

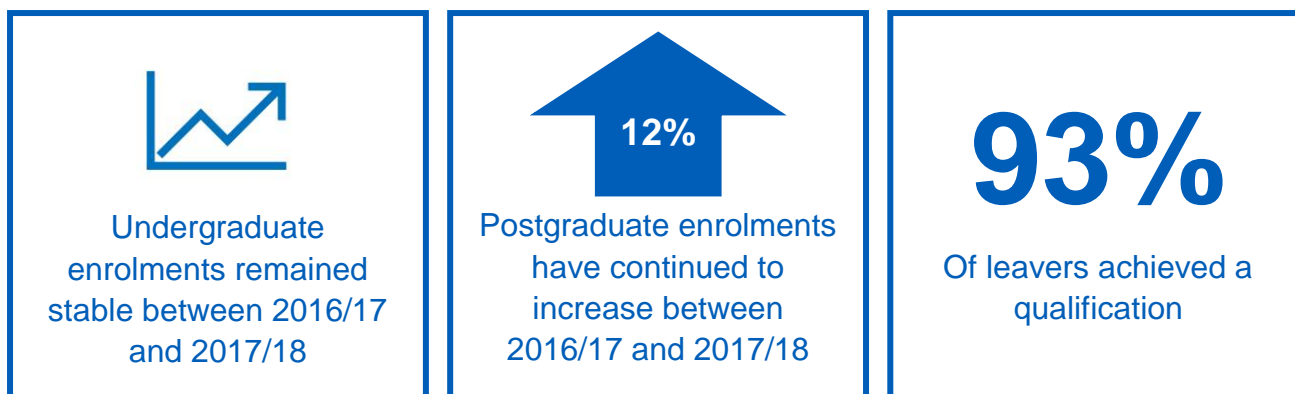
Social work education 2019

Skills for Care analysis of Higher Education
Statistics Agency (HESA) data

This report presents information about social work education enrolments and qualifiers. For context and where appropriate, comparisons are made to social workers in the adult social care sector, using workforce estimates produced by Skills for Care using the National Minimum Dataset for Social Care (NMDS-SC).

Previously there has been a destination of leavers survey included in this report. However, this information was unavailable for the 2017/18 academic year. Previous results have been included for context.

Summary of key findings



Enrolments

- 4,650 students enrolled onto social work courses in 2017/18. The number of enrolments has remained at a similar level since 2012/13. Prior to this, enrolments decreased by around 1,000 (20%) between 2010/11 and 2012/13.
- Postgraduate enrolments increased by 12% in 2017/18 following a 13% increase in 2016/17. This number had previously decreased each year between 2010/11 and 2014/15, before increasing in 2015/16.
- Undergraduate enrolments remained stable from 2016/17 to 2017/18 (decreasing by 10 enrolments). Prior to this, enrolments had decreased by 350 between 2015/16 and 2016/17 after being stable at around 3,000 enrolments since 2011/12.
- 56% of those enrolled on undergraduate courses were under 25 years old. On postgraduate courses, 51% were aged 30 and above.
- Around 34% of enrolments were individuals identifying as having a BAME ethnicity. 22% were Black, 7% Asian, and 5% "Other".
- 4% of enrolments were EU nationals. This proportion may be affected by Brexit and future immigration policy.

Qualifiers

- Of the 4,410 leavers from social work courses in 2017/18, 4,090 (93%) achieved a qualification.
- The number of qualifiers is lower than in 2016/17 (4,220), but slightly higher than in 2015/16 (4,040).
- Given the trend in enrolments, Skills for Care modelling forecasts that the number of leavers will remain broadly the same in 2018/19.
- Around 56% of postgraduate qualifiers were aged 30 and above compared to 45% of undergraduate qualifiers.
- 32% of those leaving their courses identified as having a BAME ethnicity, whilst 3% had an EU nationality. This correlates to the proportions of enrolments.

1. Introduction

The information in this report is based on Skills for Care's analysis of social work higher education data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Whilst acknowledging the importance of understanding the experiences of students and academics, this report focuses on the numbers of students starting and leaving courses. Only students that enrolled on, or left from, courses regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) were included.

For workforce planning to be as effective as possible, it is necessary to understand the take-up of social work education and the demographic profile of students. Further analysis relates to factors that could influence the 'success rates' of students in terms of course completion and academic achievement.

Data from 69 higher education institutions (HEIs) were included in the HESA dataset. As such, all total figures (e.g. enrolments, leavers, graduates) in this report represent the student population of these 69 HEIs. It is acknowledged that a number of social work students study at, and graduate from, further education colleges that provide courses accredited by higher education institutions that cannot be directly identified in the dataset, as well as from graduate entry schemes (see below).

In previous reports, the destinations of social work graduates were also analysed using data from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, collected by HESA. This information was unavailable for the 2017/18 academic year. However, the 2016/17 results have been included for context. This includes the number and proportion of graduates who were employed as social workers six months after graduation, as well as those working in a health or care-related role at this time. Factors that affect the likelihood of a graduate finding employment are also discussed.

Current social work policy context

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education continue to implement policy initiatives focussed on continued improvement of social work services and the education and continuous professional development required to ensure social workers are well trained and able to practise confidently. Social Work England took over the regulation of the social work profession on 2nd December 2019, taking over responsibility from The Health and Care Professions Council for education and training standards and the approval of career entry courses.

The government have continued to fund social work Teaching Partnerships (comprised of employers and HEI's), providing further resources and focussed work aimed at improving the quality of local workforce planning and practice education among other things.

Social Work Apprenticeship

A 'trailblazer' group of employers, supported by Skills for Care, have developed an integrated degree based apprenticeship route to becoming a social worker. The Apprenticeship standard and assessment strategy have been approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships. This learning programme will integrate the on-programme learning and assessment with the independent 'end point' assessment made at the end of the apprenticeship. For more information please visit:

www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/social-worker-degree/

This does not feature in this report, as programme were not available until the 2018/19 academic year.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) is offered to all newly qualified social workers (NQSW) through their employer. It provides planned support and development as well as assessment against national standards (Knowledge and Skills Statements in both adults and child and family services, and the overarching Professional Capabilities Framework). The ASYE enables NQSWs to consolidate their degree learning, develop capability and strengthen their professional confidence in practice in their first employment situation. Both government departments provide some funding support to employers towards the delivery of ASYE programmes.

Graduate entry schemes

Other current policy initiatives include the implementation of 'graduate entry' schemes where graduates with non-social work degrees can train to become social workers. The number of people graduating from these schemes are not included throughout this report but top level figures are presented here to provide context. The number of starters and graduates for graduate entry schemes was provided by the Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care.

Frontline: The Frontline programme begins with a five-week residential period developing the skills and knowledge to practice social work. Participants are then placed as groups of four within a local authority, working directly with vulnerable children and families, and supervised by an experienced consultant social worker.

After successfully completing their first year, participants attain a post graduate qualification and become registered social workers responsible for their own case load with continued support and continue to study towards a Masters qualification. Successfully completing their second year qualifies participants to join the Frontline Fellowship. For more information on Frontline programme please visit: www.thefrontline.org.uk.

The first cohort of the Frontline programme started in July 2014 with 104 entrants. In each consecutive year, the number of entrants increased, reaching 155 in July 2016. After this point, the number of entrants increased at a greater rate, reaching 391 in July 2019.

In total there have been 918 graduates from the Frontline programme from a population of 1,001 entrants up to cohort 5.

Step Up to Social Work: An intensive, 14-month programme offering placements for graduates (with a minimum 2:1 degree or a 2:2 degree plus a higher-level qualification) in local authority social work departments. Trainees work towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work and, upon successful completion, can register with HCPC as a social worker.

The first cohort of the Step Up to Social Work programme started in September 2010 with 185 starts. The number of starts increased substantially in the following cohorts, reaching 563 in January 2018.

There have been 1,656 graduates from the Step Up to Social Work programme from a population of 1,744 entrants up to cohort 5.

Think Ahead: A two-year programme for graduates to become social workers in mental health service settings. The programme begins with a six-week residential Summer Institute which prepares participants to enter the workplace. They then spend a year training within a community mental health service, in groups of four each led by a Consultant Social Worker.

Each group takes a shared caseload, for which the Consultant Social Worker takes responsibility, which averages 21 cases half-way through the year and 35 cases during the second half of the year. At the end of the first year the participants gain a postgraduate diploma in social work and can register as social workers. In the second year they take up a paid role and complete a master's degree in social work.

Entrants typically hold a 2:1 undergraduate degree (unless mitigating circumstances apply) and are chosen using a three-stage selection process involving service users and social workers. Graduates of more than 60 universities have been represented amongst entrants.

