



Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) child and family

Annual report to the Department for
Education

April 2024 – March 2025

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1. Acknowledgements

Skills for Care would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all the employers and employees that are involved in the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) for child and family services.

We would particularly like to thank those organisations that participated in quality assurance (QA) review meetings during the year.

2. Overview

Skills for Care is the employer-led workforce development body for social care in England. The Department of Education (DfE) appointed Skills for Care to support the delivery and QA of the ASYE programme for newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) in child and family services in England.

This report focuses on the work that has taken place over the last year as Skills for Care has led and supported the ASYE community to embed approaches which:

- prioritise the NQSW, considering their personal and professional needs
- promote national consistency
- focus on the development needs of assessors
- ensure that ASYE programmes offer an equitable experience to all.

The number of NQSWs in child and family services registered with Skills for Care by employers has decreased from 3201 in 2023-24 to 2599 in 2024-25. There has also been decrease in the numbers of NQSWs registered in adult services during the same period. This follows two years of steady increases in numbers registered previously.

The report also:

- focuses on specific themes which emerged from the learning and insights gathered from various sources [\(section 3\)](#)

- discusses work developed during the period covered by this report to improve support to ASYE co-ordinators who are new to the role ([section 4](#))
- explores learning from a broad range of sources ([section 5](#)) including:
 - [The NQSW registration platform](#)
 - [National forums, including the national NQSW forum, assessors' forum, and the Group for Ethnic Minority \(GEMS\) NQSW's forum](#)
 - [In-depth employer quality assurance review visits](#)
 - [The 360-degree organisational evaluation tool](#)
 - [Action learning sets for assessors and co-ordinators](#)
 - [The annual ASYE survey](#).

3. Thematic insights

This section summarises key themes emerging over the past year through QA visits, discussions, forums, drop-in sessions, action learning, national events, and the results from the annual survey.

Employers continue to demonstrate strong commitment to supporting NQSWs through the ASYE programme, which remains central to broader strategies for workforce recruitment and retention. However, recruitment and retention challenges persist, despite small improvements in some of the national workforce numbers reported.

3.1 Inconsistent ASYE experience

NQSWs report varied experiences across and within organisations, reflecting tensions between the national ASYE framework and local delivery. Inconsistencies range from access to equipment to differences in programme interpretation. These disparities affect NQSWs' perceptions of fairness and support during their induction period.

3.2 Equity and inclusion

Despite clear commitments to anti-racist practice, experiences remain mixed. We continue to hear of instances of micro-aggressions, as well as examples of where racial and ethnic identity are positively promoted and celebrated.

As described in the section on protected characteristics, data from the child and family ASYE platform shows higher rates of unsuccessful completions among male NQSWs, those from global majority communities, and those who deferred. While equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) remain a priority for employers, not all NQSWs feel safe disclosing additional needs due to fears around employment security.

Although many employers have EEDI policies and training, the impact on day-to-day practice remains unclear. Consequently, our QA processes now focus more explicitly on the outcomes of these initiatives.

We also encourage jointly developed, clear EEDI frameworks within ASYE programmes, centered on the voice of NQSWs and outlining accessible support pathways from the outset.

3.3 Workload

Workload continues to be a major concern, with many NQSWs reporting inequitable caseloads. Despite supportive policies, some NQSWs take on too much due to team loyalty or staffing shortages. High referral rates and ongoing recruitment pressures compound the issue, often undermining NQSWs' learning and increasing burnout risk.

Senior managers must actively safeguard protected development time and ensure workloads align with ASYE criteria.

3.4 Wellbeing

Wellbeing concerns increasingly relate to neurodivergence. While many employers respond well to disclosures and provide reasonable adjustments, early openness remains a barrier. This affects employers' ability to provide timely support, even with strong systems in place.

Access to work assessments and equipment is also inconsistent. Some NQSWs receive timely support, while others face prolonged delays that may disadvantage them during their ASYE.

3.5 Supervision

There is significant variation in the level of supervision and support NQSWs receive. Challenges often arise from staffing instability, organisational change, or sickness absence.

Most employers' value supervision, but inconsistencies in delivery continue to impact on the overall ASYE experience.

4. Key messages

- NQSWs face varied and sometimes inequitable ASYE experiences across and within organisations, affecting their sense of fairness, support, and professional development.
- EEDI continues to be a cross-cutting theme, and developments around this continues to be prioritised by employers.
- NQSWs express loyalty to their team and are often willing to take on additional work, even though the ASYE framework makes provisions around protected time and reductions in caseload.
- Most employers take the matter of support and supervision seriously. However, the impact of individual and organisational change on the NQSW is still a challenge within ASYE programmes.

5. ASYE co-ordinator support

In an ASYE programme, the role of the ASYE co-ordinator is crucial to its success. NQSWs and assessors regularly refer to the individual responsible for coordinating the programme as a “font of all knowledge” and “the person who helps me to understand and make sense of the ASYE programme.”

5.1 Key insights

- Our regional locality managers’ report a continuing ‘churn’ in the ASYE co-ordinator role. This highlights the need to support co-ordinators to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ASYE and to support the development of good ASYE programmes.
- NHS Trusts continue to increase their engagement with the ASYE programme but do not necessarily have an institutional knowledge base about it on which to draw.
- Co-ordinators report their roles can often be isolating, but the provision of additional support such as the training for new ASYE co-ordinators and the ASYE co-ordinator drop-ins also provides networking opportunities for them.

In response to these issues and the associated emerging need, Skills for Care’s support offer has been developed in two specific ways:

- to continue the monthly drop-in sessions for ASYE co-ordinators, which had originally been established in a time limited way, to support the implementation of the refreshed ASYE programme and the national QA framework
- to provide training for new ASYE co-ordinators and a handbook to support the training.

5.2 ASYE co-ordinator drop-ins

Skills for Care runs monthly online drop-in sessions during which co-ordinators can raise questions about the programme and seek clarification on issues they are

experiencing in their local context. Although they are informal, we have found that most co-ordinators attend for the whole session.

The drop-in sessions provide:

- a forum for co-ordinators from different parts of the country to meet and support each other
- a source of practical information and support for new co-ordinators and a valuable sounding board for more experienced ones
- a quick and accessible way to have a question or issue addressed
- a space for co-ordinators to share their own experiences of how they have addressed issues and developed their programmes. In this respect the sessions are strengths-based and facilitate problem-solving and programme development.

Importantly, the sessions also help reduce the isolation that co-ordinators may experience.

Table 1: key themes and feedback from co-ordinator drop-ins

Key themes covered	Feedback
<p>The key themes identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ working with NQSWs with additional learning needs or time management issues ▪ managing programme timescales for part-time NQSWs, including supervision and protected development time ▪ developing action plans for continuous improvement ▪ clarifying requirements for direct observations, lived experience 	<p>Drop-ins continue to be highly valued by participants for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ clarifying programme requirements and addressing live concerns ▪ sharing insights, approaches, and good practice across regions ▪ networking and collaborative learning ▪ providing new perspectives and practical ideas to enhance programme delivery.

<p>feedback, professional feedback, and group supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ guidance on paperwork, including word guides vs. word counts ▪ understanding moderation processes ▪ deferral procedures and support for NQSWs and their assessors ▪ managing the use of artificial intelligence (AI) by NQSWs and assessors. 	<p>Attendees stress the complexity they experience when trying to initiate programme change, often with scarce resources, and have highlighted the key role of senior managers in championing the programmes ongoing development</p>
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5.3 Training for new ASYE co-ordinators

In response to the number of ASYE co-ordinators who were new to the role, in 2024-25, Skills for Care delivered training for a further 18 new ASYE co-ordinators. The aims of the training were:

- to enhance new ASYE co-ordinator's knowledge of the ASYE national framework
- to promote new ASYE co-ordinator's confidence in undertaking their role and to help them establish their peer support networks.

We supplemented the training with six one-hour sessions focused on using action learning approaches. The evaluation of the training indicates it was well-received and demonstrated impact on participants including:

- helping to improve co-ordinators' confidence
- reducing their feeling of isolation
- supporting them to keep the experience and voice of the NQSW at the centre of the programme.

88% of attendees who completed a post-event evaluation reported an increase in their overall knowledge, and 100% reported an increase in their understanding.

6. Learning from different sources

6.1 The child and family ASYE funding and registration platform

Between 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025:

- 192 organisations registered 2599 NQSWs onto the ASYE programme.
- 4337% of the registrations were from employers based in the South of England, 28% from those based in the Midlands and 35% from those based in the North of England.

[See appendix 1](#) for a breakdown of data from the funding and registration platform.

6.2 Protected characteristics

- The data we collect from the child and family ASYE funding and registration platform shows that, while the numbers of unsuccessful completions are marginal, they remain higher among male NQSWs, those from a global majority community and those who have deferred their ASYE.
- Rates of unsuccessful completion of the ASYE are decreasing for all NQSWs over the years, however differences regarding ethnicity, gender and deferral rates remain.

[See appendix 2](#) for further data and information on protected characteristics.

6.3 National forums

We continue to run our ever-popular forums (NQSW, assessor and GEMS), and the format provides a valued continued professional development (CPD) activity for attendees. The forums include small group discussions, which enable participants to explore relevant practice areas, and provide opportunities for networking.

