



The Profile of Social Workers in Wales

2016

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A report from the Care
Council for Wales Register
of Social Care Workers



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1 Introduction

The Profile of qualified social workers in Wales is published annually by the Care Council for Wales (Care Council). It is the sixth annual report and is based on the data provided by applicants to register with a social work qualification and to maintain their registration.

The report profiles the 6,063 individuals with a social work qualification on the Register as of the 1 June 2016 and the analysis includes data about people joining and leaving the Register from 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2016. The final year social work students in this period were analysed to identify the number who passed and registered to practise in Wales, their characteristics and their employment outcomes at the reporting date.

2 Summary

The number of social workers in Wales is stable. There is a slight increase of 87 since last year, and this follows the same trend since 2012, although this is the highest net gain since that date. The turnover of social workers leaving the Register was 5.5 per cent, which is a decrease compared to the last 2 years.

The majority of social workers are working in local authority social services, and over three quarters of these individuals have a social work case load. There continues to be an increase in the number of social workers (across all sectors) in post for more than 10 years.

Almost all of the social work students in their final year of study on a social work degree in Wales qualified (246 out of 251). 94 per cent of these newly qualified social workers registered with the Care Council by 1 June, and 72.8 per cent had obtained a job in social care within a year, which is a decrease of 12.9 per cent compared to last year. Over a third of newly qualified social workers had a social care post at the time they qualified.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are fewer vacancies available and that employers are finding it easier to recruit with more competition for social work jobs.

Of the newly qualified social workers in Wales, 14 did not register with the Care Council but 18 qualified from Universities in England and Scotland and registered with the Care Council. It is worth noting that the number of social workers who qualified outside the UK and registered with the Care Council has almost doubled this year (24 compared to 13).

The number of social workers over 60 continues to rise but the average age remains stable at 46 years old. The ratio of social workers is approximately 1 man to 4 women.

Figures for the framework of Continuing Professional Education and Learning for qualified social workers in Wales (CPEL) are collected in October 2016. However most recent data indicates 493 social workers have registered for the Consolidation Programme, the first part of the framework, and 329 have passed since 2015, 197 of whom passed in the year up to August 2015.

3 Social Worker key points and trends at 1 June 2016

- 6,063 individuals with a social work qualification were on the Register on 1 June 2016. This was an increase since the last Profile of 87 individuals. 91.8 per cent of these individuals were working in social care.
- More social workers joined the Register than left, a net gain of 1.5 per cent. The turnover of social workers leaving the Register was 5.5 per cent (6.5 per cent in 2015)
- Of the 91.8 per cent working in social care 76.4 per cent (4,148) worked in local authority social services, 6.5 per cent worked in the third sector and 4.6 per cent in the private sector.
- Over a quarter (29.8 per cent) of those registrants had moved job within the sector during the last two years, down from 32.9 per cent in 2015
- 98 per cent of students in their final year of social work study in Wales qualified, and 94.3 per cent of those who qualified in Wales registered to work in Wales
- The average age of all social workers on the Register was 46. This compares to an average age of 34 for newly qualified social workers
- Over half, 57.6 per cent (compared to 69 per cent in 2015), of newly qualified social workers had obtained a job as a social worker with a case load in Wales by the 1 June
- By 1 June 2016, 132 newly qualified and registered social workers had completed the CPEL consolidation programme in the 2015 to 2016 period, with further results still to be received.
- The number of individuals who qualified outside the UK and registered in Wales this year has doubled compared to 2015.
- 95.1 per cent of the social workers described themselves as White
- 35.4 per cent described themselves as having some Welsh language ability or fluency

4 What the Care Council is doing

The Care Council continues to progress the implementation of the Continuing Professional Education and Learning (CPEL) Framework for social workers in Wales. All of the CPEL Programmes (the Consolidation Programme for newly qualified social workers, the Experienced Practice in Social Work Programme, the Senior Practice in Social Work Programme and the Consultant Social Work Programme) are now available. Whilst employers fund the Consolidation Programme, the Care Council funds 100 places on the other CPEL Programmes. These are delivered by Cardiff University in alliance with Bangor, Glyndwr and Swansea Universities.

The Care Council has commissioned a 5 year evaluation of the CPEL framework. The evaluation focuses in particular on the impact of the CPEL programmes on social work practice. The second year evaluation report will be published in Autumn 2016.

The Care Council continues to support social workers by the publication of practice guidance. In 2016, 'Openness and honesty when things go wrong: the professional duty of candour'¹ was published. Social workers were also notified about Home Office guidance relating to the new statutory duty to report cases of female genital mutilation.

In 2015 to 17, the Care Council, working with partners, is leading on the national training plan for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. The plan includes core and specialist modules relevant to social workers. More information can be found on the [social care legislation in Wales information and learning hub](#).

5 Data and Analysis

5.1 Number of social workers registered

The number of social workers on the Register has increased to 6,063, a net gain of 87. The increase follows the trend since 2012.

Table 1 – Work category of social workers working in social care

Work Type	Total
Employed in Social Care	5074
Self-Employed in Social Care	282
Employed in Social Care by Agency	191
On Secondment in Social Care	17
Total working in social care	5564

91.8 per cent of social workers on the Register (5,564 social workers) were currently working in social care. Of these, 5.1 per cent (282) were self-employed and 3.4 per cent (191) employed by an agency. These statistics have changed little since 2004.

There were 1.7 per cent of social workers on the Register with a main work address outside Wales, an increase from 74 to 104. This excludes 60 employed by an agency with a registered address outside Wales.

¹ 'Openness and honesty when things go wrong: the professional duty of candour'
<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/edrms/157657/>

The Register of qualified social workers included a small percentage (0.7 per cent) on Part 2 of the Register to work in a social care role where registration is mandatory. This percentage has changed little over the last 3 years. The breakdown is as follows:

- 7 residential child care managers,
- 14 adult care home managers,
- 12 domiciliary care managers,
- 7 residential child care workers,
- 2 adult care home workers.