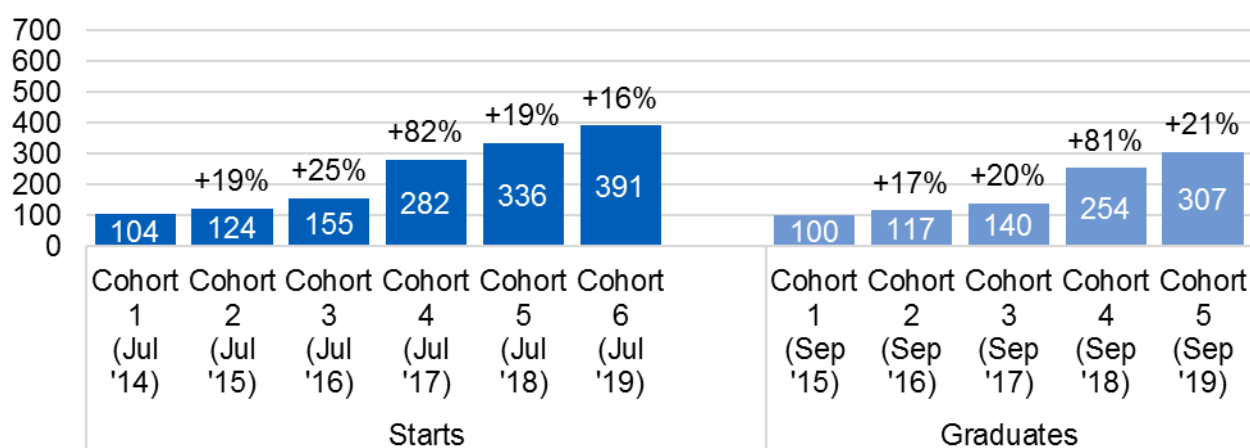
The first cohort started in July 2016 with 95 entrants. This has risen each year to 105 in July 2019. From the initial cohort, 93% qualified as social workers with 85% employed as social workers 6 months after qualifying. The second cohort saw 90% of entrants qualify as social workers, with 81% employed as social workers 6 months after qualifying¹.

The 'Frontline: Impact report 2018'² states that 87% of participants remain in children's social work six months after completing the programme. The Department for Education found that the retention rate of cohort 1 of the Step Up to Social Work programme was 85% three years after qualifying, and 80% for those in cohort 2³.

Chart 1. Number of starts and graduates from Frontline, Step Up to Social Work and Think Ahead graduate schemes

Source: Department for Education, Think Ahead

Frontline

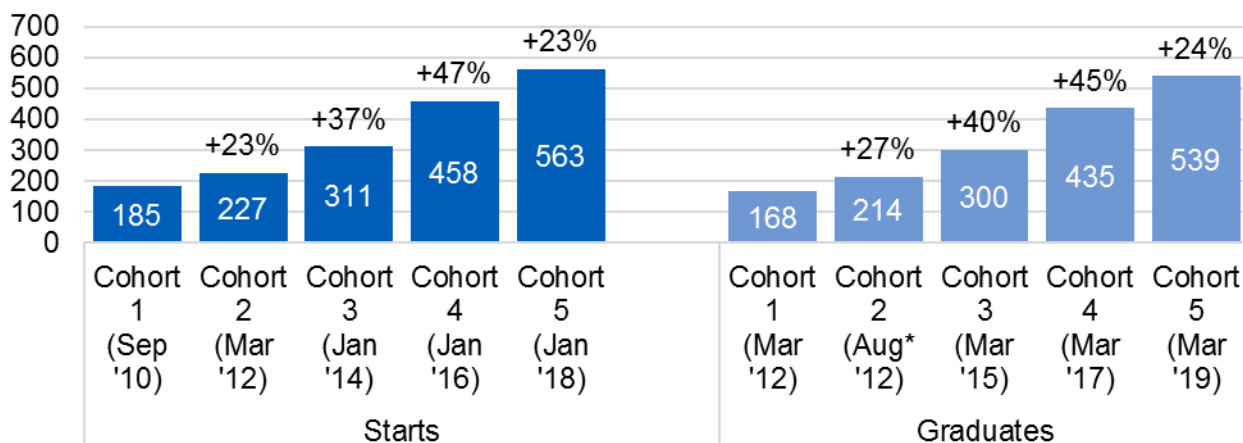


¹ Think Ahead: Impact Update, April 2019. Available at: <https://s24042.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/Think-Aheads-Impact-Update.pdf>

² Frontline: Impact report 2018. Available at: <https://thefrontline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Frontline-Impact-Report-2018.pdf> - December 2018

³ Evaluation of Step Up to Social Work, Cohorts 1 and 2: 3-years and 5-years on. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/step-up-to-social-work-evaluation-after-3-and-5-years> - December 2018

Step Up to Social Work



*Precise date for cohort 2 of Step Up to Social Work not available

Think Ahead

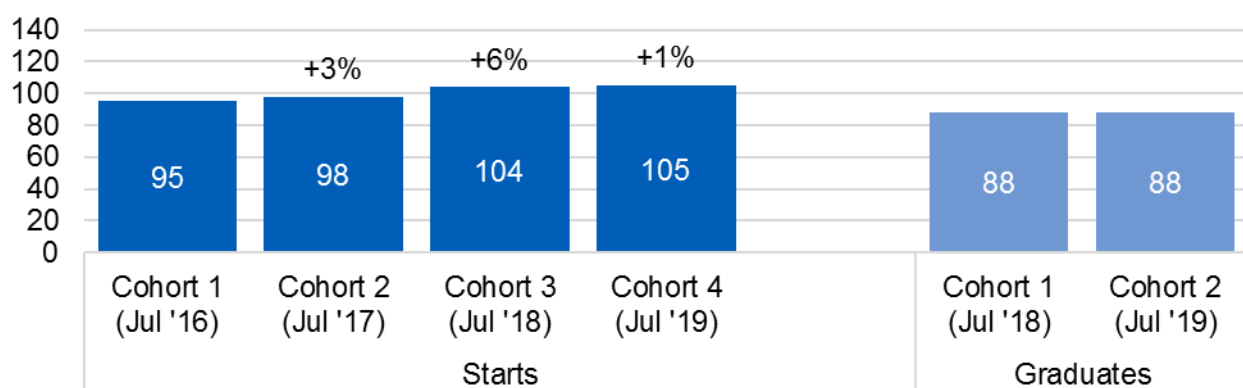


Chart 2 below shows the proportion of graduate scheme starts out of all postgraduate enrolments. Frontline and Think Ahead entrants begin their initial residential training in July then continue onto their placement and therefore entrants to cohort 1 of these programmes were included in academic year 2014/15 in the chart below.

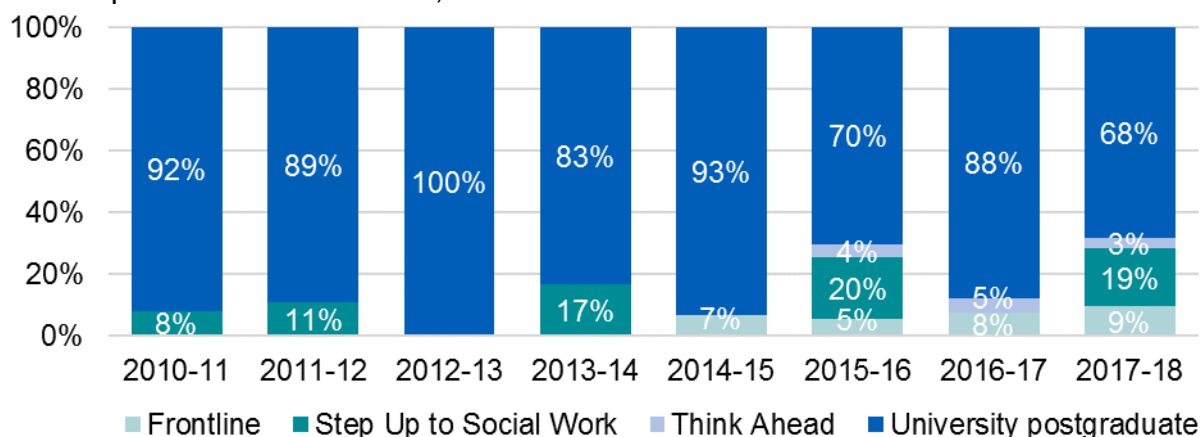
Entrants into the Step Up to Social Work programme began in September 2010, then March 2012 for cohort 2, then in January for each subsequent cohort.

Please note that the Frontline and Step Up to Social Work graduate schemes undertake their training within children's services settings only. The university postgraduate data refers to generic university-based programmes.

Entrants to the Step Up to Social Work programme accounted for around a fifth of postgraduate enrolments in the academic years 2013/14, 2015/16 and 2017/18 (intake is every two years). In 2017/18, the Think Ahead programme account for 3% whilst Frontline accounted for 9%.

Chart 2. Proportion of postgraduate and graduate scheme enrolments, 2010/11 to 2017/18

Source: Department for Education, HESA student record



Funding

On the Frontline and Think Ahead graduate schemes, trainee's qualification fees are paid for and they also receive a tax-free bursary of between £18,000 and £20,000 (depending on their location) for Frontline and £17,200 to £19,100 for Think Ahead. In the second year of Frontline and Think Ahead trainees receive a newly qualified social worker salary (£21 - £30,000) rather than a bursary. Step Up to Social Work participants receive a bursary of £19,833.

For comparison, students on traditional undergraduate social work courses can receive bursaries of around £3,500. Postgraduate students can receive a basic (non-means tested) bursary of around £3,500 that can be topped up by a (means-test) grant of £3,000 to £4,000 as well as additional allowances from a maintenance grant (means-tested), adult dependents allowance, parents' learning allowance, childcare allowance and disabled students allowance.