Table 2: format, overview and feedback on the national forums

Forum	Format and overview	Feedback
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NQSW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open to NQSWs in both children's and adults' services, the forum provides CPD opportunities and peer learning through shared discussion on key issues and lived experience. ▪ Meetings are two hours long and are held online on a quarterly basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants have told us that they value the chance to connect with peers nationally, reflect on their ASYE journey, and gain broader perspectives.
GEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exclusively for NQSWs from global majority communities, the GEMS forum provides a safe space for sharing, support, and discussion. ▪ Held on a quarterly basis, each online two-hour session includes updates, guest speakers, and breakout discussions. Attendance is steadily growing, with some employers now replicating the model locally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback confirms its value in offering affirmation, collective support, and a platform to raise issues with Skills for Care. ▪ Some NQSWs have requested continued access post-ASYE, highlighting an unmet need for ongoing tailored support.
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open to NQSW assessors (and many co-ordinators), this forum supports peer learning, reflective practice, and CPD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attendance has increased, and forums are evolving in response to feedback. A continuing priority is ensuring assessors are equipped to deliver high-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings are two hours long, and are held online on a quarterly basis. 	<p>quality, reflective supervision and that their role is well-supported and quality assured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants appreciated having the space to reflect and network with their peers. They described the forums as valuable, thought provoking, and informative.
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Table 3: forums held, and themes covered

Forum	Dates held	No. of attendees	Key themes covered
NQSW	18/06/24	98	Neurodivergence and NQSWs
	10/09/24	70	AI
	19/11/24	87	Neuroscience of fear, wellbeing, and self-care
	18/02/25	56	Critical reflection
GEMS	14/05/24	33	Purpose and limitations of GEMS; Protected characteristics data
	26/11/24	32	Exploring AI, EEDI, and its place within social work and ASYE programmes
	25/02/25	75	Supervision, wellbeing, retention, and EEDI
	25/03/25	21	Supervision, wellbeing, retention, and EEDI
Assessors	21/05/24	64	Working with neurodivergent NQSWs
	5/09/25	88	AI
	12/11/24	71	Fitness to practice
	11/02/25	103	Critical reflection; AI

6.4 In-depth employer quality assurance review meetings

QA meetings were held with 40 employees during 2024-25, allowing us to collect qualitative data directly from all those involved in the delivery of ASYE programme, including senior leaders, co-ordinators, assessors, and NQSWs.

Each year we identify key themes to explore with participants. In 2024-25 the themes were:

- **ASYE wellbeing:** understanding how both organisational and ASYE programme approaches are being developed to support the overall wellbeing of NQSWs and understanding the changes in the number of deferrals over the last few years, the different reasons for the deferrals, and the support provided in relation to deferrals.
- **Assessor training and support¹:** understanding how support and learning needs are addressed; understanding how assessors' work is quality assured to support their development and the development of the programme.

See [appendix 3](#) for further information about our QA review meetings, including a list of the employers that were selected for QA meetings this year.

6.5 National quality assurance panel

The national quality assurance panel (NQAP) comprises 12 members, drawn from the public sector and the private, voluntary independent (PVI) sector. The members have operational and strategic experience of delivering the ASYE programme and their roles include ASYE co-ordinators/leads, principal social workers, and service managers.

The NQAP has two core functions:

- **Moderation of portfolio evidence:** the panel moderated 22 sets of portfolio evidence and provided individual feedback to the submitting organisations.

¹ We know that the assessor role is pivotal in the delivery of the ASYE programme and the NQSW experience

- **Endorsement of examples of good practice:** the panel identified examples of good practice and has given feedback to those who submitted examples for consideration. These examples have contributed to a growing bank of good practice resources that will serve to inform the development of other programmes, stimulate good practice and consistency across the sector (see [Examples of good practice in the delivery of the ASYE programme](#)).

The key themes identified for improving the quality of the evidence presented on portfolios by NQSWs and assessors were:

- the importance of SMART objectives
- ensuring that evidence is linked explicitly to the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) and post-qualifying standards (PQS)
- encouraging assessors to record practice examples to support their assessment (e.g., examples of observed practice).

6.6 360-degree evaluation tool

- In advance of an in-depth QA review meeting, employers are asked to complete a 360-degree organisation evaluation tool. This enables them to gather feedback from all stakeholders involved in their ASYE programme.
- The data submitted indicates that the ASYE is functioning well for participants across most measures, with the highest scoring areas being the use of personal development plans (PDPs), access to learning, and reflective practice.
- [See appendix 4](#) for further information about the 360-degree evaluation tool, and the composite results from the tool for 2024-25.

6.7 Action learning sets

We provided action learning sets (ALS) to 36 ASYE assessors and 24 ASYE co-ordinators in 2024-25. They focus on supporting the development of leadership, reflective practice, and collaborative learning skills to enable participants to address challenges in their practice as well as share best practice. Feedback from attendees indicates that the ALS are effective in promoting/supporting reflective supervision and critical thinking.

Feedback also highlighted factors that influence and challenge the delivery of ALS in organisations, including:

- time pressures and 'business as usual' being prioritised over ALS
- lack of organisational or senior leadership buy-in
- NQSW's are increasingly required to take on case work beyond their experience due to staff shortages, limiting their capacity to engage in reflective supervision and critical thinking.

Table 4: ALS feedback

Feedback from assessors	Feedback from co-ordinators
<p>Feedback from assessors evidenced how the knowledge and skills gained from the training is going to be applied in changing the delivery of the programme, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ encouraging new ways of thinking, including when addressing barriers to learning and development ▪ promoting ideas around critical reflection, and identifying how to describe a challenge or problem ▪ introducing problem-solving forums and action learning as a training option for practitioners ▪ supporting NQSWs to think in a more critical way developing 	<p>Feedback from the co-ordinators training highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the value of ALS in developing NQSWs' critical thinking ▪ how to share knowledge and experience to develop solutions ▪ the importance of evaluating an established support style ▪ using ALS approach to explore dilemmas and issues ▪ gaining new skills to navigate problems ▪ a new approach for supporting NQSWs to reflect and learn from their experiences of practice.

supervision and reflection strategies.	
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Table 5: action learning sets evaluation data

	ASYE co-ordinators	ASYE assessors
Number of attendees	24	36
Percentage of attendees who reported an improvement in their skills	88%	88%
Percentage of attendees who reported an improvement in their knowledge	75%	94%

6.8 ASYE annual survey

Survey links were emailed to ASYE leads, assessors and NQSWs registered on the ASYE platform on 15 January 2025. Reminder emails were sent on 29 January and 12 February, and the surveys were closed on 21 February 2025. The table below shows the number of survey links successfully delivered, the number of responses received and the response rates.

Table 6: Annual survey overview

	Survey link successfully delivered to	Responses received ²	Additional responses received ³	Response rate
ASYE leads	257	32	20	20%
ASYE assessors	1008	66	14	8%
NQSWs	1535	116	2	8%

Key positive takeaways from the surveys:

- The role of the ASYE assessor is clear with employers continuing to report high levels of understanding of the ASYE assessment process, including the requirements of assessors. Additionally, levels of confidence in the capability of ASYE assessors and supervisors remain high with the majority of NQSWs being satisfied with the supervision and assessment of their ASYE.
- The support and resources provided by Skills for Care continue to be well received and valued.
- The QA process is perceived as positively contributing to the overall effectiveness of the ASYE.
- The DfE funding of the ASYE is critical. Without it, 10% of employers would not offer the ASYE at all, and 17% would offer it to fewer NQSWs.

Points of learning/development:

- Support for leaders and managers is needed to ensure the ASYE is fully understood, embedded, and supported by employers. This includes the need for the ASYE's original purpose to be restated, and employers reminded that it should be tailored to the NQSW's stage of development.

² People working in child and family services only

³ People working across both child and family and adult services

- Further work is needed to ensure the ASYE achieves its aim of being accessible to all, including NQSWs from global majority backgrounds and those who are neurodivergent.
- The support offered to assessors remains a key area for the development and promotion of excellent quality ASYE programmes.
- There were not enough responses from co-ordinators and assessors from minoritised ethnic backgrounds to analyse their answers compared with those given by white respondents. However, NQSWs were positive about EEDI issues in their workplace. However, respondents from minoritised ethnic backgrounds were less positive than white respondents on five of the seven statements provided.
- EEDI needs continued promotion across ASYE, and particularly through QA visits.

Further details, including methodology and key findings, are included in [appendix 5](#) of the final report.

6.9 Conferences

Each year we hold two ASYE conferences aimed at ASYE assessors and co-ordinators from across adults, child and family, and combined services.

Table 7: ASYE conferences

Conference date	Autumn: 15 October 2024	Spring: 18 March 2025
Title	Exploring dilemmas and solutions to strengthen the ASYE	The role of supervision and wellbeing in the retention of NQSWs'
Key themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engaging people with lived experience in governance of ASYE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ASYE in a mental health setting ▪ how to maintain the wellbeing of NQSW's

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> managing change in the ASYE process (failing/withdrawing, deferring/ transferring NQSW's supporting neurodivergent NQSWs in practice challenges and opportunities presented by generative AI in the assessment of NQSW action plans and how to write them critical reflection through effective presentations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQSW supervision in the workplace good practice example NQSW retention importance of wellbeing and supervision intermediary work with NQSWs and assessors.
No. of attendees	225	158

7. Recommendations

7.1 Improve consistency in ASYE delivery

Skills for Care will:

- continue to work with employers to address variations in programme delivery to ensure equitable and fair experiences for all NQSWs
- promote a shared understanding of ASYE expectations across organisations
- encourage employers to ensure adequate and consistent access to supervision, development time, equipment, and support systems.

7.2 Strengthen equity, diversity, and inclusion

Skills for Care will:

- encourage employers to co-produce EEDI frameworks with NQSWs, focused on lived experience and accessible support
- continue to actively monitor disparities in completion rates among male NQSWs, those from global majority communities, and those who defer
- continue to promote safe spaces for disclosure and psychological safety within the ASYE environment, e.g. via the GEMS forum.

7.3 Support ASYE co-ordinators and assessors

Skills for Care will:

- continue to hold drop-in sessions and training for new ASYE co-ordinators, with a focus on building confidence and reducing isolation
- deliver assessor training to ensure high-quality, reflective support for NQSWs
- encourage senior leadership to champion and resource the ASYE programme effectively.