Table 2 – Social workers not currently working in social care

Work Type	Total
Employment Not Known	142
Unemployed	136
Employed outside Social Care	80
Retired	67
Outside UK	21
Studying - not in employment	20
Career Break	20
Self-Employed Outside Social Care	8
Carer-No Employer	5
Total	499

The majority of social workers not currently practising but on the Register are either unemployed or their employer is unknown to the Care Council (55.7 per cent of those not practising).

5.2 Employment information

- Over three quarters (76.1 per cent) of the 91.8 per cent of registrants (5,564) employed or self-employed in social care were employed by or contracted to local authority social services.

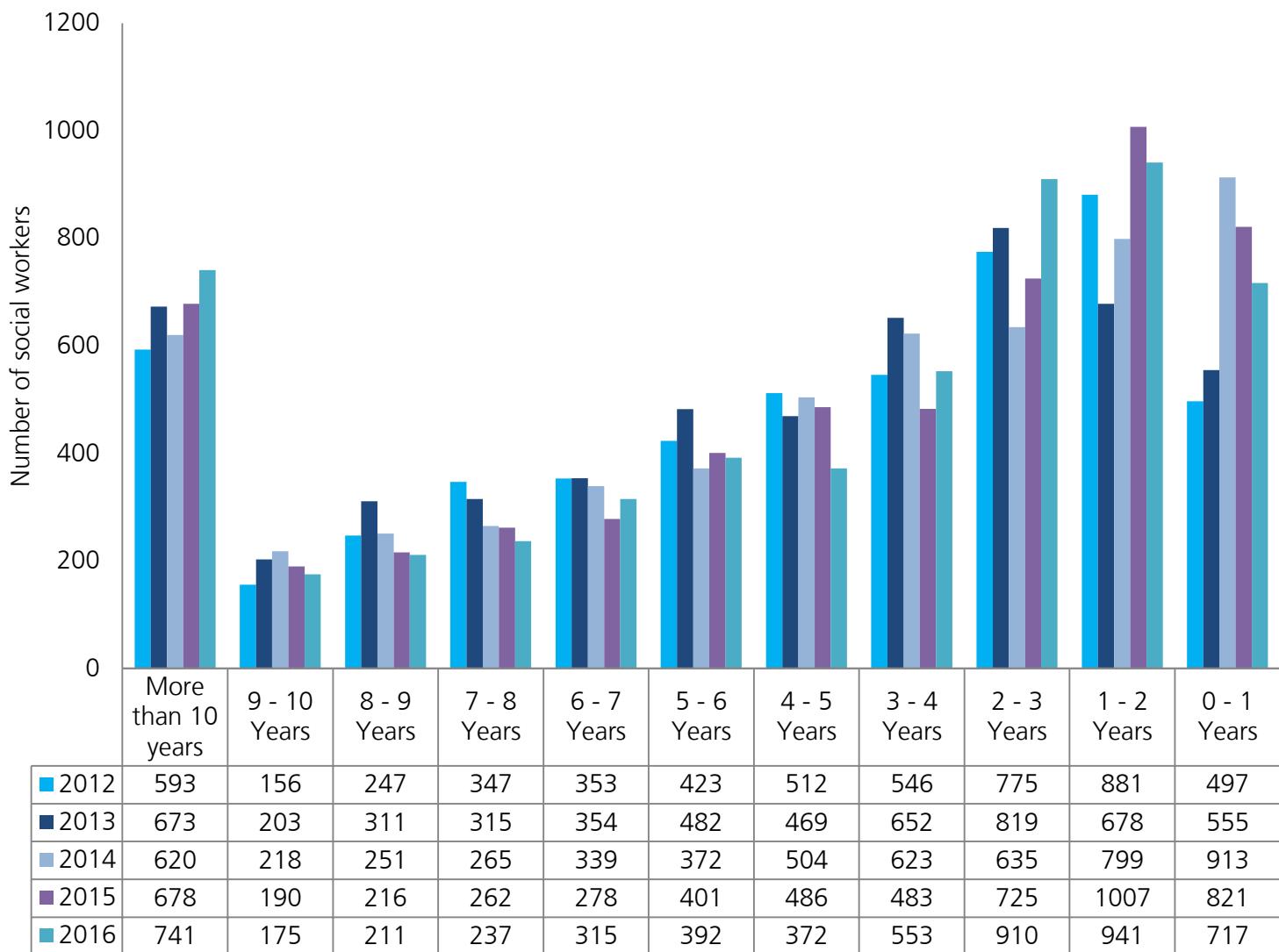
Table 3 – Employment sector of social workers employed or self-employed in social care

Sector	Percentage and number							
	2013		2014		2015		2016	
Local Authority - Social Services	4146	75.2%	4180	75.5%	4246	76.5%	4224	76.1%
Third Sector	368	6.7%	355	6.4%	369	6.7%	364	6.5%
Private	265	4.8%	279	5.0%	274	4.9%	257	4.6%
Self Employed	211	3.8%	223	4.0%	222	4.0%	232	4.2%
Government	164	3.0%	149	2.7%	140	2.5%	140	2.6%
Recruitment Agency/Employment Agency	167	3.0%	184	3.3%	122	2.2%	119	2.1%
Health and Justice	75	1.4%	61	1.1%	71	1.3%	115	2.1%
FE/HE Education	44	0.8%	42	0.8%	53	1.0%	47	0.8%
Regulation/Inspection	46	0.8%	44	0.8%	35	0.6%	32	0.6%
Local Authority - Other	25	0.5%	22	0.4%	15	0.3%	30	0.5%
Total	5511	100%	5539	100%	5547	100%	5560	100%

- The percentages in the table above have changed very little year on year since 2014. The biggest change in percentage has been the number working in health and justice, which has increased from 71 to 115 (2.1 per cent)
- The vast majority of social workers continue to be employed by local authority social services (76.1 per cent).