Skills for Care plans to monitor the impact of the increasing numbers of students going through graduate entry schemes and the different funding models available.

2. Enrolments in social work education

This section contains Skills for Care's analysis of HESA data to describe individuals enrolling onto social work higher education courses. Only courses that allowed graduates to register with the HCPC as social workers have been included in these tables. This does not include any of the fast-track schemes listed in the introduction. The latest data available presented here covers the academic year 2017/18.



In 2017/18 there were around 4,650 enrolments onto courses that could lead to social worker registration. Undergraduate courses made up 56% of these enrolments and 44% were postgraduate courses.

The number of enrolments remained at a similar level between 2012/13 and 2017/18 (at an average of around 4,600). This figure had previously decreased by around 500 between 2011/12 and 2012/13. The number of enrolments increased by 5% in 2017/18 compared to the previous year.

Table 1. Enrolments by course level, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student records. Values are rounded.

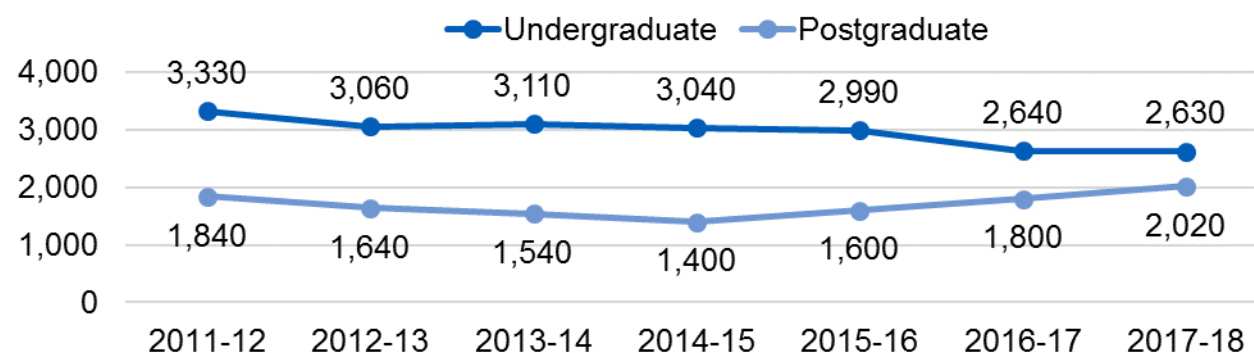
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total enrolments	5,180	4,690	4,650	4,440	4,590	4,440	4,650
Undergraduate	64%	65%	67%	68%	65%	59%	56%
Postgraduate	36%	35%	33%	32%	35%	41%	44%

Chart 2 shows that between 2012/13 and 2014/15 undergraduate enrolments remained stable at around 3,000 per year. After 2014/15, undergraduate enrolments began to decrease. There are, however, early signs that this may be stabilising but at the lower total of around 2,600.

Postgraduate enrolments decreased year-on-year between 2011/12 and 2014/15 from 1,840 to 1,400 (down by 24%). However, since 2014/15, postgraduate enrolments have increased each year. In 2017/18, postgraduate enrolments reached 2,020 – a 44% increase since 2014/15.

Chart 2. Enrolments by course level, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record



This increase may be related to the funding available to students which varies between academic levels. As at 2017/18, postgraduate social work students could apply for a bursary throughout each year of their course, which included a non-means tested basic grant paid to the student and a contribution to the tuition fees paid to the university. Additional funding was also available from a maintenance grant (means-tested), adult dependents allowance, parents' learning allowance, childcare allowance and disabled students allowance.

Undergraduate students were entitled to apply for a bursary in their second and third years but were not entitled to contributions towards their tuition fees or additional funding as was available to postgraduate students.

Chart 3 shows the proportion of enrolments in undergraduate and postgraduate social work courses by the student's home region. Undergraduate enrolments were more evenly dispersed geographically than postgraduate enrolments.

Postgraduate enrolments showed a greater variation between regions as almost a fifth of enrolments were students from the North West (19%), closely followed by London (16%).

Chart 3. Proportion of enrolments by home region and degree level

Source: HESA student record

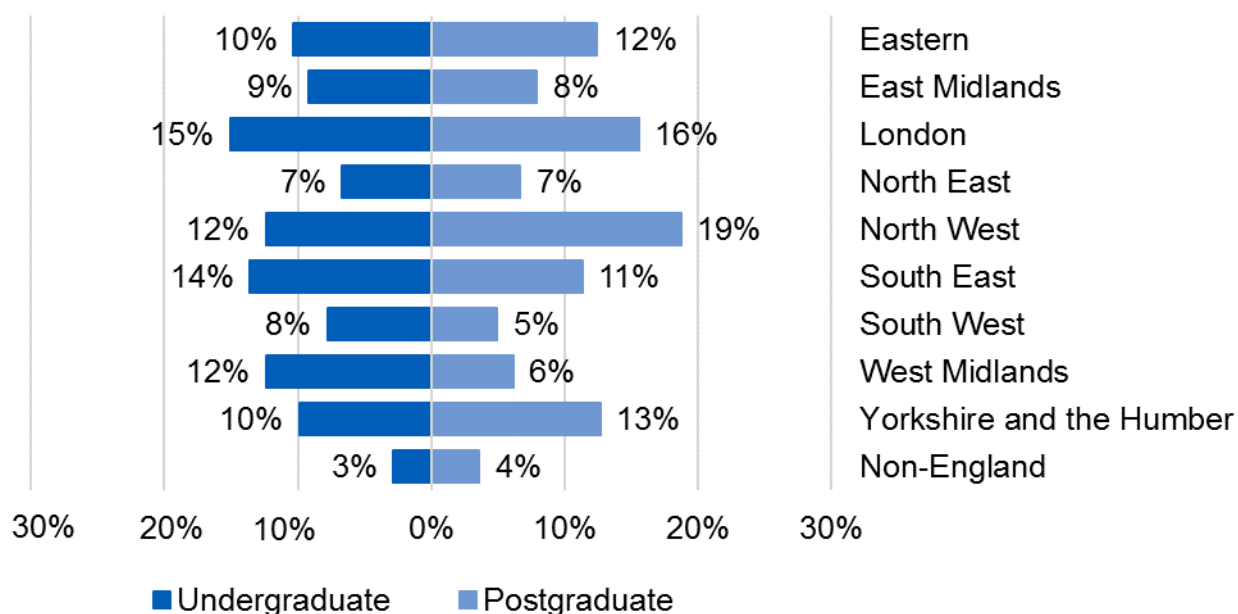
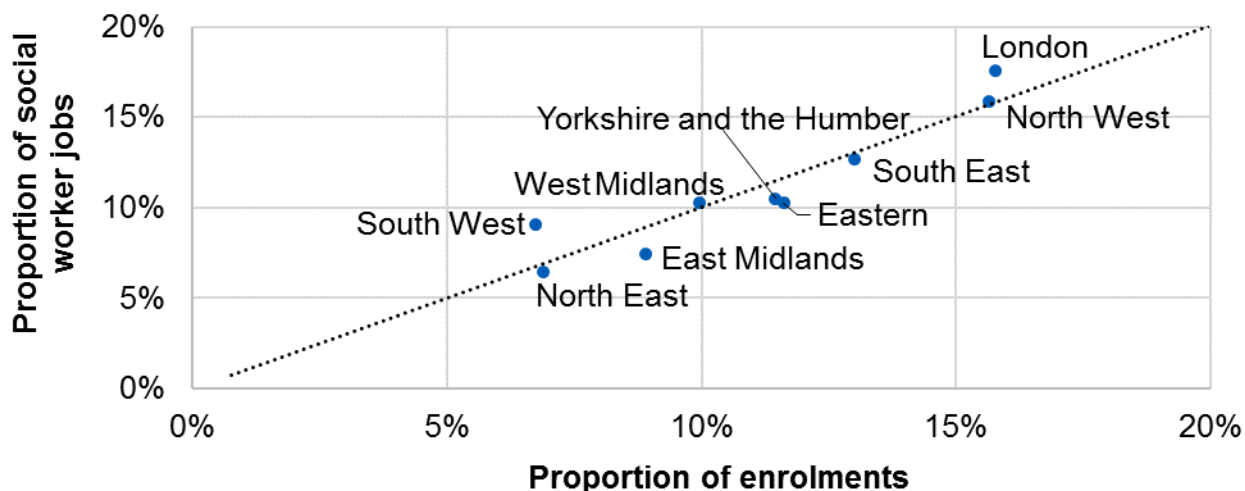


Chart 4 compares the proportion of enrolments in social work education from this report to social worker jobs across the adult social care sector. This allows a comparison between supply and demand of future graduates against current jobs. This helps to determine if there may be an over or under supply of social workers in the future.

It is acknowledged that the number of vacancies and changes in the number of jobs are not included in this. It should also be noted that information includes **adult social care jobs only** and does not include children's social workers. There are significantly more social workers in children's services and as such a large proportion of graduates obtain positions in this sector. Please see Section 4 of this report for information about the destination of leavers.