7.4 Tackle workload and wellbeing concerns

Skills for Care will work with employers to encourage them to:

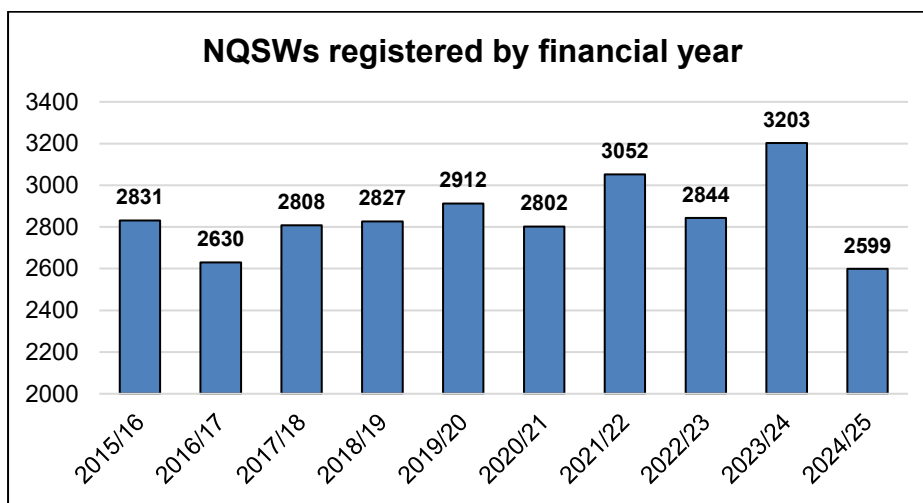
- ensure protected development time and manageable caseloads are in place, in line with ASYE guidance
- improve timely access to workplace assessments and adjustments, especially for neurodivergent NQSWs
- strengthen wellbeing initiatives, particularly around mental health, deferrals, and transitions back into the ASYE.

Appendix 1: The child and family ASYE funding and registration platform

NQSW registrations, by year

The total number of ASYE registrations for 2024-25 was 2599. This was a drop of 604 registrations from the peak in 2023-24.

Table 1: NQSW registrations by financial year



2024-25 registrations, by employer type

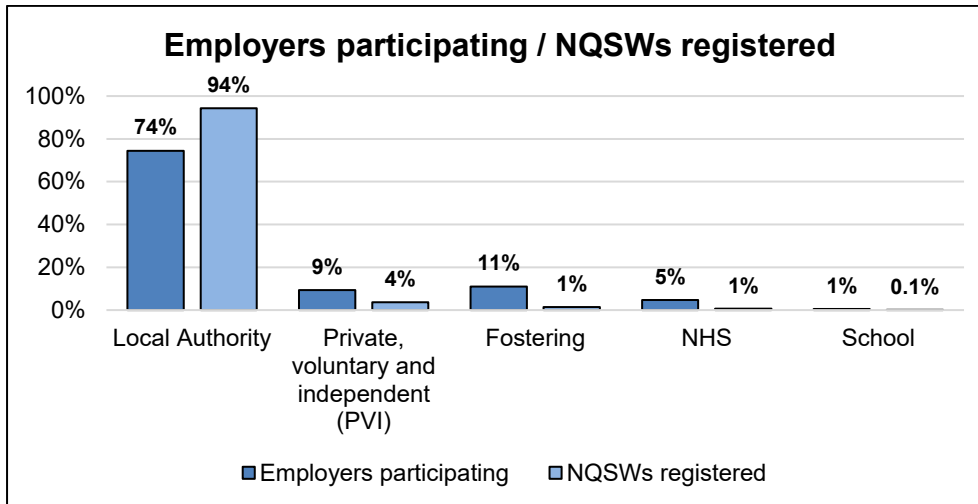
Registrations were made by a total of 192 employers.

Table 2: registrations, by employer type

	Number of employers participating	Number of NQSWs registered
Local authority	143	2452
Private, voluntary and independent (PVI)	18	94
Fostering	21	35
NHS	9	16
School	1	2

Total	192	2599
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Figure 1: NQSW registrations by financial year



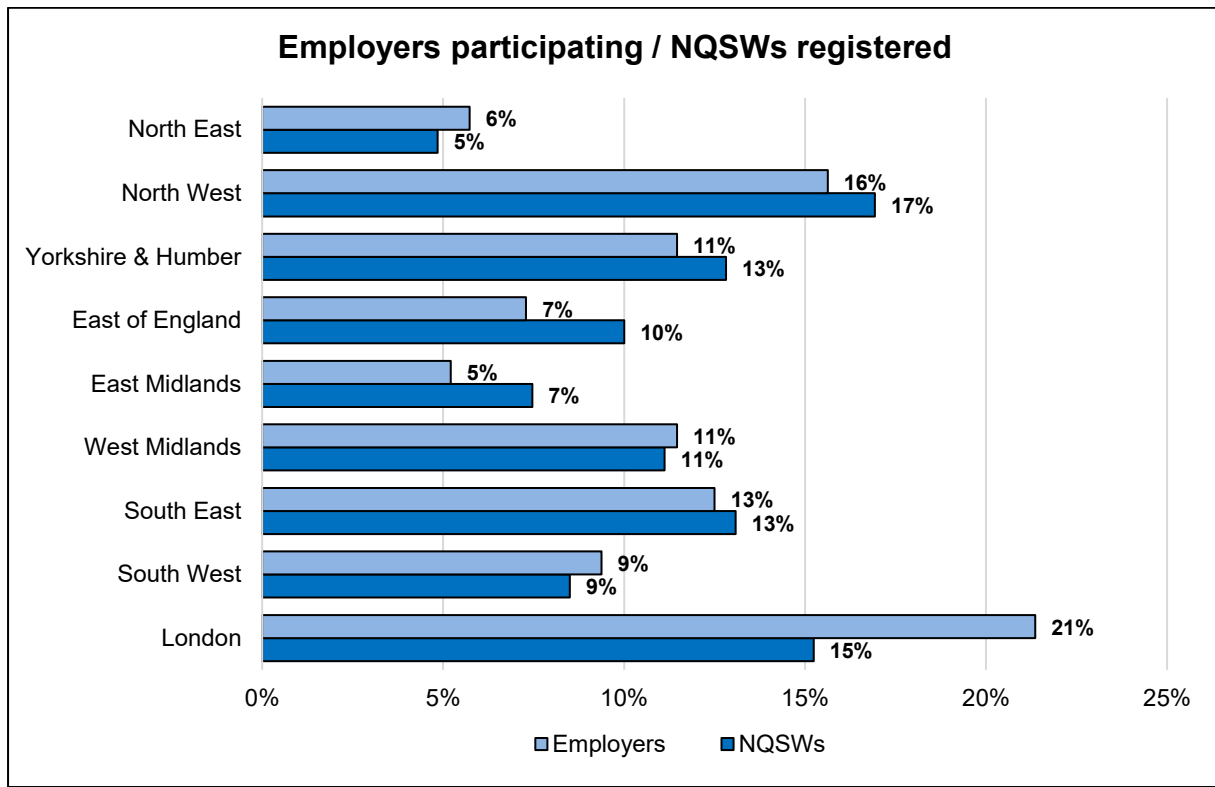
2024-25 registrations, by area

37% of the registrations were from employers based in the South of England, 28% from those based in the Midlands and 35% from those in the North of England.

Table 3: registrations by area

	Number of NQSWs registered	Number of employers
London	396	41
South West	221	18
South East	340	24
West Midlands	289	22
East Midlands	194	10
East of England	260	14
Yorkshire and Humber	333	22
North West	440	30
North East	126	11
Total	2599	192

Figure 2: registrations by area



Appendix 2: Protected characteristics analysis - September 2024

Using the ASYE registration platform, Skills for Care has investigated the impact of protected characteristics of NQSWs (gender, age, ethnicity, and nationality) and other factors (region and deferral rate) on the ASYE outcome (successfully/unsuccessfully completed).

Employers claiming ASYE funding are required to record information on NQSWs, such as demographics, outcomes of six and twelve-months' reviews, etc., on the Skills for Care platform.

Data for the last three cohorts of child and family social workers is summarised below.

Table 1: number of NQSWs by cohort

	Cohort			Total
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
Child and family NQSWs	2753	2574	3070	8397

Of these 8,397 records we currently have complete data (i.e. those where we held data on all predictors as well as the success/fail outcome) for 4,700 NQSWs of whom 4,676 (99.5%) passed the ASYE and 24 (0.5%) did not.

By applying Logistic Regression Analysis (LRA) to the data collected, we have been able to ascertain which, if any, factors have a significant impact on the ASYE outcome. We used this method as the outcome is binary, a NQSW is either successful or unsuccessful in completing their ASYE.

This was the fourth time that this analysis had been undertaken. By repeating the LRA, using up to date data we have been able to further test the reliability of the 'baseline' findings.

- **NQSWs from a global majority background were more likely to be unsuccessful in completing the ASYE than white NQSWs:** 1.1% of NQSWs from a global majority background were unsuccessful, compared with 0.2% of white NQSWs.
- **Male NQSWs were more likely to be unsuccessful than female NQSWs:** 1.5% of male NQSWs did not successfully complete the ASYE compared with 0.4% of female NQSWs.

While the numbers of unsuccessful completions are marginal, they remain higher among male NQSWs and those from a global majority community, as was the case in previous years. A key finding however is that the proportion of unsuccessful completions continues to decrease for all NQSWs compared to previous years.

For the second time, we were able to look at trends over time to see how rates of unsuccessful completion have changed over the last five years. Due to the data retention policy, (personal data is only kept for four years) trend data is based on aggregated data. On average, rates of unsuccessful completion of the ASYE are decreasing for all NQSWs over the years, however differences regarding ethnicity, gender and deferral rates remain.