5.3 Length of time in post

Figure 1 – Length of time in current post



There has continued to be an increase in the number of social workers in post for more than 10 years. This has increased from 12.2 per cent in 2015 to 13.3 per cent in 2016. This percentage was 11.1 per cent in 2012. The number in their current post five years or more has also increased for the first time since 2013.

The number in post for less than a year is lower than it has been since 2013.

Table 4 - Movement of social workers in social care employment into their current post

	Percentage of social workers at 1 June			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
In social care employment or self-employed				
Moved to current post within previous year	10.1%	16.5%	14.8%	12.9%
Moved to current post within previous 2 years	22.3%	30.9%	32.9%	29.8%
In current post 5 years or longer	42.4%	37.3%	36.5%	37.2%
On current post over 10 years	10.1%	11.2%	12.2%	13.3%

5.4 Local authority social services in Wales

The number of social workers on the Register and employed by local authority social services in Wales has decreased from 4,189 in 2015 to 4,148, (68.4 per cent of the Register of social workers and 74.6 per cent of those in social care employment).

Table 5 – Employment category of social workers in local authority social services in Wales

Type of employment	2013	2014	2015	2016
Local authority - social services with a case load	3073	3205	3288	3262
Local authority - social services managing social workers no case load	431	461	460	450
Local authority - social services other posts	420	468	441	436
Total	3924	4134	4189	4148

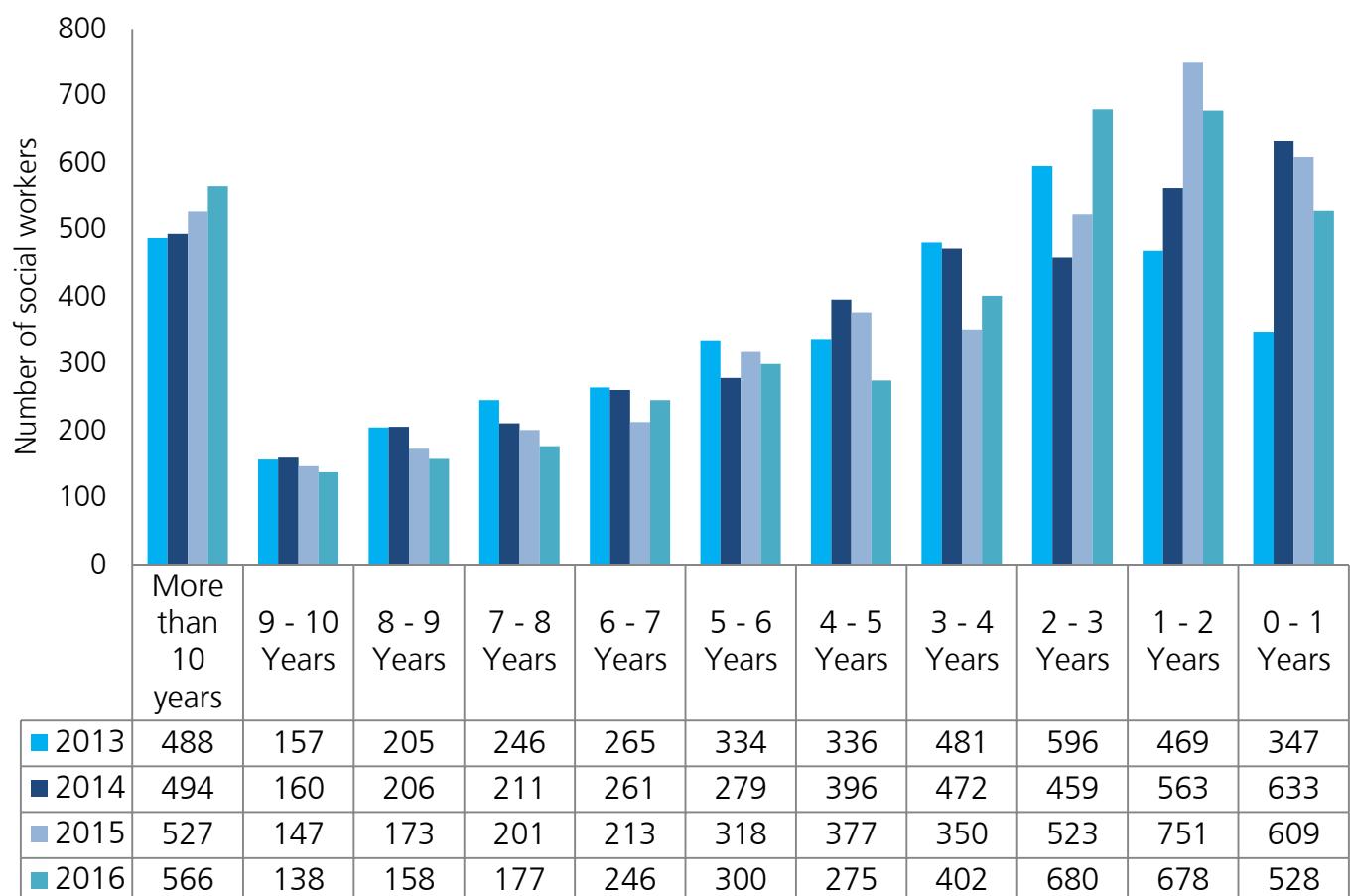
- Over three quarters (78.6 per cent) of social workers working in local authority social services in Wales have a social work case load. This is similar to previous years.