Chart 4. Comparison of enrolments to adult social worker jobs by home region

Source: HESA student record, Skills for Care workforce estimates 2018



There was a strong correlation between social work enrolments and jobs in the workforce. Those below the line in the chart above, such as the East Midlands, had a higher proportion of enrolments. This may suggest that students from this region must leave the area to find employment as a social worker when they graduate. Those above the line, such as the South West, had a higher proportion of social worker jobs. This may suggest employers may have to find social work graduates from other regions to meet demand.

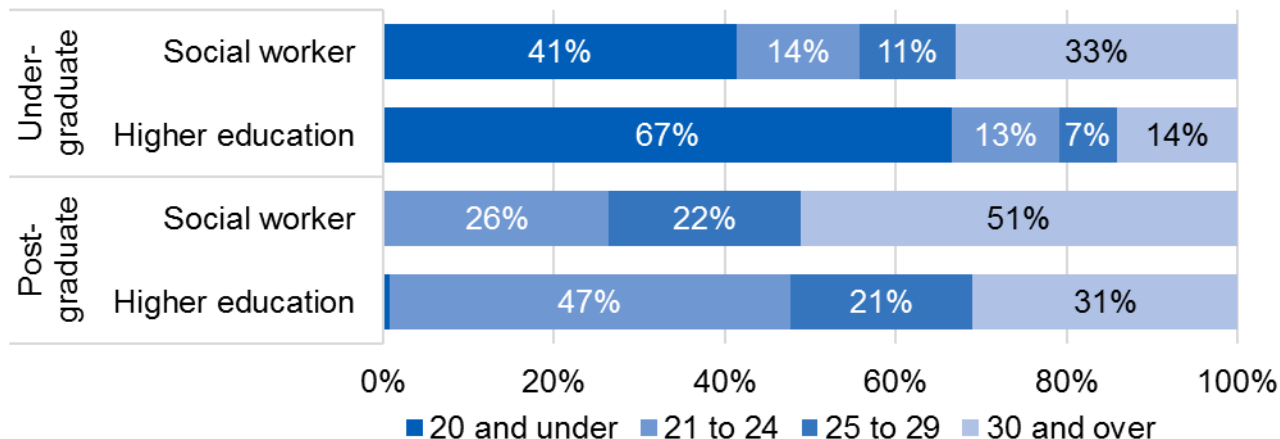
Chart 5 below compares the proportion of enrolments by age group between social work and all higher education enrolments. Students enrolling on undergraduate social work courses were older than the general undergraduate population, as 33% of social work undergraduates were aged 30 and over compared to 14% on all higher education courses.

Students enrolling on postgraduate social work courses were also older than their counterparts on other courses. Around 51% of social work postgraduates were aged 30 and over, compared to 31% within all higher education courses.

The average age of an undergraduate student in social work was 27 years old, whereas the average age of students enrolling in postgraduate social work courses was 32 years old.

Chart 5. Enrolments by age group and degree level

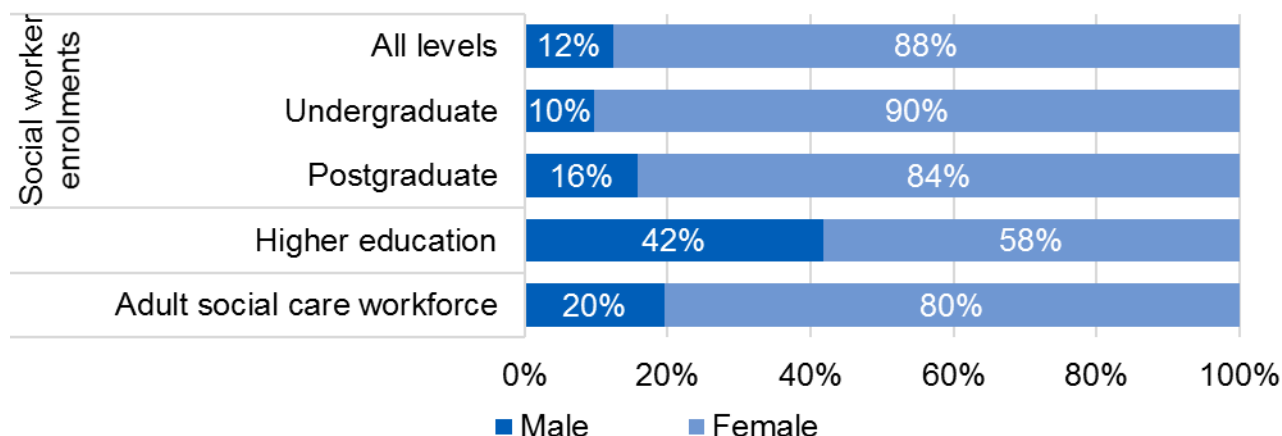
Source: HESA student record



Most people enrolling on social work courses in 2017/18 were female (88%). This proportion has been steadily increasing over time from 83% in 2011/12. The proportion of females on social work courses was much higher than the equivalent proportion from higher education generally (58%), although it was in line with the gender distribution across the adult social care workforce in which 80% of social workers were female.

Chart 6. Enrolments by gender compared to all higher education and adult social care workforce

Source: HESA student record, Skills for Care workforce estimates 2018

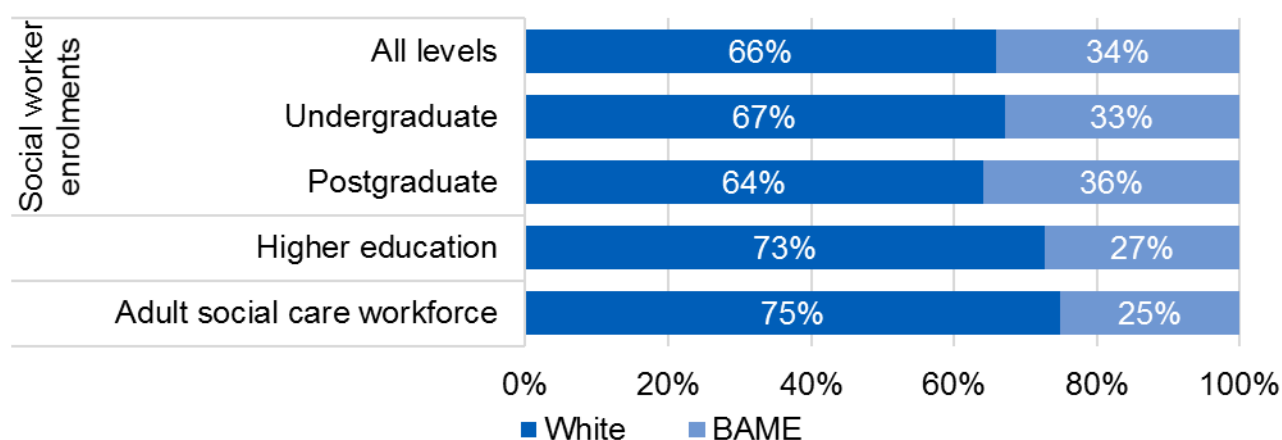


The ethnicity distribution of students enrolled on social work courses in 2017/18 was 66% White and 34% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME). This ethnic diversity has increased over time as the proportion of BAME students has increased from 25% in 2011/12.

Social work enrolments had a greater proportion of people from BAME backgrounds than the average across all higher education (27% BAME) as well as social workers across the adult social care workforce (25% BAME). The data included 'unknown' ethnicity responses; these have been excluded from the chart below.

Chart 7. Enrolments by ethnic group compared to all higher education and adult social care workforce

Source: HESA student record, Skills for Care workforce estimates 2018.



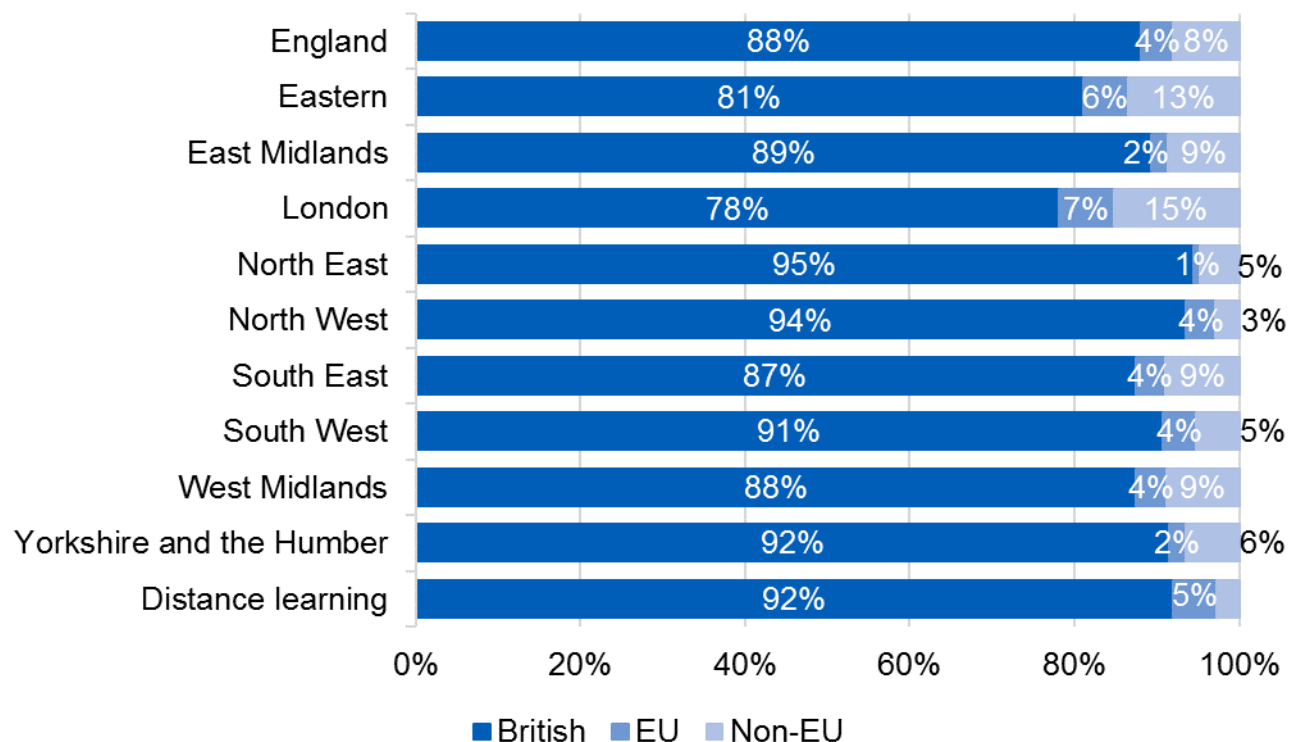
In 2017/18, 18% of people enrolling considered themselves to have a disability and this proportion has risen from 14% of enrolments in 2011/12.