Figure 1 shows that, while the level of unsuccessful completions is decreasing overall, the gap between NQSWs from a global majority community and their white counterparts remains relatively stable.

Figure 1: % of unsuccessful completions by ethnicity for child and family NQSWs

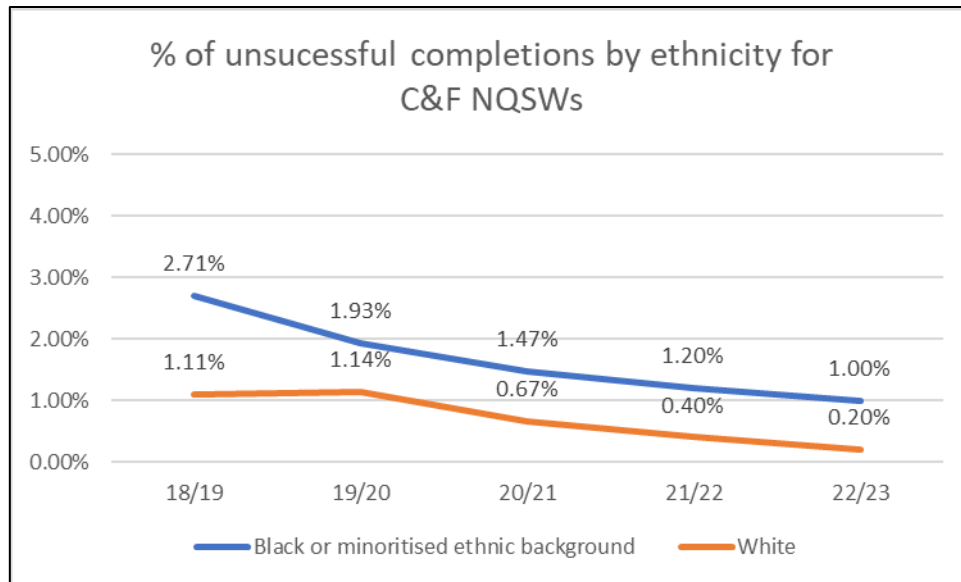
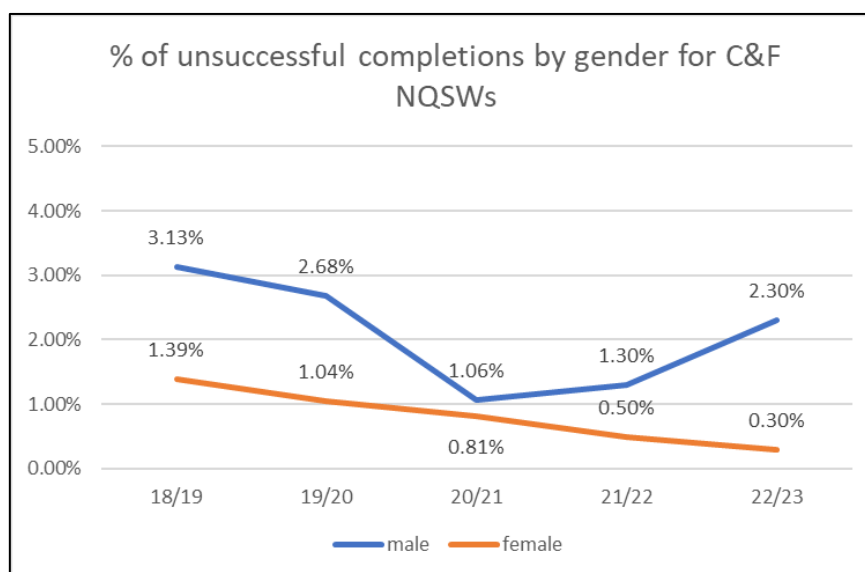


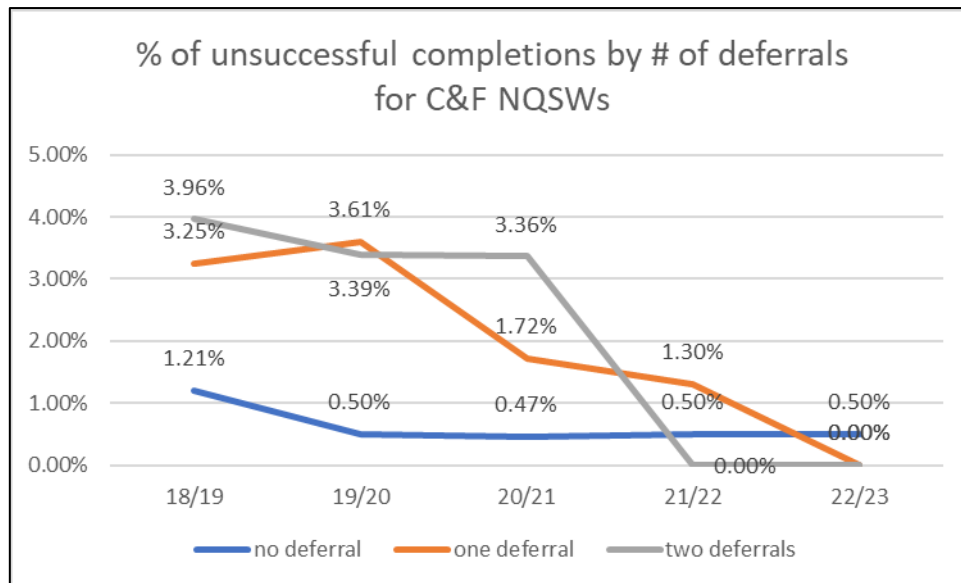
Figure 2 shows that unsuccessful completion rates have continued to decrease for female NQSWs, however they have been rising for male NQSWs in the last two years.

Figure 2: % of unsuccessful completions by gender for child and family NQSWs



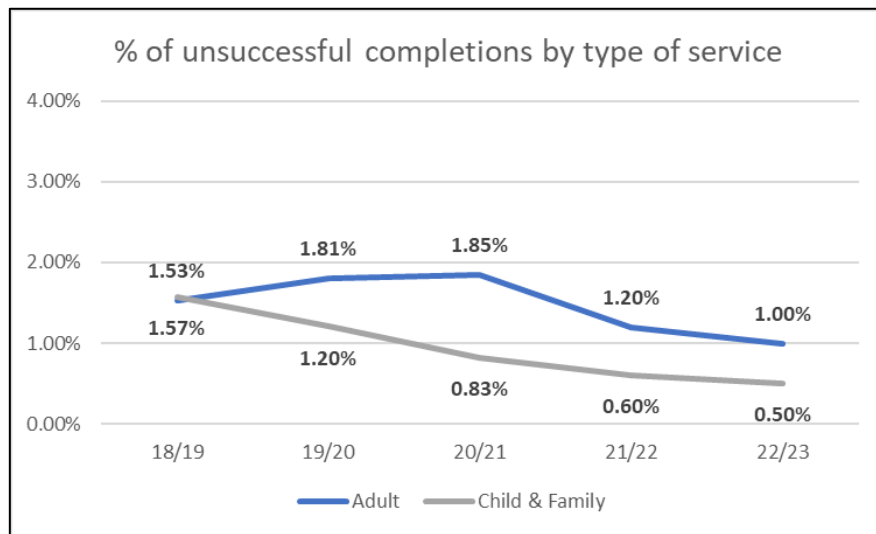
The impact of deferrals on rates of unsuccessful completion has continued to decrease. Figure 3 shows that in 2022-23, NQSWs who had been deferred once or twice were significantly less likely to fail their ASYEs compared to previous years.

Figure 3: % of unsuccessful completions by number of deferrals for child and family NQSWs



As we conduct the same analysis for adult NQSWs, we were able to look at trend data comparing ASYE programmes in both service areas. Figure 4 shows that rates of unsuccessful completion among child and family NQSWs have been consistently lower than among adult NQSWs in the last four years of this reporting period.

Figure 4: % of unsuccessful completions by service area



Our analysis showed that gender, ethnicity and deferral rates have the greatest impact on whether NQSWs successfully complete their ASYE. This could also explain the difference in failure rates between child and family and adult NQSWs. Further analysis revealed that deferral rates are comparable, but the child and family NQSWs are less diverse. Figure 5 shows that the percentage of NQSWs from a global majority background has consistently increased across all services. However, among child and family NQSWs, the ethnic distribution has remains lower.