Table 6 – Number of social workers employed by local authority social services in Wales

County	2015	2016
Cardiff	345	354
Swansea	345	348
Rhondda Cynon Taf	347	338
Carmarthenshire	260	259
Caerphilly	227	233
Neath Port Talbot	218	221
Newport	224	221
Bridgend	232	219
Wrexham	199	205
Torfaen	172	182
Gwynedd	186	179
Conwy	186	178
Powys	171	163
Flintshire	166	160
Vale of Glamorgan	142	147
Pembrokeshire	148	146
Denbighshire	143	126
Blaenau Gwent	110	110
Monmouthshire	106	105
Ceredigion	102	104
Merthyr Tydfil	80	75
Isle of Anglesey	80	75
Total	4,189	4,148

Eight of the local authorities have more social workers than in 2015 and 13 have less. One remained the same. There are 41 less social workers employed by local authorities compared to 2015.

Figure 2 – Length of time in current post of social workers working in local authority social services in Wales



The numbers above follow a similar pattern as all social workers , 13.6 per cent have been in their current post over 10 years (13.3 per cent for all social workers) and 29.1 per cent having moved to their current post within the last 2 years (29.8 per cent for all social workers).

5.5 Qualifications held

Figure 3 – Qualifications of social workers on the Register at June 2016

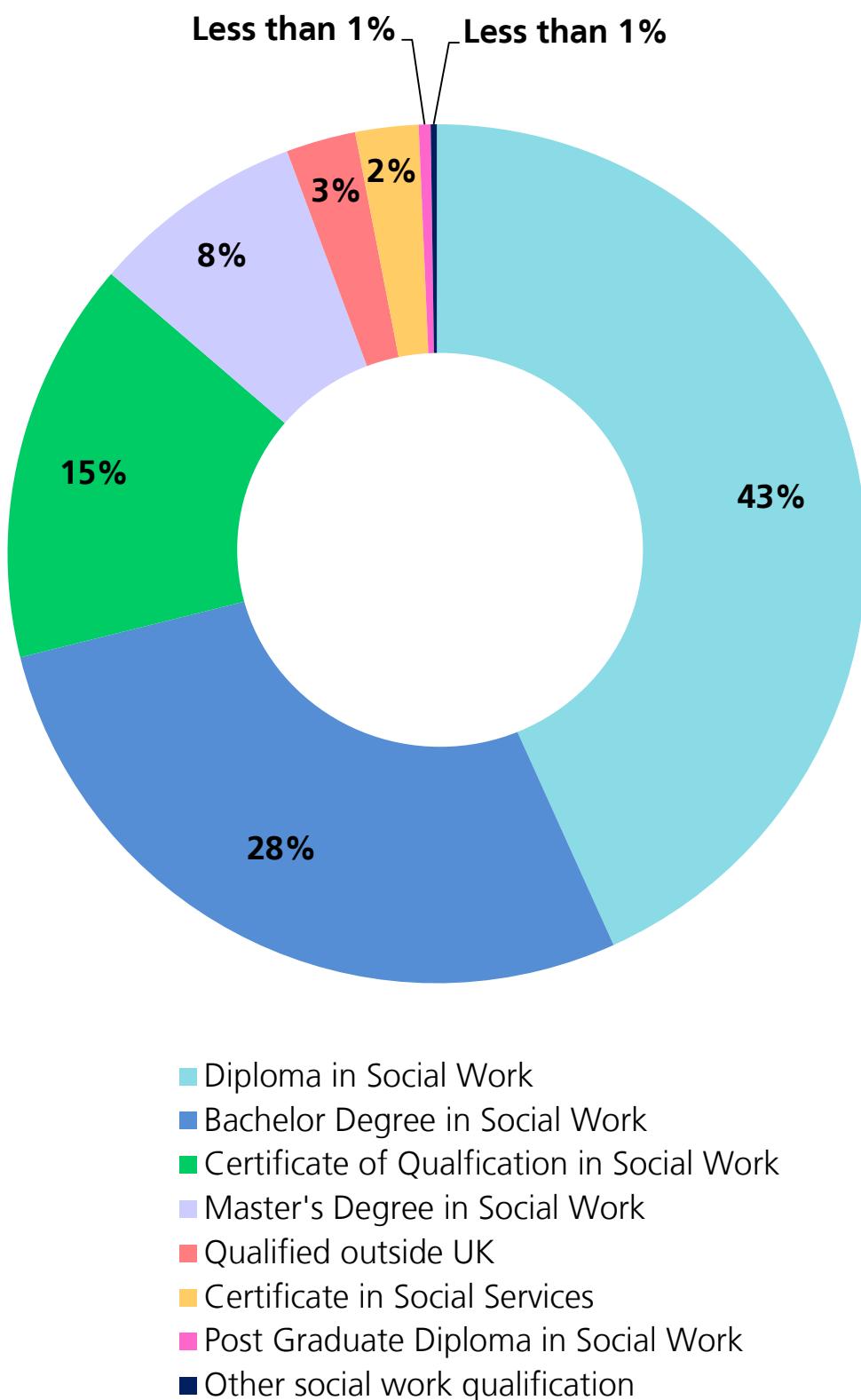
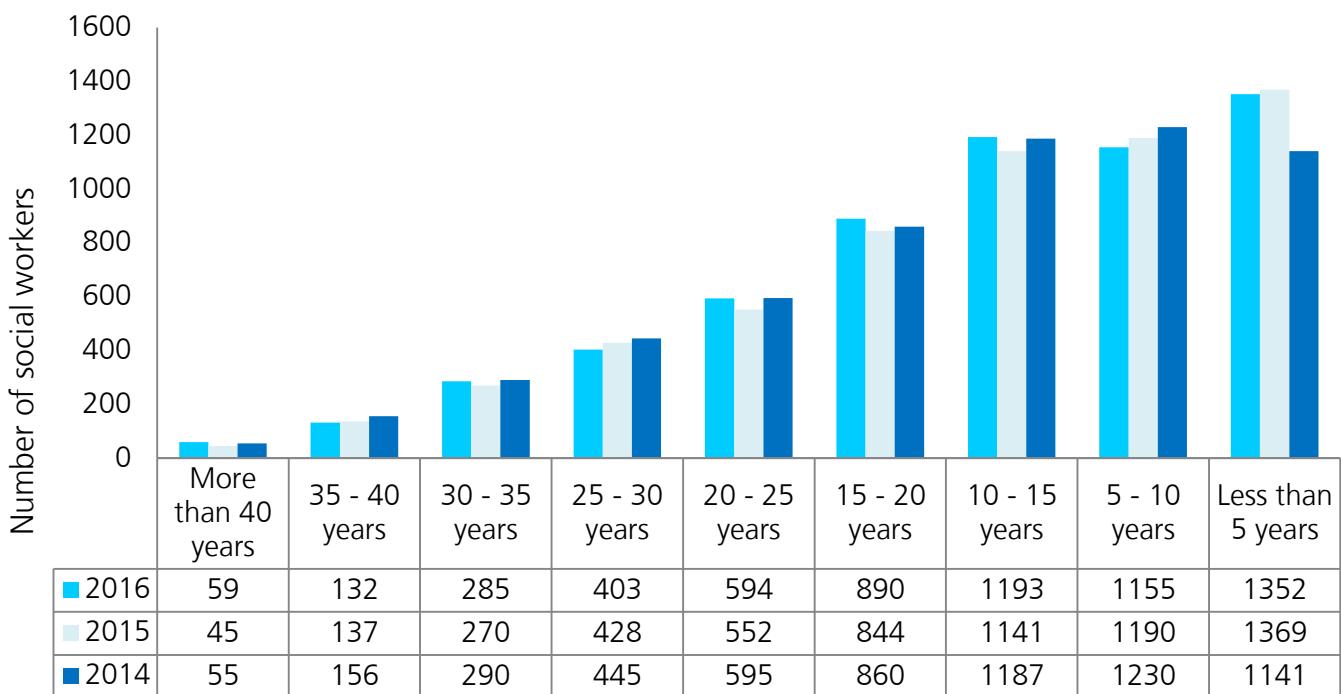