Of enrolments on social work courses in 2017/18, 88% of students had a British nationality, 4% had an EU nationality and 8% had a nationality outside of the EU. These proportions have changed very little over time although there were variations found between regions. The highest proportion of enrolments by people with non-British nationalities was at higher education institutes in London with 7% from the EU and 15% from non-EU nationalities.

The North East had the highest proportion of enrolments from people with British nationalities (95%). This regional variation follows the nationality profile of people working in the adult social care sector where the proportion of non-British workers was also highest in London.

Chart 8. Enrolments by nationality and higher education institute region

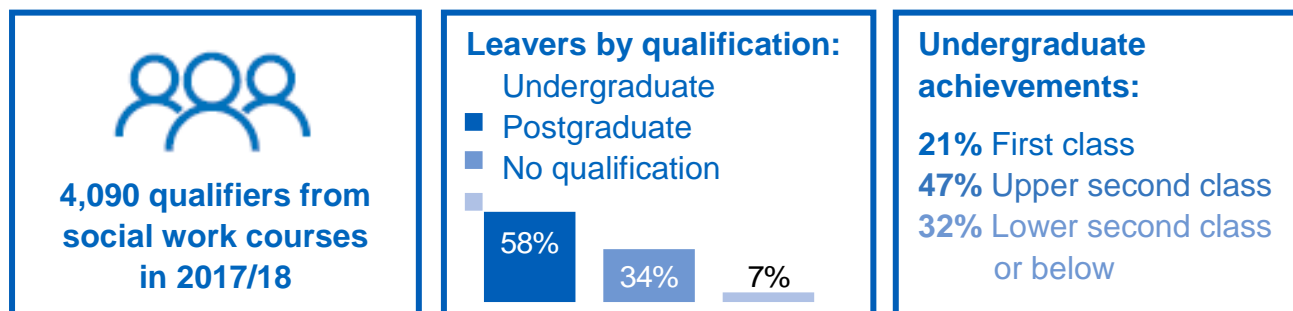
Source: HESA student record



There is a degree of uncertainty around future funding for international students, which will depend on the outcomes of the Brexit deal. Depending on what decisions are made, the proportion of EU students may be affected.

3. Qualifiers from social work education courses

This section presents the attainments and course outcomes of social work higher education students. Total numbers and types of qualifications achieved by leaving students are shown. The demographic profile of students leaving and, where applicable, factors affecting rates of successful qualification, are described.



In 2017/18 there were around 4,410 leavers from higher education social work courses. Of these, 58% achieved an undergraduate qualification, 34% achieved a postgraduate qualification and 7% left without obtaining a qualification. This equated to around 4,090 qualifying leavers.

Since 2011/12 the proportion of students that left without obtaining a qualification has decreased from 9% to 7% in 2017/18. Undergraduates have made up a decreasing proportion of qualifiers whereas postgraduates have accounted for more, increasing by 8 percentage points, between 2011/12 and 2017/18. Chart 9 highlights these changes.

Those not achieving a qualification have also decreased. This trend is a result of the decreasing enrolment numbers observed in Section 2. Enrolments cannot be directly linked to leavers in a particular year due to differing lengths of study but, in general, enrolment figures have the largest impact on leaver figures three years later. Given the trend in enrolments, Skills for Care modelling forecasts that the number of qualifiers will remain broadly the same in 2017/18.

Chart 9. Course leavers by qualification obtained, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record. Values have been rounded.

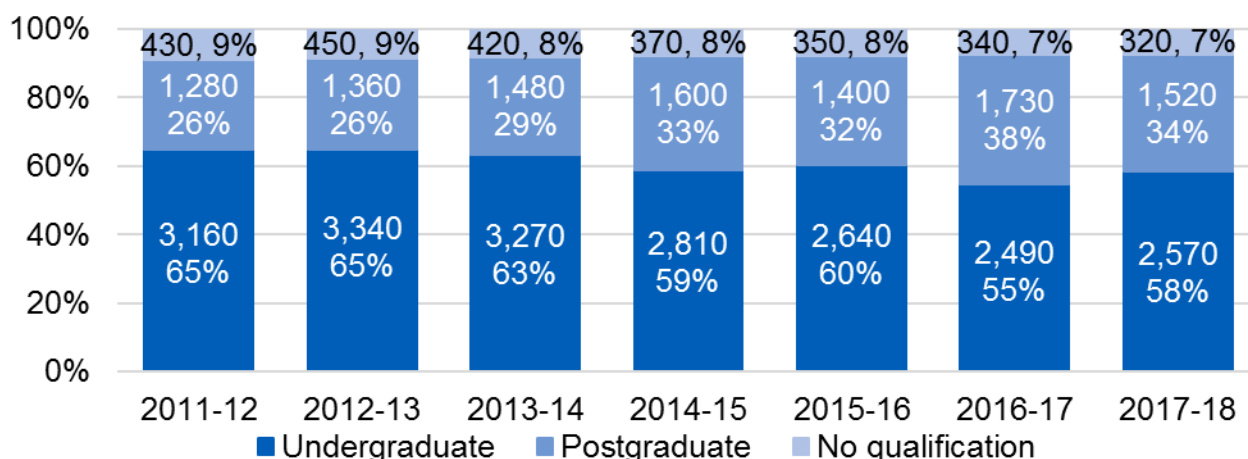


Chart 10 below shows the proportion of leavers that achieved their course aim (the type of course they started) between 2011/12 and 2017/18. In 2017/18 the postgraduate achievement decreased for the first time since 2011/12. However, it remains at similar levels to 2013/14 (94%). Undergraduates showed an increasing achievement rate from 91% in 2011/12 to 92% in 2017/18.

Chart 10. Achievement rate of leavers by course aim

Source: HESA student record

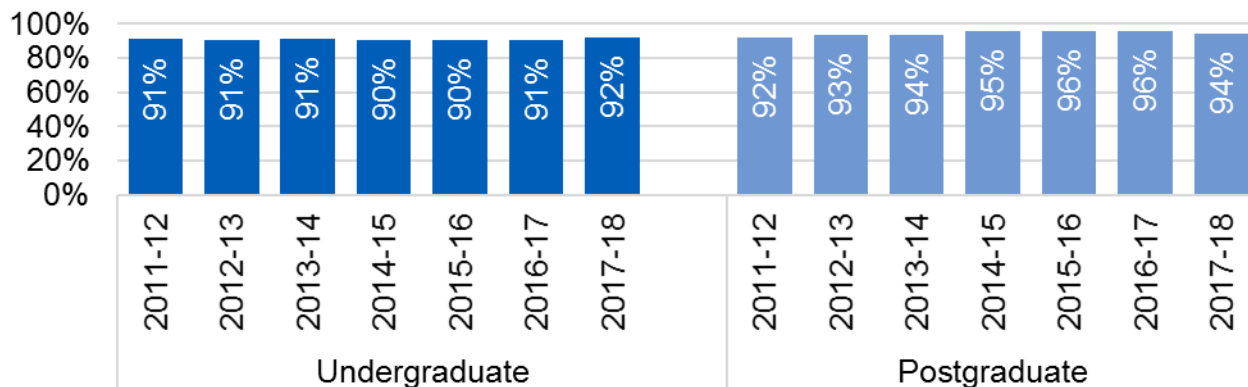
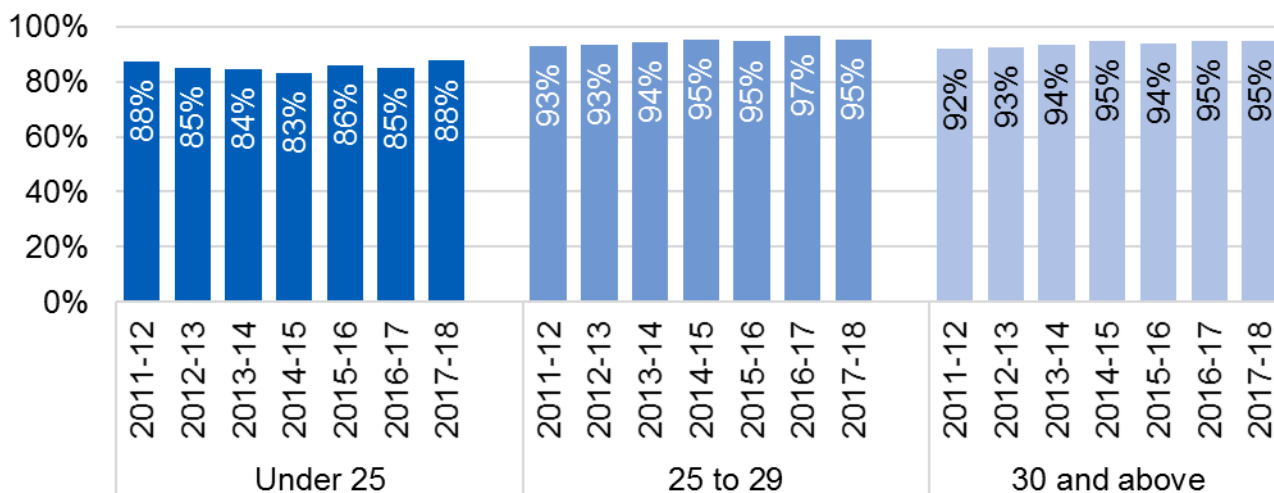