Figure 5: % of NQSWs from global majority backgrounds by type of service

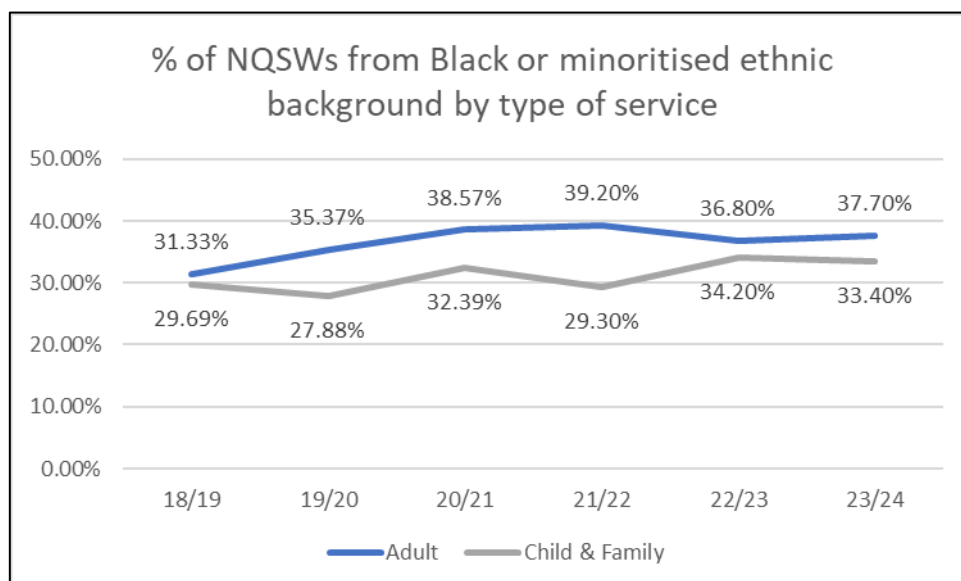
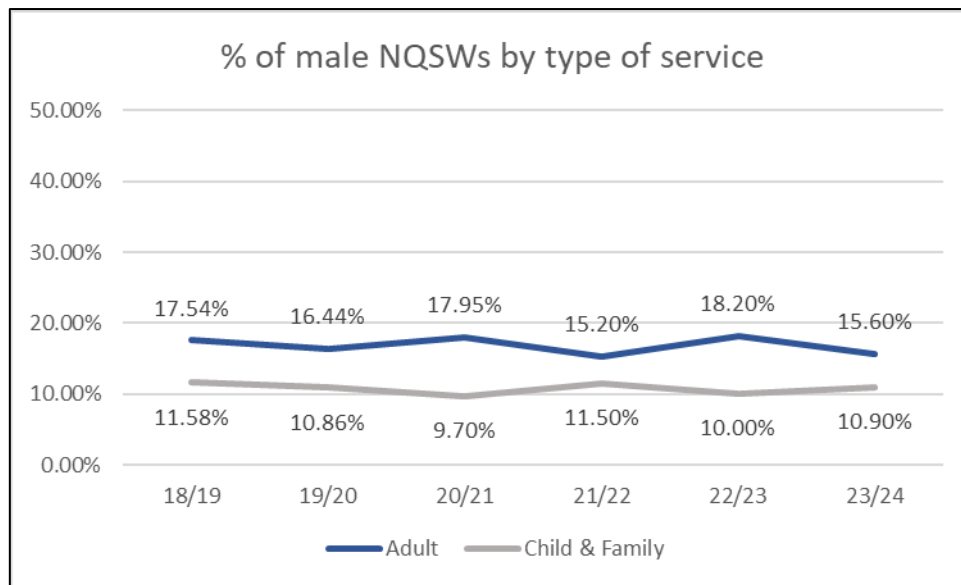


Figure 6 shows that the percentage of male NQSWs has consistently been lower in child and family services compared to adult services.

Figure 6: % of male NQSWs by service type



Appendix 3: Quality assurance review meetings

As in previous years, QA meetings continue to generate valuable qualitative data from ASYE programmes, including input from NQSWs, assessors, and co-ordinators. In 2024–25, we engaged with the organisations listed in Table 8 overleaf. However, small organisations, especially those with only one NQSW, remain difficult to engage, requiring alternative approaches.

Before each QA meeting, employers submit a pre-meeting questionnaire, a 360-degree evaluation report, and a current action plan. These inputs, alongside annual theme-based discussions with participants, allow for strong triangulation of evidence and a clearer picture of the ASYE landscape.

2024–25 themes:

- **NQSW wellbeing:** we examined how programmes prioritise NQSW wellbeing from the outset, including awareness of support structures like buddying and peer networks. We explored how programmes adapt to individual needs, including cultural and identity factors. Additionally, we reviewed trends in ASYE deferrals, reasons for them, and the support provided during these periods.
- **Assessor support and QA:** recognising the assessor's central role, we explored how their development needs are met individually and collectively, and how their work is quality assured to enhance both their growth and the ASYE programme. This theme was explored specifically in meetings with senior managers and ASYE leads.

This process contributes significantly to our understanding of the ASYE across England.

Table 1: employers involved in in-depth QA review meetings in 2024-25

Organisation Name	Area	Employer type
Bradford District Care Trust	Yorkshire and the Humber	LA
Bristol City Council	South West	LA
Buckinghamshire Council	South East	LA
Cumbria County Council	North West	LA
Derbyshire Council	West Midlands	LA
Family First Fostering	London	Fostering
ISWP (Independent Social Workers Partnership)	South East	PVI
Jamma Umoja	London	PVI
Leeds City Council	Yorkshire and the Humber	LA
London Borough of Barnet	London	LA
London Borough of Bexley	London	LA
London Borough of Camden	London	LA
London Borough of Croydon	London	LA
London Borough of Haringey	London	LA
London Borough of Hillingdon	London	LA
London Borough of Hounslow	London	LA
London Borough of Newham	London	LA
London Borough of Southwark	London	LA
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	London	LA
London Borough of Wandsworth	London	LA
National Fostering Group	North West	Fostering
North Lincolnshire Council	Yorkshire and the Humber	LA
Northamptonshire Children's Trust	East Midlands	LA

Nottinghamshire County Council	East Midlands	LA
Oxfordshire County Council	South East	LA
Peterborough City Council	Eastern	LA
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	Yorkshire and the Humber	LA
Sheffield City Council	Yorkshire and the Humber	LA
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	West Midlands	LA
Southend Borough Council	Eastern	LA
St Helens Council	North West	LA
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	LA
Swindon Borough Council	South West	LA
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	North West	LA
Trafford Council	North West	LA
West Berkshire Council	South East	LA
West Sussex County Council	South East	LA
Westmorland and Furness Council	North West	LA
Wiltshire Council	South West	LA
Wolverhampton City Council	West Midlands	LA

Appendix 4: 360-degree evaluation tool

A 360-degree tool has been provided to help employers gather feedback that will help them to review, and quality assure their ASYE programmes. The tool enables employers to gain a balanced view of their progress because feedback is gathered from multiple stakeholders.

The tool is based around the ASYE programme's evaluation criteria and consists of 33 statements organised under four overarching themes:

- the NQSW experience is central to the ASYE
- the ASYE programme is delivered in accordance with the ASYE framework and employer standards
- the ASYE programme ensures that PQS (previously Knowledge and Skills Statement) and the PCF underpin NQSW professional practice
- the ASYE programme is integrated within the wider organisational system.

Respondents rate how they feel about each statement using a scale from 1 ('Significant development needed') to 5 ('Exceptional strength').

Employers complete the assessment themselves ('self-assessment'), as well as inviting their NQSWs, line managers and others to complete it. Feedback is provided anonymously.

Once complete, each employer receives a personalised report which shows their results as an average for their organisation as well as broken down by type of respondent. As more data is input into the tool, Skills for Care will be able to provide employers with comparative results for their region or Teaching Partnership.

The following pages show the composite results for the 152 organisations who had submitted their data up to 28 March 2025⁴. Using this we can report on the national

⁴ A further 58 organisations have registered but not submitted any data and a further 20 organisations have submitted some data but have not met the minimum criteria for inclusion in our reporting.

average for each statement, as well as the range of scores, from the minimum (0) to the maximum (5). The results have been coded as follows:

- 1.0 - 1.9 = Red (1 = Significant development needed)
 2.0 - 3.9 = Amber (2 = Development needed / 3 = Working well)
 4.0 - 5.0 = Green (4 = Strength / 5 = Exceptional strength)

Evaluation criteria theme 1: The NQSW experience is central to the ASYE

The results for the statements in this section were reasonably high (see table 1: evaluation criteria theme 1). Six out of the eight statements scored an average nationally of at least 3.6 out of 5 ('amber'), with the remaining statements scoring an average nationally of 4.0 ('green'). The results are almost identical to those from last year.

Table 1: evaluation criteria theme 1

			2024-25			2023-24		
			National average	Min	Max	National average	Min	Max
The NQSW experience is central to the ASYE	1	Feedback is proactively sought by employers through mechanisms such as the 360-degree evaluation tool to ensure NQSWs are active participants rather than passive recipients in their ASYE	3.6	2.0	4.8	3.6	2.0	4.8
	2	NQSWs - along with other stakeholders (i.e. ASYE supervisors/assessors, and people who need care and support and their carers, this includes children and young people) are able to make a meaningful contribution to ASYE quality assurance and continuous improvement	3.6	2.3	5.0	3.6	2.5	5.0
	3	NQSW wellbeing is prioritised from the beginning of the ASYE and NQSWs are made aware of the support structures available to them within the organisation from the outset of their ASYE and how to access this support, such as buddying and peer support netwo	4.0	2.7	5.0	3.9	2.4	5.0
	4	Equality, diversity and inclusion is central to the ASYE programme, ensuring that all NQSWs are offered an ASYE experience which is tailored to their individual needs, including cultural and learning needs	3.9	3.0	5.0	3.8	3.0	5.0
	5	ASYE programmes have policies in place to ensure their NQSWs and those supporting them practice from an anti-racist perspective	3.9	2.5	5.0	3.8	3.2	5.0
	6	ASYE programmes have an equality and diversity framework in place to ensure their NQSWs and those supporting them are not treated unfairly or discriminated against because of their background or characteristics	4.0	2.5	5.0	3.9	2.5	5.0
	7	The organisation has mechanisms in place to gather, monitor data, that is reflective of the diversity of the organisations workforce; then take action where necessary so that employees from a diverse background are not disadvantaged.	3.7	2.8	5.0	3.7	2.5	5.0
	8	NQSWs are encouraged to engage with the National ASYE Framework via the quarterly NQSW online forums	3.5	1.5	4.9	3.5	0.0	4.9

Evaluation criteria theme 2: The ASYE programme is delivered in accordance with the AYSE framework and employer standards

The results for the statements in this section were reasonably high (see table 2: evaluation criteria theme 2). Eleven of the fifteen statements scored an average nationally of at least 4 out of 5 ('green'), with the remaining statements scoring an average nationally of 3.7 - 3.9 ('amber'). The results are almost identical to those from last year.

