

## Survey of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs) spring 2014

Following on from a survey to our members last year, the BASW England Professional Development group conducted a further survey to see if the situation had changed one year on. Last year there was a strong indication that the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment (ASYE) was patchy in availability and varied in content and newly qualified social workers were struggling to get on the scheme especially if they were not employed by a Local Authority.

This year's result, although smaller in terms of the number of respondents (55 compared to last year's 182), show a marked improvement with more members being aware of the scheme and far more involved from all areas of social work.

This year the respondents were split roughly 50: 50 into those who were on an NQSW programme and those who although relatively newly qualified have not started an ASYE programme, or can't get onto one. This compares positively with last year's survey when the majority of respondents said they did not know about ASYE. This year the majority of respondents felt that they were familiar or somewhat familiar with ASYE. However there are still concerns about the details of some of the knowledge. For example about half respondents knew that there was a £2000 payment available for employers but that means that half were not aware. Also about half of respondents were aware that you can undertake ASYE if candidates are in a role that doesn't require working in a post with a social work requirement for the post. A number of respondents did not know if their local ASYE schemes were linked to partner universities.

The quality of the experience of participants on ASYE programmes was mixed, there were some great examples of well supported NQSWs, but also there were worrying accounts from some of a completely unacceptable level of support.

Some respondents said that the ASYE programme they were on is very good and well run, for example:

*"Excellent support from a team dedicated to the ASYE program"*

*"Our ASYE programme is really good in local authority x, they are supportive and thoughtful with useful and informative training and support"*

*"The ASYE program has increased my confidence in that I know I will be supported to be the best I can be. It makes all the difference knowing that my manager and team are right behind the program and protected time elements, which I know other NQSW's struggle with".*

Others were less happy:

*"My employers are happy for me to do the ASYE but do not have any idea of what to do. I am having to find out everything. Feel that there is little support out there".*

*"Lack of support from employer, difficult to fit into my role alongside case management".*

*"Very poorly run by my local authority".*

*“I am already feeling quite stressed in my post - only 4 months into the role. I work in Child Safeguarding Team, and despite being told I should only have 12-15 cases, I already have 22 cases. Don't feel there is enough time to further develop my experience, and learn from other social workers, because I am constantly trying to keep up with my own work”.*

*“ASYE really feels like a tick box exercise in my place of employment. Support is selective upon geographical location”.*

Another major concern of respondents continues to be the shortage of jobs for newly qualified workers. 42% said that they had found it easy to find work as a social worker on qualifying the rest spread between those who found it “Not very easy”, “Difficult”, “Very Difficult”, and 15% who found it impossible.

BASW officers and members are pleased to have been working with Skills for Care, who are leading on the ASYE programme to inform NQSWs about ASYE and to promote good practice examples. A number of respondents in the survey asked questions about ASYE which shows that there is still an information gap. Members are advised to look at the guidance that BASW have produced about ASYE, which provides links to Skills for Care. <https://www.basw.co.uk/resource/?id=1937>

If you have any questions about ASYE please contact the England team [england@basw.co.uk](mailto:england@basw.co.uk)