Chart 11 shows the proportion of leavers that achieved their course aim by age group. Those aged under 25 were less likely to leave higher education with a qualification than those in older age groups. In 2017/18, 88% of those aged under 25 left having qualified compared to 95% of those aged 25 to 29 and of those aged 30 and above.

Since 2011/12, the proportion of leavers aged 25 to 29 and those aged 30 and above that leave having qualified has increased gradually. Comparatively, the proportion of those under 25 that qualified decreased up to 2014/15 before increasing and stabilising thereafter at around 86%. The average age of an undergraduate qualifier was 30 years old and 34 years old for postgraduate qualifiers.

Chart 11. Proportion of qualifying leavers by age group, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record



The qualification rate of leavers varied little by gender. In 2017/18, females had a slightly higher qualification rate (93%) than males (91%). These rates have not changed greatly since 2011/12.

Chart 12 shows that the qualification rates of students had little variation between nationality groups. Within each group around 90% of students left having achieved a qualification. The qualification rate of British students increased from 91% in 2011/12 to 93% in 2017/18, whereas the qualification rate of non-British students showed more variability over time. Please note that 88% of leavers were British, 3% had an EU nationality and 8% had a non-EU nationality.

Chart 12. Proportion of qualifying leavers by nationality, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record

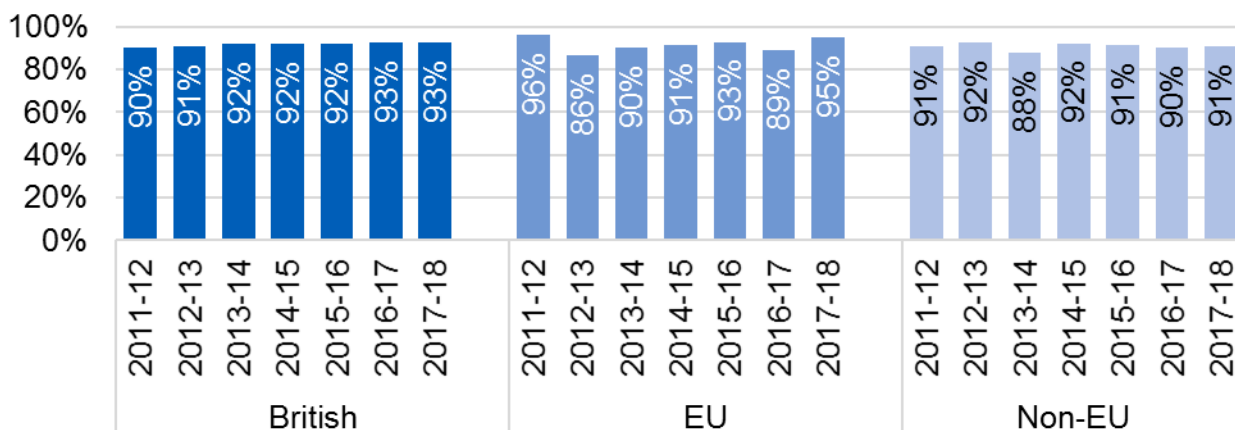
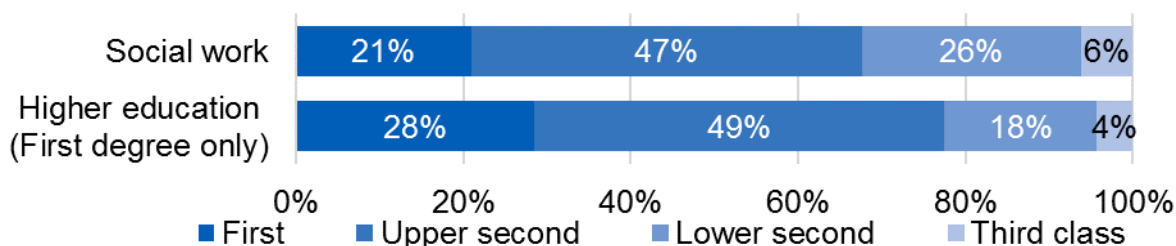


Chart 13 shows the classification of degree achieved by qualifying leavers from undergraduate social work courses. The majority of qualifiers in 2017/18 had achieved an upper second class honours degree (47%), followed by those achieving a lower second class honours degree (26%) and those having achieved a first class degree (21%).

Chart 13. Undergraduate qualifiers by classification of degree, 2017/18

Source: HESA student record

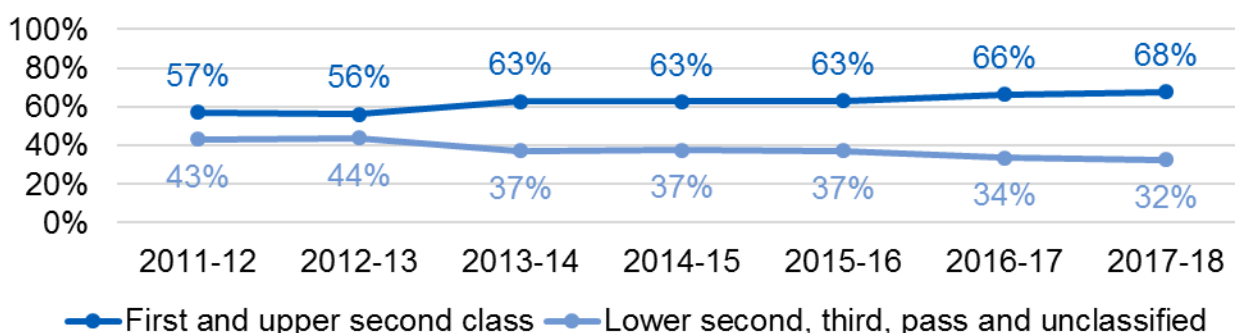


The proportion of undergraduates achieving a first or upper second class degree increased in recent years. This pattern is also seen across higher education. Social work has historically had slightly lower proportions of students achieving a first or upper second class degree compared to all higher education.

Chart 14 shows that the degree classifications achieved for social work undergraduates increased in 2013/14 then remained stable until 2016/17 when it increased again. In 2017/18, the proportion of first/upper second achievements increased further to 68%.

Chart 14. Undergraduate qualifiers by classification of degree, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record



4. Destination of social work qualifiers

Please note:

This information was NOT available for the 2017/18 academic due to changes in HESA's data collection. The previous year's (2016/17) results have been presented in this section. This section is NOT directly comparable to the rest of this report.

The following section presents analysis of the destination of leavers from higher education (DLHE) survey conducted by HESA. The survey is sent to former students approximately 6 months after leaving higher education and is non-mandatory. As the survey is non-mandatory, not all leavers respond, therefore some of the data presented in this section has been weighted to represent all leavers as opposed to just those who had responded.

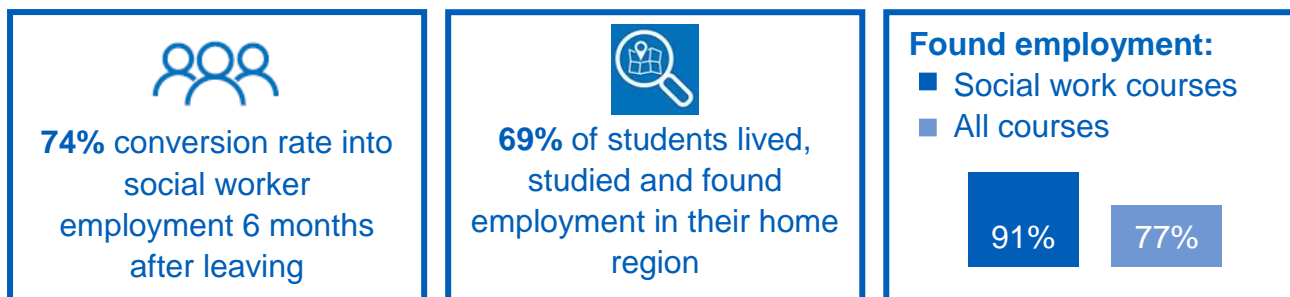


Table 2 shows the number of qualifying graduates and the number of respondents for the survey between 2011/12 (65%) and 2016/17 (71%). A higher response rate means the survey results will more accurately reflect the target population. Skills for Care has weighted the responses to ensure that the survey is as representative of all leavers from higher education courses in social work as possible.