Table 2: evaluation criteria theme 2

			2024-25			2023-24		
			National average	Min	Max	National average	Min	Max
The ASYE programme is delivered in accordance with the AYSE framework & employer standards	9	The transition from student to NQSW clearly identifies the individual support and development needs of NQSWs	4.0	2.5	5.0	4.0	2.5	5.0
	10	Every NQSW has a Personal Development Plan (PDP)	4.4	3.0	5.0	4.4	3.0	5.0
	11	The support and development needs of NQSWs are clearly identified, recorded, and reviewed via a personal development plan at each stage of the ASYE process	4.3	2.5	5.0	4.3	2.5	5.0
	12	NQSWs receive regular reflective supervision (i.e. weekly for first six weeks, fortnightly for first six months, monthly thereafter) from a registered social worker who has demonstrable skills and experience in developing others	4.1	3.0	5.0	4.1	2.5	5.0
	13	NQSWs receive workload relief appropriate to their stage in the programme. Complexity of case work is relevant to the individual NQSW and gradually increases through the ASYE. Overall, the level of workload does not exceed 90% (of the average case load)	3.8	2.0	4.9	3.7	2.0	5.0
	14	Protected time is made available for NQSWs to undertake personalised continuing professional development (CPD) activities, in line with Social Work England requirements, ASYE dedicated training events and other peer learning opportunities such as action learning	4.0	2.5	5.0	3.9	2.7	5.0
	15	The support needs of supervisors/assessors are addressed in ways appropriate to them. Employers should make it possible for them to access peer support through such things as action learning sets and the quarterly ASYE Assessors' online forum	3.7	2.3	5.0	3.7	2.4	5.0
	16	NQSWs have access to learning opportunities relevant to their individual and collective development needs	4.2	2.5	5.0	4.2	3.0	5.0
	17	Supervisors/assessors have access to learning opportunities relevant to their individual and collective development needs	3.9	2.3	5.0	3.8	2.5	5.0
	18	Employers should make it possible for them to access peer support through such things as action learning sets and the quarterly ASYE Assessors' online forum	3.8	2.1	4.8	3.7	2.0	4.7
	19	All aspects of the ASYE programme place emphasis on the importance of critically reflective practice	4.2	3.0	5.0	4.2	3.0	5.0
	20	There is an emphasis on progressive development and assessment evidence is provided by different people, in different situations and over the duration of the ASYE	4.1	2.5	5.0	4.1	2.5	5.0
	21	Feedback gathered from people, including children and young people who need care and support, through direct observations is addressed within the assessment process	4.2	2.5	5.0	4.2	2.5	5.0
	22	Both NQSWs and supervisors have a clear understanding of what is required of them with regard to the sufficiency and quality of evidence	4.1	2.5	4.9	4.0	2.5	5.0
	23	Assessment outcomes are accurate, valid, robust and sufficient	4.1	2.5	5.0	4.1	2.5	5.0

Evaluation criteria theme 3: The ASYE programme ensures that PQS (previously Knowledge and Skills Statement) and the Professional Capabilities Framework underpin NQSW professional practice

The results for the statements in this section were reasonably high (see table 3: evaluation criteria theme 3). One statement scored on average nationally 4.2 ('green') with the remaining four statements scoring on average nationally 3.7 - 3.9 ('amber'). The results are almost identical to those from last year.

Table 3: evaluation criteria theme 3

			2024-25			2023-24		
			National average	Min	Max	National average	Min	Max
The ASYE programme ensures that PQS (previously KSS) & the PCF underpin NQSW professional	24	Links are in place with partner universities so that students have understanding about the PQS in advance of their graduation	3.7	2.0	5.0	3.7	2.0	5.0
	25	The NQSW is informed about the PQS and the ASYE and the associated organisational expectations as part of the recruitment process	3.9	2.0	5.0	3.8	2.5	5.0
	26	All those involved in the ASYE (NQSWs, supervisors, managers) receive the support they need to understand their role in relation to the development of social work practice underpinned by the PQS and the PCF	3.8	2.5	4.7	3.8	2.5	4.7
	27	The PQS and the PCF are mapped against all the available learning and development opportunities provided by the organisation in relation to the ASYE	3.9	2.3	5.0	3.9	2.3	5.0
	28	ASYE assessment is based on the PQS and the PCF	4.2	3.0	5.0	4.2	3.0	5.0

Evaluation criteria theme 4: The ASYE programme is integrated within the wider organisational system

The results for the statements in this section were reasonably high (see table 4: evaluation criteria theme 4). Two statements scored on average nationally 4.0 or 4.1 ('Green') with the remaining four statements scoring on average nationally 3.7 - 3.9 ('Amber'). The results are almost identical to those from last year.

Table 4: evaluation criteria theme 4:

			2024-25			2023-24		
			National average	Min	Max	National average	Min	Max
The ASYE programme is integrated within the wider organisational system	29	The organisation takes ownership of the supervisor/assessor's assessment recommendations through an internal moderation panel	4.1	2.0	5.0	4.1	2.0	5.0
	30	A clear and transparent quality assurance and continuous improvement process is in place within the organisation. Identified improvement actions are monitored and reviewed	3.9	2.3	5.0	3.9	2.3	5.0
	31	The ASYE is embedded within the workforce strategy and forms part of clearly defined career and CPD pathways for qualified social workers	4.0	1.8	5.0	4.0	1.8	4.8
	32	The ASYE is integrated within human resources and performance management processes	3.9	1.0	4.8	3.9	1.0	4.8
	33	Senior management are aware of their key role as leaders in championing the success of the ASYE programme. This includes ensuring that NQSW's are not over-burdened with their caseloads and that protected CPD and development time is adhered to	3.8	2.0	5.0	3.7	2.0	5.0

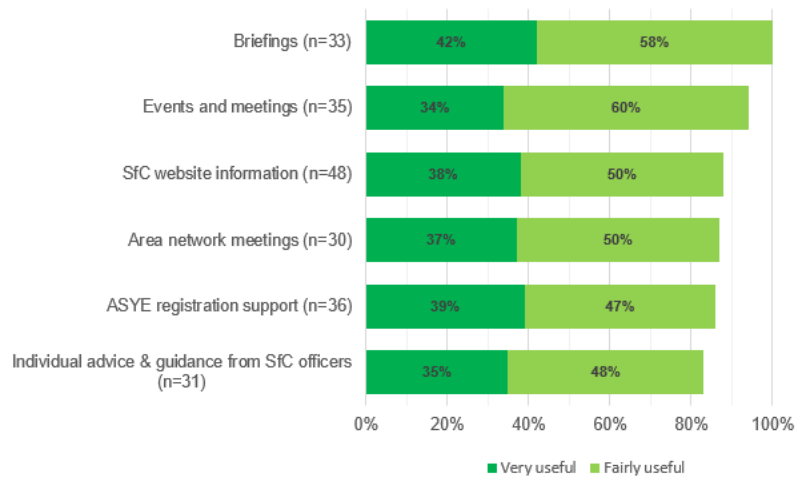
Appendix 5: ASYE annual survey

The annual ASYE surveys are an important 'temperature check' for Skills for Care, the DfE and the Chief Social Worker. The survey results, along with the QA visits, 360-degree tool results and employer action plans, provide an overall picture of what's going well and any areas for development.

Key finding 1 – Support from Skills for Care

At least four out of five ASYE leads rated the support offered by Skills for Care as 'useful' or 'very useful'. The average score across the six types of support was 90%*.

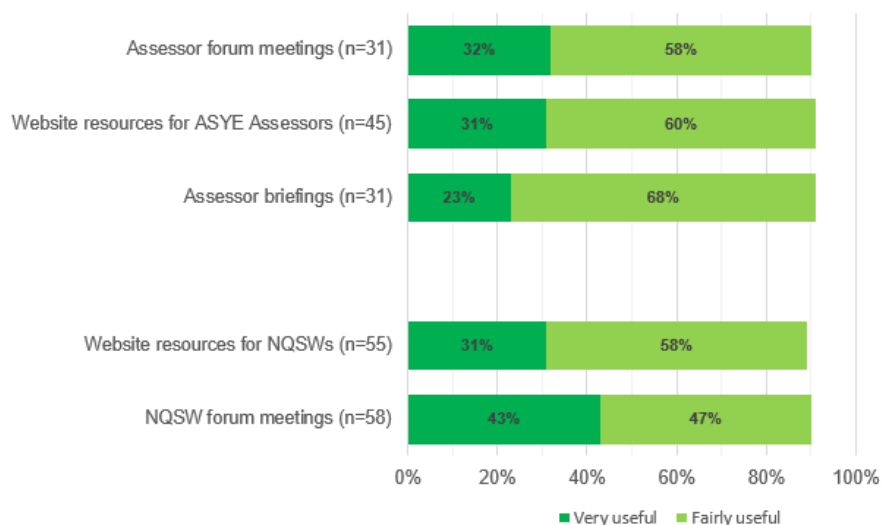
Figure 1: support from Skills for Care – ASYE leads ratings



* QA visits and Training for new ASYE co-ordinators were excluded as n<30 for them

Website resources were rated positively by both ASYE assessors and NQSWs (91% and 89% respectively), as were the general assessor/NQSWs forum meetings (both 90%). The average score across the three types of support was 91% for ASYE assessors and 90% for NQSWs*.