Table 7 – The qualification to enter the profession held by each social worker on the Register at 1 June

Qualification	2014		2015		2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Diploma in Social Work	2777	46.6%	2672	44.7%	2622	43.2%
Degree in Social Work	1372	23.0%	1544	25.8%	1690	27.9%
Certificate of Qualification in Social Work	1053	17.7%	985	16.5%	920	15.2%
Master's Degree in Social Work	369	6.2%	409	6.8%	487	8.0%
Certificate in Social Services	179	3.0%	168	2.8%	144	2.4%
Qualified outside UK	155	2.6%	151	2.5%	159	2.6%
Other social work qualification	31	0.5%	17	0.3%	14	0.2%
Post Graduate Diploma in Social Work	23	0.4%	30	0.5%	27	0.4%
Total	5959	100%	5976	100%	6063	100%

- The majority of social workers on the Register qualified with a Diploma in Social Work or a Degree in Social Work. The percentage with a UK social work degree (Bachelor or Master's degree) continues to increase each year as these have been the required qualifications to enter the profession since 2007.
- The largest proportion of social workers (43.2 per cent) hold the Diploma in Social Work but this continues to fall each year as new social workers qualify.

Figure 4 – Length of time since qualified



There has been a slight decrease in the number of social workers qualified in the last five years compared to 2015. This is primarily because of changes in provision of the social work degree and a lower intake of students as a result of employer workforce planning and number of secondments available.

5.6 Newly qualified social workers

Table 8 – Qualification outcome for final year social work students

Qualification	Number of social workers		
	In the year up to 1 June 2014	In the year up to 1 June 2015	In the year up to 1 June 2016
Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work	2	3	3
Bachelor's Degree in Social Work	209	196	168
Masters Degree in Social Work	44	53	75
Total who qualified in social work	255	252	246
Referred	1	0	1
Deferred	1	0	0
Failed	4	7	4
Total number in final year of study	261	259	251

- 98 per cent of the 251 social work students in their final year of study qualified (246). This is a small decrease compared to the year up to 31 May 2015.

Table 9 - Final year social work students in Wales: summary of registration and employment by 1 June

Status of registrants	Newly qualified social workers in Wales				
	2014		2015		2016
Qualified in Wales between June and May of year prior to the June profile date	255		252		246
Had registered as NQSW by 1 June profile date	223	87.5%	225	89.3%	232 94.3%
Had obtained a job in social care by 1 June	179	70.2%	216	85.7%	179 72.8%
Had obtained a job in social care in Wales by 1 June			212	84.1%	178 72.4%
Had a social work post with a case load in Wales by 1 June	118	46.3%	174	69.0%	143 58.1%
Had a social work post with a case load in a local authority social services in Wales by 1 June			155	61.5%	128 52.0%
Had a social work post with a case load in a local authority social services in Wales by 1 June (including those working through an agency or on secondment)			160	63.5%	129 52.4%

- 94.3 per cent of the students who qualified in 2015 registered in Wales before 1 June 2016. This is a five per cent increase compared to 2015.
- 143 of the 232 who qualified and registered to work in Wales were employed as a social worker with a case load by the 1 of June. This is a decrease of just over 10 per cent compared to 2015. 129 were in a Wales local authority including those working through an agency or on secondment.
- A small percentage (4.8 per cent) of all those who joined the Register as newly qualified had obtained a job as a social worker in other sectors. A further 10 per cent were working in other posts in social care.

Table 10 - Number of social workers qualified in the previous 12 months

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Qualified in Wales and registered in Wales	241	223	225	232
Qualified in Wales and did not register in Wales	18	32	27	14
Subtotal qualified in Wales	259	255	252	246
Qualified outside Wales and registered to work in Wales	28	34	24	18
Total newly qualified on the Register	269	257	249	250

- This year 14 (5.7 per cent) students qualified in but didn't register in Wales. It is not known if these students registered with other social work regulators to work outside Wales.
- 18 students qualified outside Wales but registered to work in Wales. 17 qualified at Universities in England and 1 in Scotland.

