadsheets to improve team working
- I have seen online care plans, care logs and scaling of service user ability and understanding used in Netherlands on ipads in real time with clients. The system is seamless, instantly updateable and feeds directly into database and communication between involved workers. The system also supports the wider business needs and whole organisation communication.

# The Social Work and Digital Project Key messages

Digital that enables social work and relationships in practice

Social worker must shape the present and future of digital – locally and nationally

Managers and supervisors should ensure training, supervision and ethical reflection

The right equipment, connectivity and fit for purpose systems are essential

Social workers and experts by experience should be involved in design, development, and procurement of digital technologies

Educators must increase digital skills training in qualifying courses

# The Social Work and Digital Project Key messages

Experts by Experience want technology to improve their lives. Use of digital technology should be rights-based - right to self-determination, consent, privacy and confidentiality

Tech developers should include social workers from the outset of projects

Electronic systems should work across organisations and be integrated

Policy affecting social work should promote systems integration, coherent regulations on data governance and a digitally ready workforce

Leaders ensuring transparency around purpose, design and procurement of systems and the increasing use of AI and predictive analytics in social work





**Nicola McGeown**  
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**(Children and Families)**  
**East Sussex County Council**



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# Questions?



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