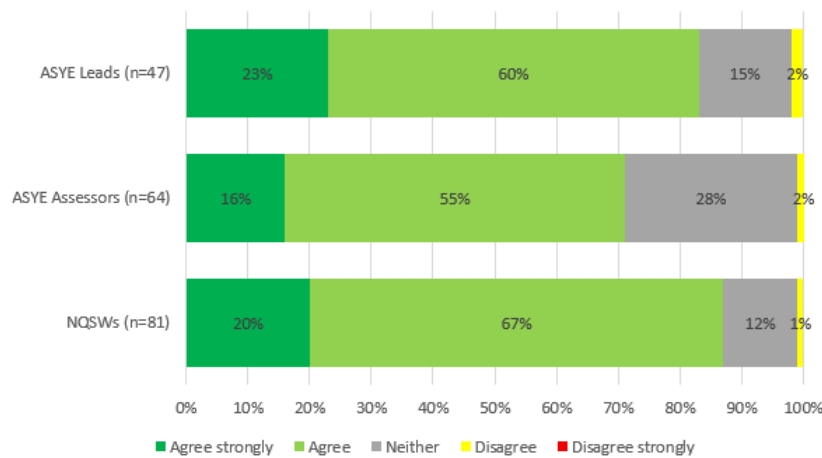
Figure 2: support from Skills for Care – assessor and NQSW ratings



* GEMS forum meetings were excluded for NQSWs as n<30

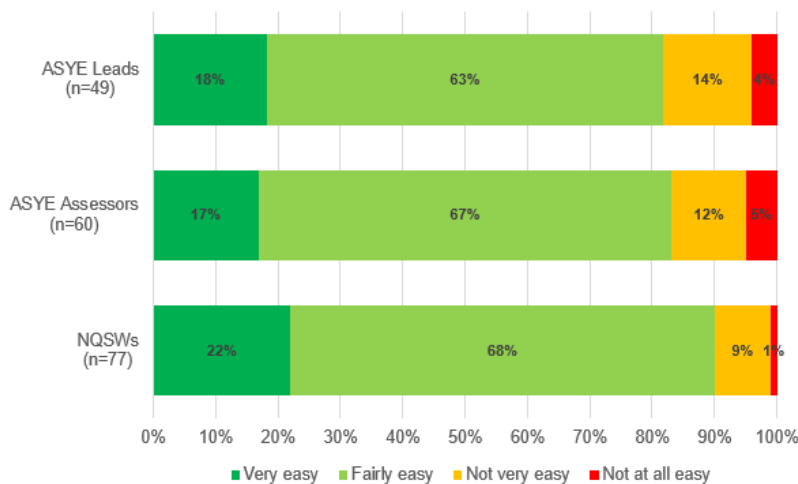
More than four-fifths of ASYE leads (83%) and NQSWs (87%) agreed or strongly agreed that Skills for Care's tools, resources, support and guidance have had a positive impact on their ability to undertake their role. However, only two-thirds of ASYE assessors (71%) reported the same.

Figure 3: support from Skills for Care – impact on ability to carry out role



More than four-fifths of ASYE leads (82%) and ASYE assessors (83%) reported that they find it 'very' or 'fairly easy' to find the information/resources they need. 90% of NQSWs reported the same.

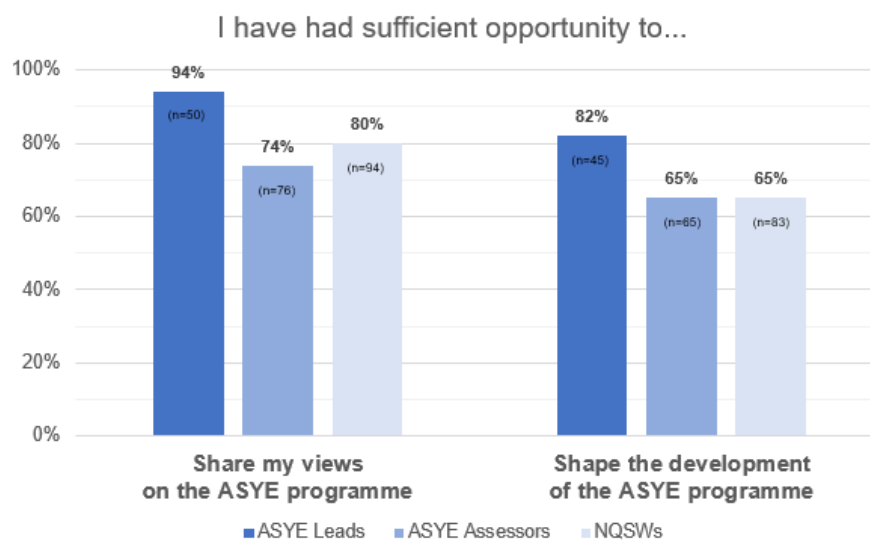
Figure 4: support from Skills for Care – ease of access of information/resources



Key finding 2 – Quality assurance and continuous improvement

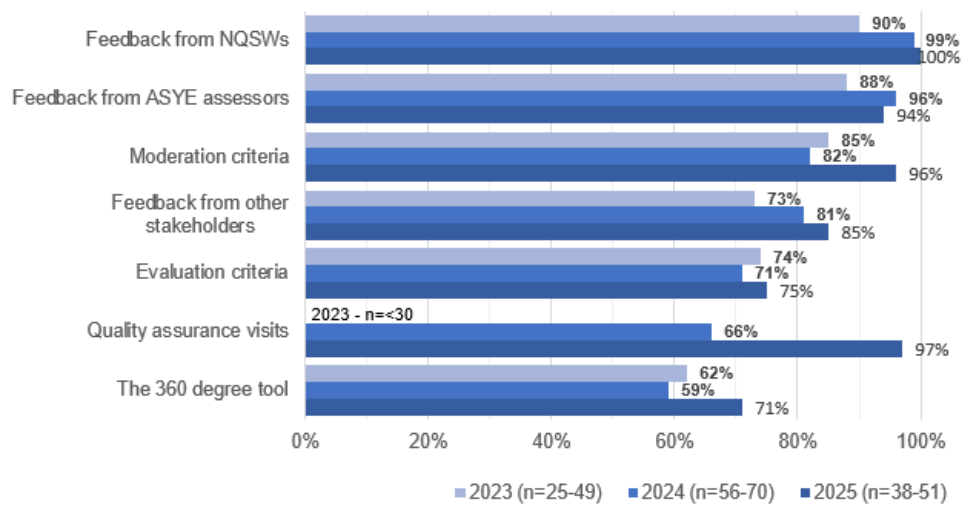
Most ASYE leads report having had sufficient opportunity to share their views on and shape the development of the ASYE programme (94% and 82% respectively). However, fewer ASYE assessors and NQSWs felt they had.

Figure 5: opportunities to share views and shape the development of the ASYE programme



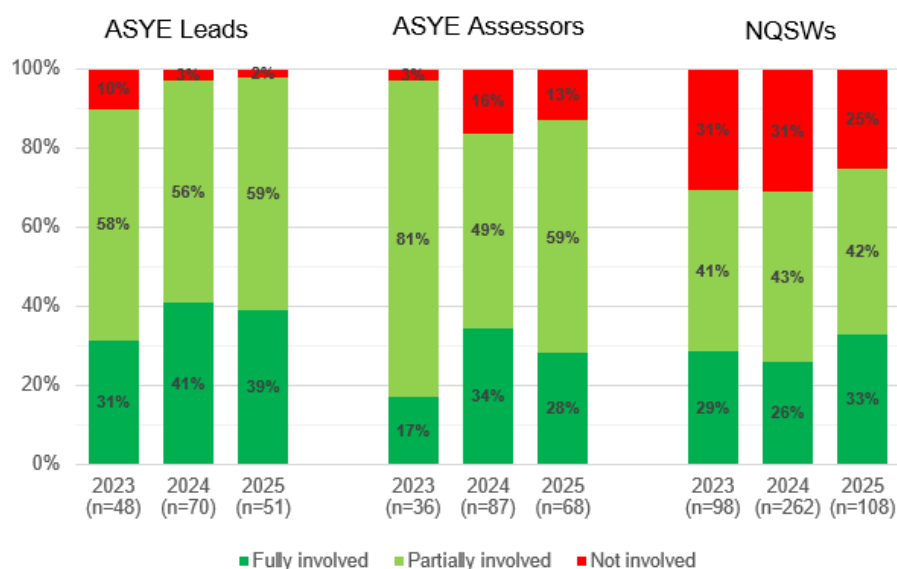
At least eight in ten ASYE leads report that feedback from NQSWs, ASYE assessors and other stakeholders positively contribute to the overall effectiveness of the ASYE and at least seven in ten agree that the moderation and evaluation criteria positively contribute.

Figure 6: impact of feedback on ASYE programme



Views are mixed on how involved NQSWs are in the QA and continuous improvement of the ASYE. 98% of ASYE leads and 87% of ASYE assessors reported that NQSWs are involved in the QA and continuous improvement of their ASYE programme, but only 75% of NQSWs said that they/their fellow NQSWs were involved*.

Figure 7: levels of involvement in QA and continual improvement

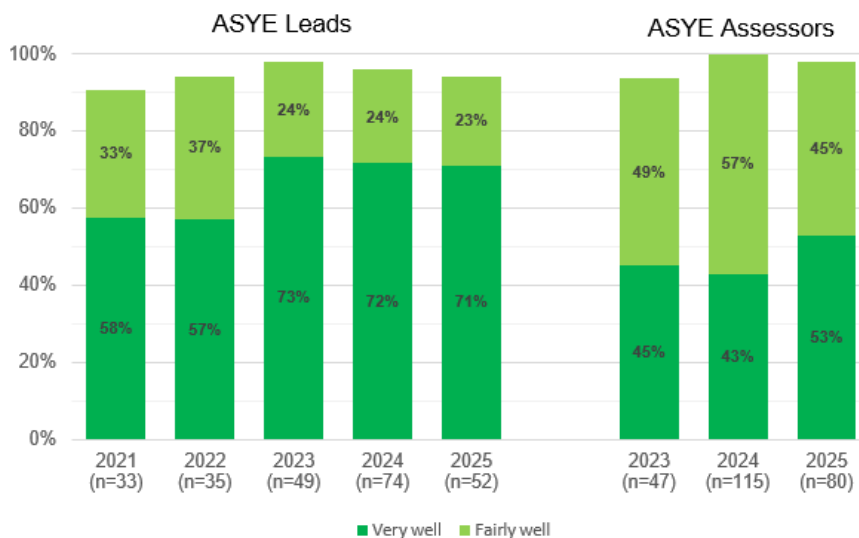


* The difference observed between the percentage of ASYE leads and NQSWs who said 'fully involved' is statistically significant.