5.7 Time taken for newly qualified social workers to obtain a job

Table 11 – Length of time since graduating that all newly qualified social workers registered in Wales and employed in social care in Wales (192 out of 250) started in their current post.

	Newly qualified social workers				
Length of time between qualifying and starting in their current post	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Already in social care job before qualifying	111	76	116	105	89
In current post within 6 months of qualifying	214	174	199	196	169
In current post within 12 months of qualifying	227	213	209	212	192

Of the 250 newly qualified social workers who joined the Register, 35.6 per cent had a social care post at the time they qualified (compared to 42 per cent in 2015) and by the reporting date 76.8 per cent had obtained a post within 12 months of qualifying (compared to 85 per cent in 2015).

Table 12– Employment category of all newly qualified social workers who registered in Wales

Type of employment	2013	2014	2015	2016
Local authority social work with a case load	164	134	160	137
Other posts	23	19	15	25
Local authority no case load	9	45	24	18
Third sector and private sector social work with case load	7	6	8	7
Agency Social Worker	10	5	5	5
Total in social care in Wales	213	209	212	192
Not employed or working outside social care or outside Wales	56	48	37	58
Total	269	257	249	250

The number of newly qualified social workers in employment has dropped compared to previous years. As of 1 June 23.2 per cent of newly qualified social workers hadn't obtained a social work post, compared to 14.9 per cent in 2015. Of those in employment the majority are working for a local authority, however the overall number of newly qualified social workers with a social work case load working for a local authority has dropped from 64.3 per cent in 2015 to 54.8 per cent in 2016.

5.8 Social workers joining and leaving the Register

Table 13 – Number of social workers who left and number who joined the Register

Registrants leaving or joining the Register	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Left the Register	283	255	384	389	327
Joined the Register	400	461	432	406	414
Total on the Register at reporting date	5719	5911	5959	5976	6063
Net increase	117 (2%)	206 (3.6%)	48 (0.8%)	17 (0.3%)	87 (1.5%)

More social workers joined the Register (414) than left the Register (327) in 2015-16, giving the highest net gain since 2013 (1.5 per cent). Overall the number of social workers on the Register has risen each year since 2012.

Table 14 – New registrants: when and how they qualified

New registrants: when and how they qualified	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
NQSW in Wales and joined the Register	249	241	223	225	232
NQSW qualified outside Wales and registered to work in Wales	16	27	33	24	18
Social Worker qualified outside UK	9	14	20	13	24
Qualified with social work degree or postgraduate diploma more than 12 months ago	44	61	54	62	45
Other social work qualification	82	124	102	82	95
Total	400	467	432	406	414

The number of newly qualified social workers joining the Register this year has increased to 250 (60.4 per cent of new registrants).

The number of social workers who had qualified more than a year ago and joined the Register in Wales has increased to 164 (from 157 in 2015). This is primarily due to the number of social workers qualified outside the UK joining the Register almost doubling this year.

5.9 Turnover of social workers and the profile of those who left the Register

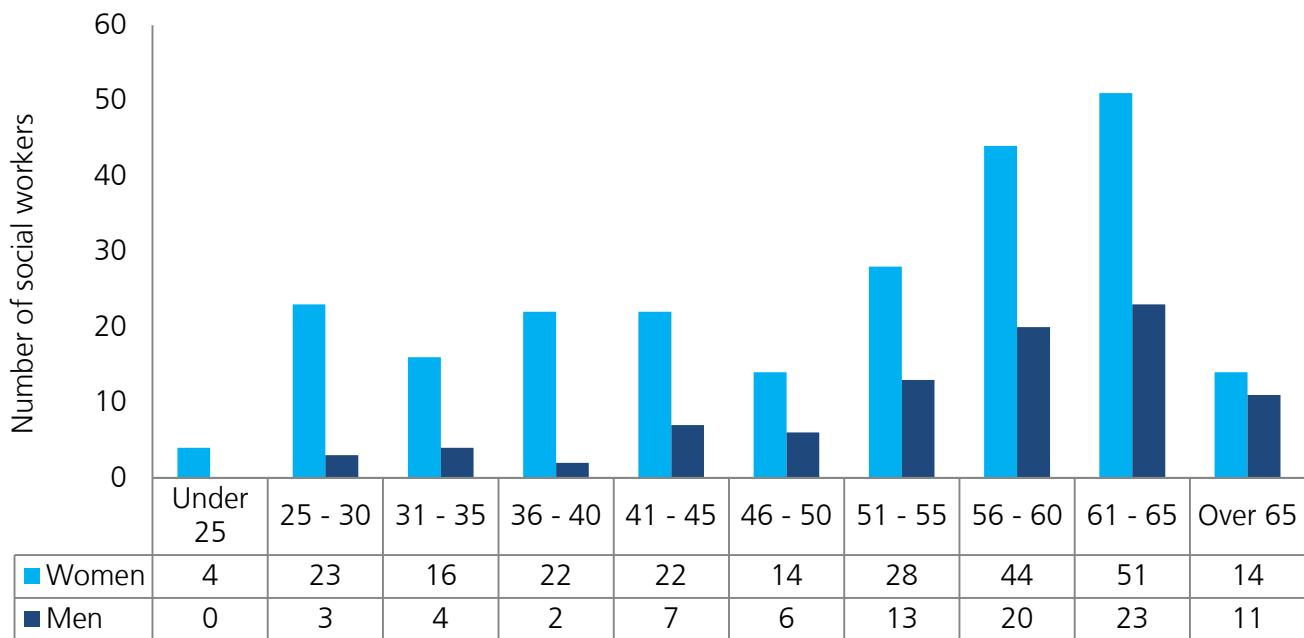
Table 15 – Social workers removed from the Register between 1 June 2015 and 31 May 2016, by removal category

Reason for leaving	Number of social workers		
	2014	2015	2016
Did not maintain registration	371	373	317
Deceased	4	8	7
Removed by Conduct or Health Committee	3	4	1
ISO - Interim Suspension Order	2	3	0
Suspended	1	1	2
Renewal refused (PRTL shortfall)	1	0	0
Total	382	389	327

The turnover of social workers leaving the Register was 5.5 per cent, compared to 6.5 per cent in both 2014 and 2015.