Table 2. DLHE responses and qualifying leavers, 2011/12 to 2016/17

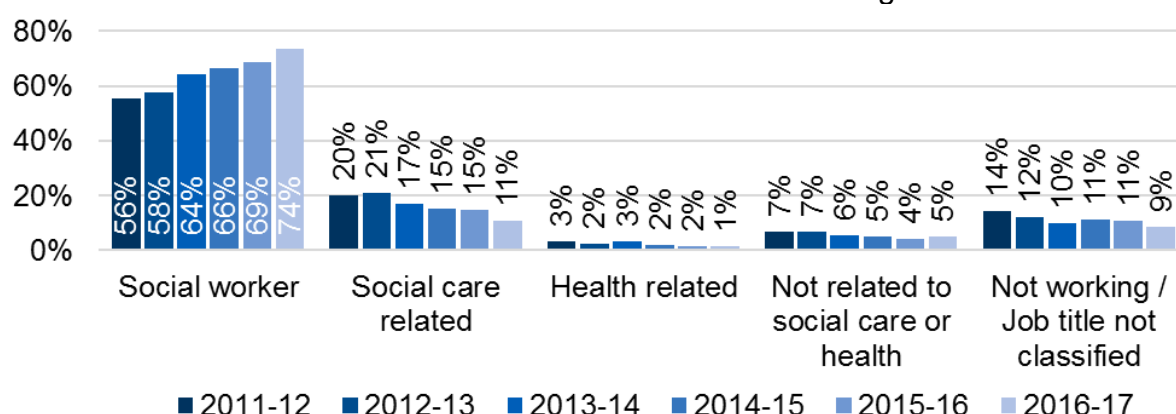
Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Qualifiers	4,440	4,700	4,760	4,420	4,040	4,220
Respondents	2,870	3,160	3,250	3,120	2,880	3,000
Response rate	65%	67%	68%	71%	71%	71%

Chart 15 shows the occupation of graduates from social work courses sixth months after leaving education. In 2016/17, 74% of graduates went on to become social workers, and 11% went into another role in social care. A further 1% obtained roles in the health sector and the remaining 14% moved into a role outside of health and social care or were not in employment when surveyed.

Chart 15. Occupation of social work graduates six months after graduation, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey



Over time there has been an increase in the proportion of graduates that entered employment as social workers, from 56% in 2011/12 to the latest rate of 74% in 2016/17. This proportion is the conversion rate of graduates from relevant social work courses to social workers.

The increasing conversion rate may be influenced by the decrease in the total number of graduates in recent years (please see section 3). A cause of this decline was the decrease in enrolments between 2010/11 and 2012/13, although as discussed above, this trend has begun to plateau. As a result, it is expected that the number of graduates will remain at these levels in the coming years.

Although no specific evidence is available, additional factors likely to be impacting the trend of fewer enrolments could include the closure of some university programmes and limiting enrolment numbers as a result of the capping of the social work bursary scheme.

Table 3 below shows the conversion rate by the region of the higher education institute. Graduates from distance learning had the highest conversion rate into social workers (85%). London and the North West had the lowest conversion rate (67%).

Table 3. Number of graduates and proportion working as social workers six months after graduation by HEI region, 2015/16 and 2016/17

Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey

	2015/16		2016/17	
	Graduates	Conversion rate	Graduates	Conversion rate
England	4,040	69%	4220	74%
Eastern	330	74%	430	81%
East Midlands	330	66%	300	79%
London	540	64%	520	67%
North East	230	71%	250	76%
North West	830	64%	910	67%
South East	470	72%	540	78%
South West	240	75%	220	78%
West Midlands	350	82%	360	81%
Yorkshire and the Humber	540	61%	560	69%
<i>Distance learning</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>85%</i>

Chart 16 below shows the relationship between the number of qualifying graduates and conversion rate of graduates into social workers. On the far left of the chart is the North West, where qualifying graduates are high, and the conversion rate is relatively low.

Chart 16. Number of graduates and proportion working as social workers six months after graduation by HEI region, 2016/17

Source: HESA student record and destination of leavers from Higher Education Survey



Those in regions with larger numbers of graduates were less likely to find employment in social work. This may be due to a supply and demand mismatch at regional or local level, whereby the proportion of all newly qualified social workers (who are available to take up employment) may be greater in one area than the relative demand. Further analysis in this report shows some graduates move between regions to find work as a social worker (Chart 19) and some find employment outside of the sector (Chart 15).

The funding of Social Work Teaching Partnerships by Government is seen as a key policy in driving forward reforms in social work education through engaging Partnerships to focus on a range of issues on a local basis. One clear criteria for Teaching Partnerships is improvements in workforce planning to inform the required number of social workers to be trained for the future, and ensuring that the necessary resources including practice placements are available.

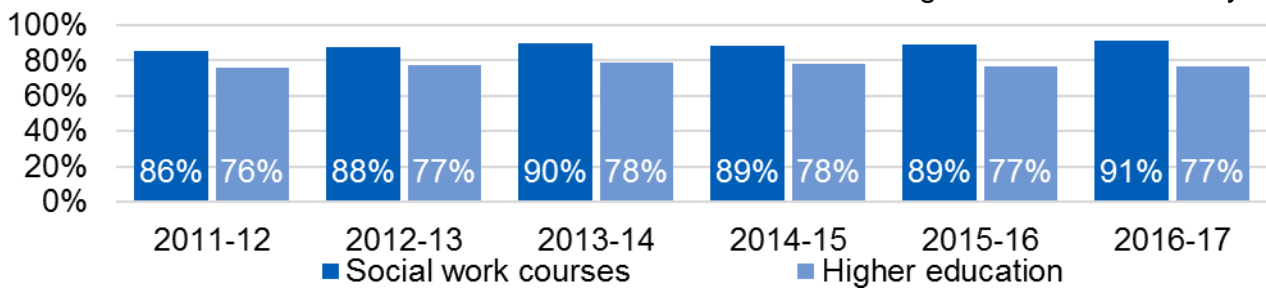
This 'localised' partnership approach will likely address the regional variances in the supply of social work graduates, although careful national coordination will be necessary to avoid shortages caused by any reduction in numbers trained in areas which traditionally export social work graduates.

Chart 17 shows the percentage of graduates who find any type of employment after leaving university or continue to study in further education in combination with employment. In 2016/17, 91% of qualifying social work graduates were employed (88%) or combining work with studying (3%) six months after leaving their course.

This proportion was higher than the 77% of graduates across all higher education who were employed six months after graduating. This suggests that the skills acquired by social work graduates may have a broader range of applications to employers, and that social work students are more likely to have made a vocational career choice prior to starting their studies.

Chart 17. Comparison of employment between social worker and all higher education graduates, 2011/12 to 2016/17

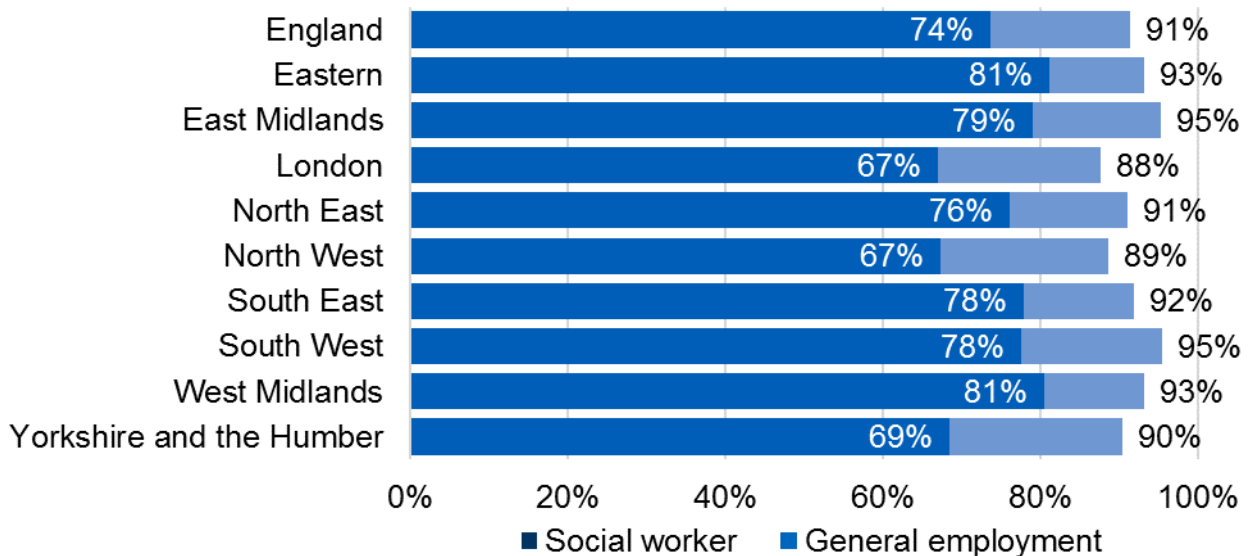
Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey



As discussed above, the conversion rate from social work graduates to employed social workers varied by region. Chart 18 below compares the proportion of graduates that became social workers and those that found general employment between regions. The general employment of social work graduates was shown to vary less than the proportion that are employed as social workers. Again, this suggests that social work graduates are well equipped to find employment if they are unable or do not choose to find a social worker role.