Key finding 3 – ASYE assessment and supervision

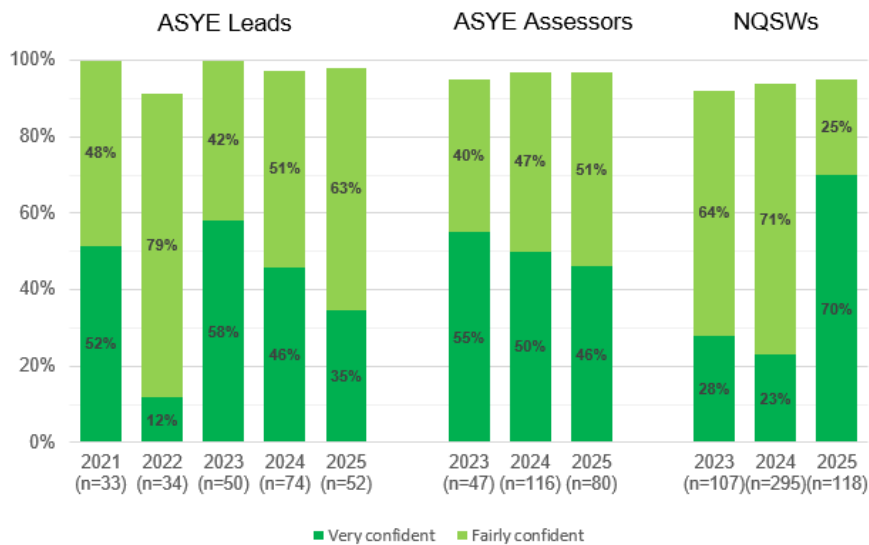
94% of ASYE leads and 98% of ASYE assessors reported that they understood the assessment arrangements for the ASYE ‘very’ or ‘fairly well’.

Figure 8: levels of understanding of assessment arrangements



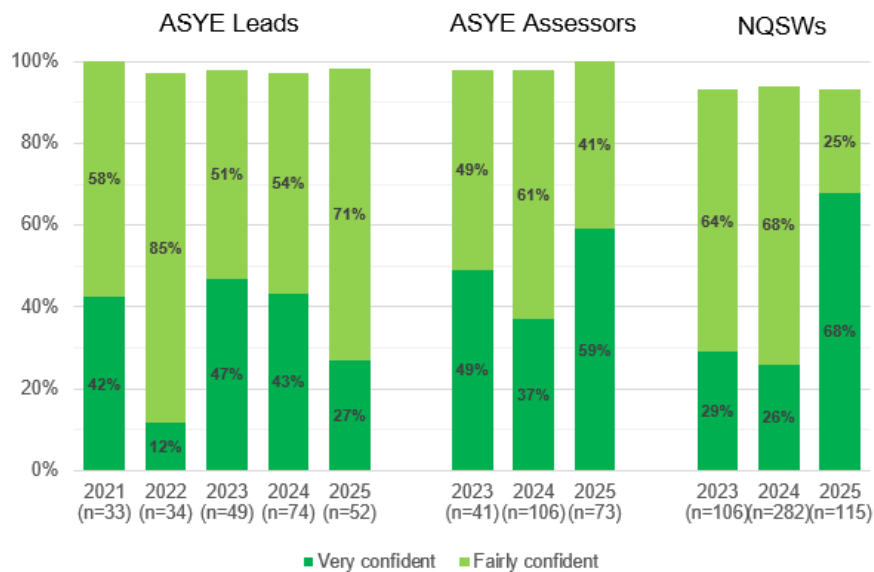
98% of ASYE leads reported that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’ in the capability of ASYE assessors in their organisation. Confidence levels were similarly high amongst ASYE assessors (98% rated themselves ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’) and NQSWs (95% said that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’ in their ASYE assessor).

Figure 9: confidence levels – capability of assessors



98% of ASYE leads reported that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’ in the capability of ASYE supervisors in their organisation. Confidence levels were similarly high amongst ASYE assessors (100% rated themselves ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’) and NQSWs (93% said that they were ‘very’ or ‘fairly confident’ in their ASYE supervisor).

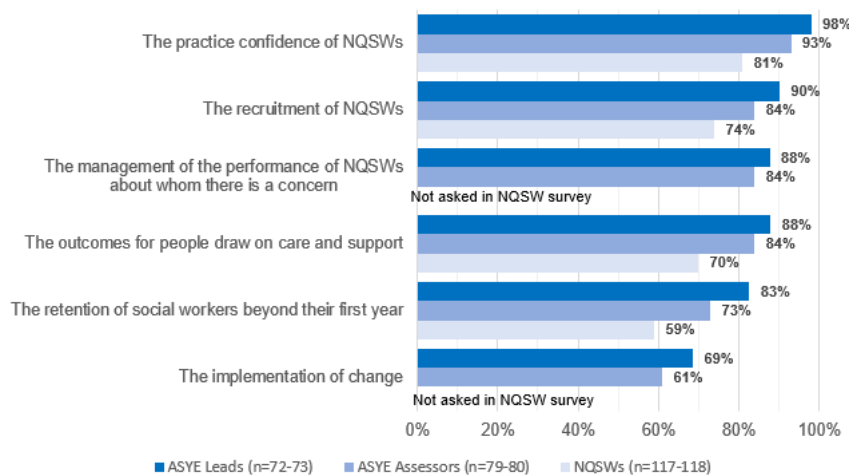
Figure 10: confidence levels – capability of supervisors



Key finding 4 – Impact of the ASYE and future workforce challenges

ASYE leads and ASYE assessors were generally more positive about the impact that the ASYE is having than NQSWs. All three respondent groups were most positive about the impact it is having on the practice confidence of NQSWs.

Figure 11: impact of the ASYE



Across 'ASYE', 'CPD' and 'other areas', the top 5 social work workforce challenges for the next one-two years identified are shown in table 13 below. There has been change in the priorities since 2024: The retention of social workers was ranked first in 2024, supporting leaders and managers was ranked fourth, improving the capability of assessors was ranked second and providing EEDI training was ranked third.

Table 1: top workforce challenges

Ranking	Challenge	%
1	Supporting leaders and managers	88%
2	Retaining social workers	84%
3	Improving the capability of assessors	75%
4	Recruiting social workers	59%
5	Providing EEDI training and development	51%

Key finding 5 – Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion

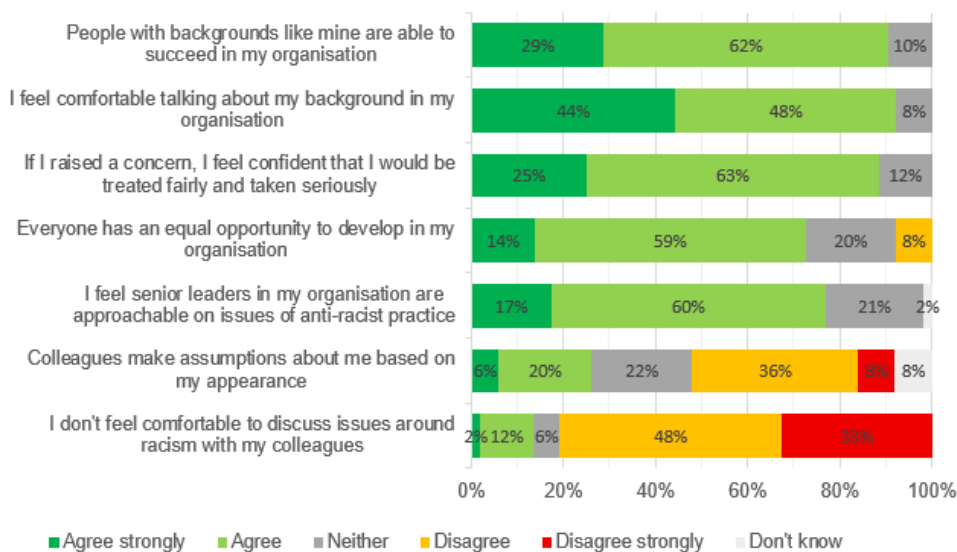
76% of ASYE leads reported that their organisation specifically incorporates anti-racist perspectives in the delivery of their ASYE programme and 71% that it records the protected characteristics of the NQSWs undertaking their ASYE programme.

The most frequently cited examples of anti-racism being incorporated, cited by ASYE leads, assessors and NQSWs, were:

- training (39 mentions)
- through supervision (25 mentions)
- the culture and expected values (10 mentions)
- a clear statement/policy (9 mentions).

ASYE leads generally gave positive responses to the statements about EEDI issues in the workplace and most indicated that their organisation has clear policies and practice in relation to anti-racism and the LGBTQ+ community. Fewer agreed that their organisation had a similar position in relation to other protected characteristics and neurodiversity.

Figure 12: EEDI issues in the workplace - ASYE leads



Most ASYE leads, ASYE assessor and NQSWs reported that their organisation had clear anti-discriminatory policies and practices.

- At least two-thirds of respondents agreed / agreed strongly that their organisation has clear policies and practices relating to anti-racism and the LGBTQ+ community.
- More than three-quarters agreed that it is clear in relation to other protected characteristics.
- Slightly fewer were as positive about support for neurodivergent individuals.

Figure 13: EEDI policy and practice