Of the 317 who did not maintain their registration, 139 contacted the Care Council to voluntarily remove themselves from the Register. The most common reason given was retirement (72 social workers, 22 per cent of all those that left the Register). In addition, 18 had moved to a new job which did not require registration and 16 were working in social care outside Wales.

Figure 5 – Age and sex of social workers who left the Register



The most common age group of those who left, 42.2 per cent, was 56 to 65. However, 9.2 per cent who left the Register in Wales were under 30 years old. Of those who left the Register in Wales, 61 had started their current employment in the last two years and 26 had been working for a local authority. Just under half of the individuals who left the Register were working with children (161 of the 327 who left).

Of the social workers renewing their registration, over 99 per cent had undertaken at least 90 hours of training and learning (PRTL) in their three-year registration period. Only four registrants gave their reason for leaving as unable to meet the PRTL requirement.

5.10 Age and sex profile

Table 16 – Age profile of social workers

Age Group	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Under 25	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%	0.9%	0.8%
30 and under	9.5%	9.5%	9.4%	9.5%	9.1%
31 to 50	51.9%	51.7%	51.7%	51.0%	51.0%
Over 50	38.5%	38.7%	38.9%	39.5%	39.9%
Over 60	8.9%	9.4%	9.5%	10.4%	11.0%

Apart from the number of social workers aged over 60, which has increased from 10.4 per cent in 2015 to 11.0 per cent in 2016, all other percentages have changed very little. The percentage over 60 has increased annually and risen by 2.1 per cent since 2012.

Figure 6 – Age and sex of all registered social workers at June 2016

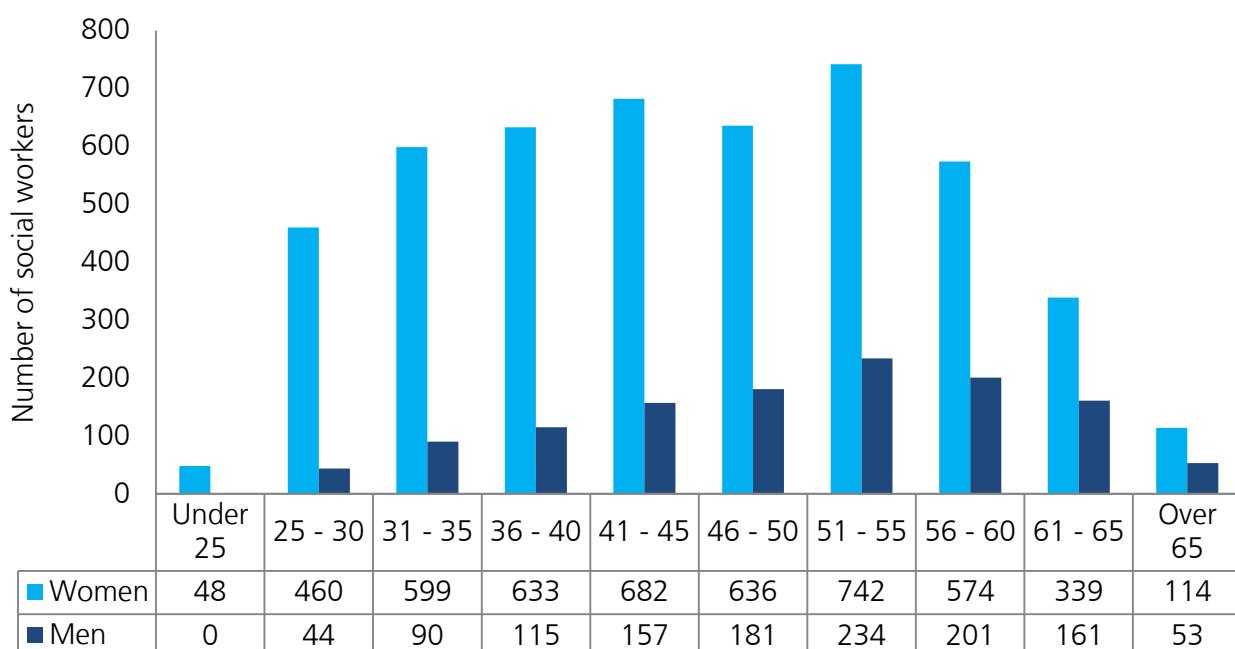
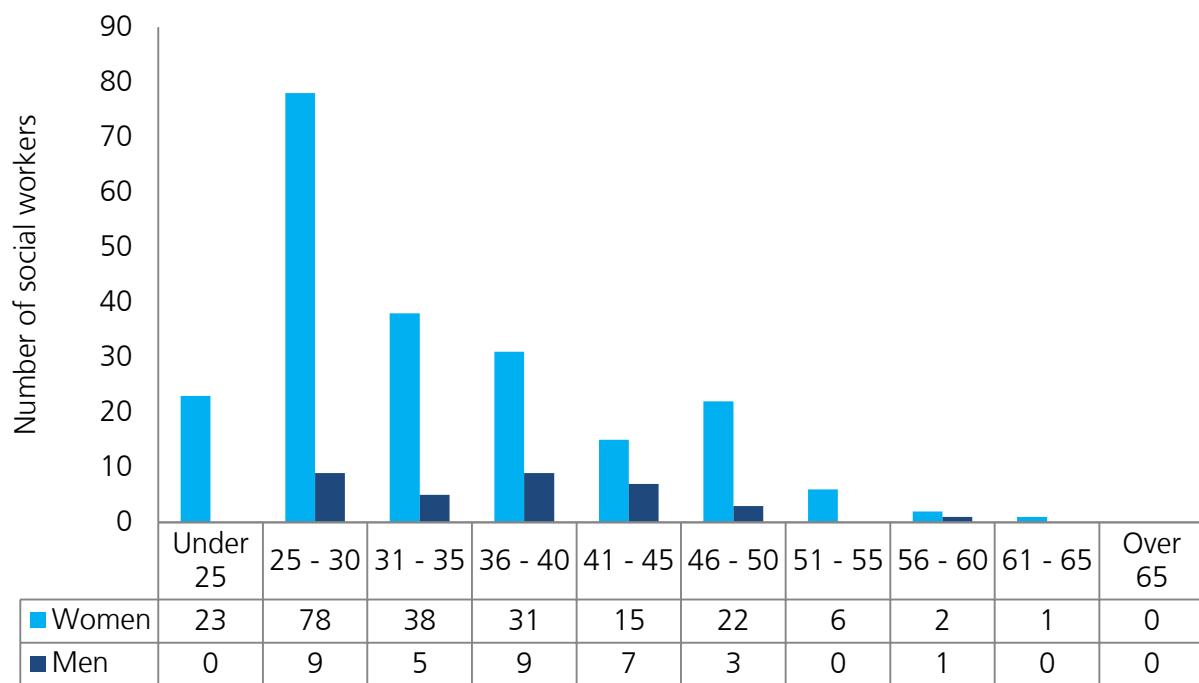