Chart 18. Proportion of social work graduates in employment six months after graduation by HEI region

Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey



Other than regional effects, a number of factors have been identified that can affect the likelihood of a graduate’s post-qualifying employment. One such factor is the level of the qualification obtained, shown in Table 4 below.

Of the 1,730 postgraduate qualifiers in 2016/17, around 79% were employed as social workers six months after graduating. This compares to 70% of the 2,490 undergraduates. Taken together, these figures demonstrate that postgraduate qualifiers, generally, have greater employability than undergraduates.

Table 4. Occupation (category of role) of social work graduates six months after graduation by qualification level, 2011/12 to 2016/17

Source: HESA student record and destination of leavers from Higher Education Survey

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Undergraduate						
All qualifiers	3,160	3,340	3,270	2,810	2,640	2,490
Social workers	52%	55%	61%	64%	67%	70%
Care/health related	26%	25%	21%	19%	16%	14%
Not working/working in a non-care related field	22%	20%	18%	18%	16%	15%
Postgraduate						
All qualifiers	1,280	1,360	1,490	1,600	1,400	1,730
Social workers	66%	63%	71%	72%	72%	79%
Care/health related	16%	19%	18%	15%	16%	9%
Not working/working in a non-care related field	19%	18%	11%	13%	12%	12%

The relationship between a leaver's home region, where they studied and where they found employment is shown in Chart 19. Respondents to the destination of leaver's survey were asked where they were currently employed. These responses, where possible, were grouped into regions.

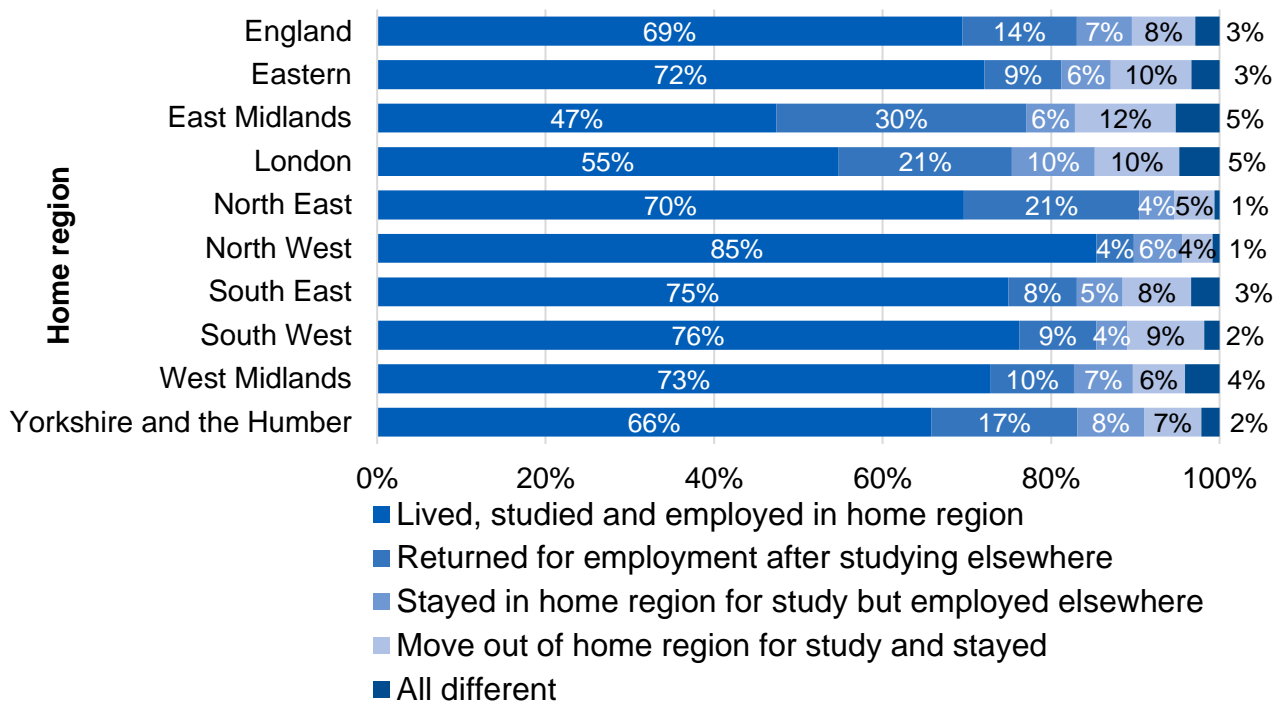
These figures may be useful in terms of workforce planning. Across England, the majority of graduates (69%) had remained in their home region for study and employment after leaving. Therefore, the impact is being made where the investment is being applied.

In most regions the second highest proportion were graduates finding employment in their home region after studying elsewhere, therefore the skills they have acquired are pulled back into their home region.

Across each of the regions, relatively few graduates found employment outside of their home region. For example, London had the highest proportion of graduates studying within the region but moved out of the region for employment (10%). Comparatively, the East Midlands had the highest proportion move out of the region for study and also found employment outside their home region (12%).

Chart 19. Regional movement of graduates between home, study and employment

Source: HESA student record and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey



5. Social worker jobs and ASYE

This section presents information on the number of working social workers, qualifying graduates and registrations on the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

Table 5 below shows the estimated number of social worker jobs by sector between 2013 and 2018. The number of local authority employed social workers has increased by 18% over the period from 41,390 in 2013 to 48,720 in 2018. Those working in adult social services increased by 3% whereas those working in children's services increased by 27%.

NHS Digital data shows there were around 2,600 social workers employed by the NHS (including adults and children's services) which has increased by 73% since 2013. This could be due to the integration of health and social care services as part of the Sustainable Transformation Plans first announced in 2015 and an increase in NHS Trusts directly employing social workers in integrated services in addition to those seconded or transferred from the local authority.

Table 5. Social workers job by sector, 2013 to 2018

Source: Skills for Care workforce estimates 2018, DfE February 2018. Values have been rounded.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Local authority	41,390	42,510	44,670	46,030	46,870	48,720
Local authority - adults' services	16,500	15,700	16,100	16,100	16,200	17,000
Local authority - children's services	24,890	26,810	28,570	29,930	30,670	31,720
Independent sector- adults' services	1,300	950	1,100	950	950	950
NHS	1,500	1,700	1,800	2,100	2,400	2,600

Table 6 shows the number of qualifying graduates, newly qualified social workers who were employed within six months of leaving university and ASYE registrations between 2011/12 and 2017/18. It should be noted that ASYE registrations as reported here relate to the number of newly qualified social workers who were registered with Skills for Care or the Department for Education by their employers. Destination of leavers survey data was not available for 2017/18.

Table 6. Qualifying graduates, newly qualified social workers and ASYE registrations, 2011/12 to 2017/18

Source: HESA student record and DLHE Survey, Skills for Care ASYE data

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Qualifying graduates	4,380	4,700	4,760	4,420	4,040	4,220	4,090
Working as social workers 6 months after graduating	2,460	2,710	3,070	2,920	2,800	3,110	Not available
Working as social workers (%)	55%	58%	64%	66%	69%	74%	Not available
ASYE registrations (total)	2,390	2,690	3,570	3,980	4,010	3,980	4,070

The number of ASYE registration has increased from 2,390 to 4,070 (70%) between 2011/12 and 2017/18. This suggests that the demand for newly qualified social workers has increased significantly over the period. The number of ASYE registrations can differ from the number of qualifying graduates employed as social workers due to graduates from previous years registering for the ASYE.

Over the same period the number of qualifying graduates has decreased by around 8%. Therefore the supply of new qualified social workers has decreased. These two factors, lower supply and higher demand, will be influencing the increasing conversion rate of graduates to social workers.

6. Acknowledgment of data coverage

The data presented in this report was provided by HESA and covers participants in social work education during 2016/17. The figures in this report include enrolments and leavers from designated social worker education courses that were regulated and can lead to registration with the Health and Care Professions Council in England.

It is acknowledged that some social work students not included in this report were studying courses regulated by The Nursing and Midwifery Council or the regulatory body was not specified in the data provided.

7. Workforce intelligence publications and data uses

Skills for Care provides outstanding workforce intelligence relied upon by government, strategic bodies, employers and individuals to make decisions that will improve outcomes for people who use services. NMDS-SC is recognised as the leading source of workforce intelligence for adult social care. Skills for Care publications and information about the workforce intelligence available can be found here:

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/workforceintelligence