Figure 7 – Age and sex of newly qualified social workers joining the Register in 2016



The ratio of social workers was approximately one man to four women.

The percentage of newly qualified social workers who are women has increased from 83.9 per cent in 2015 to 86.4 per cent this year. The percentage of men has decreased from 16.1 per cent in 2015 to 13.6 per cent in 2016. 61.2 per cent of newly qualified social workers are under 35 years compared to 20.5 per cent of all social workers on the Register.

The average age of all social workers on the Register has remained at 46 years old since 2012. The average age of newly qualified social workers remains as 34.

There has been a small but steady year on year decrease in the percentage of men on the Register from 21.9 per cent in 2012 to 20.4 per cent in 2016.

5.11 Diversity and Welsh language profile

Table 17 - Disability declarations

Disability Declared	Percentage of social workers				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
No	97.7%	97.7%	97.9%	97.9%	97.9%
Yes	2.3%	2.3%	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%

Out the 78.3 per cent of social workers who had supplied monitoring information, 2.1 per cent declared a disability, unchanged since 2014.

Table 18 - Ethnic diversity

Ethnicity	Percentage
White, White British, White Welsh, White Irish	87.1%
Any other White background	7.9%
Black African	0.9%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	<0.5%
Black Caribbean	<0.5%
Other Ethnicity	<0.5%
Any other mixed background	<0.5%
Asian or Asian British Indian	<0.5%
Black or Black British African	<0.5%
Indian	<0.5%
Any other Asian background	<0.5%
Mixed White and Asian	<0.5%
Mixed White and Black African	<0.5%
Black or Black British Caribbean	<0.5%
Any other Black background	<0.5%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<0.5%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	<0.5%
Chinese	<0.5%
Bangladeshi	<0.5%
Pakistani	<0.5%
Total responded	77.1%

Of the 77.1 per cent of social workers who provided information about their ethnicity, 95.1 per cent declared they were White. This is a small decrease compared to 2015 (95.5 per cent)

Table 19 – Declared Welsh language ability of newly qualified social workers compared to all social workers on the Register

	2013 to 2014		2014 to 2015		2015 to 2016	
	Students who qualified in June 2013 to May 2014	All registered social workers at June 2014	Students who qualified in June 2014 to May 2015	All registered social workers at June 2015	Students who qualified in June 2015 to May 2016	All registered social workers at June 2016
Fluent Welsh	12.1%	13.5%	11.6% (28)	13.5%	16.5% (41)	13.6%
Some Welsh	32%	20.4%	31.6% (76)	21.0%	29.8% (74)	21.7%
No Welsh	55.9%	66.1%	56.6% (136)	65.5%	53.6% (133)	64.6%
Total declared some Welsh	44.1%	33.9%	43.3% (104)	34.5%	46.4% (115)	35.4%

The Welsh language monitoring data provided by 78.3 per cent of social workers showed a slight increase in social workers declaring they have some Welsh (either some or fluent) to 35.4 per cent compared with 2015 (34.5 per cent)

5.12 Social Work Continuing Professional Education and Learning (CPEL)

The Consolidation Programme for social workers in their first social work role after qualifying is the first stage of the CPEL Framework. First introduced in 2013, many employers now require their newly qualified social workers to complete it. Completion of the Consolidation Programme is a Care Council requirement for all social workers qualifying from April 2016.

It is too soon to report on the figures from the other CPEL Programmes: the Experienced Practice in Social Work and Senior Practice in Social Work Programmes which commenced in 2014 and the Consultant Social Work Programme which commenced in 2015.

Table 20 Number of completed and incomplete CPEL qualifications

Number of social workers			
2015		2016	
Number completed and passed	Number withdrawn/failed	Number completed and passed	Number withdrawn/failed
Total	197	32	132

Note: Full results are received by October each year, so the figures for 2016 represent those received this year to date, and the figures for 2015 have been updated from those that appeared in last year's Profile.

Final results for 2014 to 2015 show that 86 per cent of those undertaking the Consolidation Programme in this period completed and passed, and 14 per cent failed or withdrew. Results received at the time of this Profile show that, in 2015 to 2016, 91.7 per cent have completed and passed and 8.3 per cent have failed or withdrawn to date. Final figures for this period will be received in October and appear in next year's Profile.

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