



# **Review of Social Work**

## **Future Skills**

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## Executive Summary

There is an expressed need for greater attention by social work educators to ensure that their programmes make explicit where Future Skills, including digital literacy and competence, social media knowledge, creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are included and how they align with the current SiSWE. The survey data from social workers, NQSWs and HEIs suggests there are discrepancies between what social work employers/managers expect of their workforce and what is being delivered in terms of these Future Skills. This may be in part to the demands of an already stretched curriculum in resource constrained HEI environments. Meanwhile social work agencies in local authorities and third sector organisations are experiencing considerable financial pressures, dealing with increased demands for services amidst seemingly unrelenting austerity measures and are thus looking at new entrants into the profession to bring "Future Skills" to complement existing discipline knowledge, relational and person centred approaches and theories to inform and influence future practice.

The digital and social media landscape has changed the way we communicate, and there are clear examples of how new technologies have been embedded in practice innovatively creatively. Similarly innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are arguably the defining characteristics of social work practice in terms of how these have been used to empower vulnerable people, transform communities and reshape services. Imaginative responses to the challenges of current social work practice in a complex environment are continually required.

There are some simple measures which social work educators both in academic and fieldwork contexts can implement which could contribute towards reducing the mismatch between the expectations of employers and the capacities of HEIs to deliver this education and support the development of these Future Skills which are outlined in the recommendations of this report. This might require some adjustments to existing programmes. Continuation and development of already effective knowledge exchange partnerships with agencies, service users and other academic disciplines could address the perceived and actual skill deficits for existing practitioners and those students undertaking social work education.

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## Area of Inquiry

This project focussed on exploring the “future skills” of social workers and sought to respond to these questions:

- What “future skills” are currently included in qualifying social work education and training?
- What “future skills” do employers require social workers to have when they enter practice?
- Where and in what format can social work qualifying programmes embed future skills training and education?

We defined “future skills” with reference to existing thinking on digital literacies and new media literacy and also focussed on social media skills, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in accordance with the original project brief.

## Literature review

Here we provide a brief overview of themes stemming from the literature related to digital and social media technologies and their inclusion in social work education to date, as well as some observations about innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in social work education.

### **Digital developments: regulations and ethical social work practice**

The Scottish Government Digital Strategy (Scottish Government 2012) outlines the ambitions for supporting digital participation and capitalising on digital technologies to improve digital public services. Most UK universities have established codes of conduct for students in terms of using social media, as well as providing training and support to student to use digital and social media. In Scotland social work students are registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and therefore bound by codes of conduct to the professional body which regulates social work education and practice. Ethical issues stemming from the increased availability and use of new digital technologies led BASW the professional associations to comment: *“social workers need to be aware of and knowledgeable about technological developments and understand the impact, use and advantages as well as possible ethical concerns and risks in*

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*relation to themselves, the people they are working with and their employers”* (BASW 2012, p.5). They also stipulate a need to reflect on the changes in the way we communicate and consider how this impacts on practice in terms of maintaining service users’ rights, trust and confidentiality. Agencies should be proactive in establishing these and involve social media users, legal representatives and human resources departments. In the spirit of participation, collaboration and transparency it would also be considered good practice to include service users and carers in designing such policies (Kimball and Kim 2013). Watling and Rogers (2012) identified common themes specific to social work practice in terms of digital exclusion and divides suggesting that people who receive services are more likely to experience this divide and so the profession would need to be sensitive to this in developing new ways of working with people who use social services. There are also key practical issues about connectivity and about confidentiality and social workers needing to be clear about their use of digital and social media when working with service users so as not to contravene data protection and service user confidentiality (Mishna 2012). Indeed Goldkind and Wolf (2014) argue that the profession needs to review the way values are shaped and revised by new digital technology developments.

Developments in digital technologies have led to the introduction of innovative and creative ways of accessing knowledge and information for social services (IRISS 2016) and specifically in social work education and practice. There are a small number of Apps available for social work education and practice: child development for different age ranges (Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Campbell & McColgan 2014; NISCC, Campbell & McColgan 2015a and NISCC, McColgan & Campbell 2015b;) for social workers focussing on substance misuse (Campbell & ASCERT 2015) and for student to engage with ethical and values issues when using social media (Cooner 2013a). There are a growing number of service user feedback platforms such as the Patient Feedback App (Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust 2016) and Patient Survey App (iCheckup, LLC 2016) and for social work feedback (Westwood et al under review). In addition several practice developments have emerged in recent years which have explored the risks and potentials for integrating technologies in practice with children in the looked after system (BAAF 2010;Stevenson 2010; Fitch 2012;Fursland 2014; MOMO 2016).

## **Digital Competence and digital literacy**

There are several elements of digital literacy which include, learning skills, ITC literacy, career and identity management, information literacy, digital scholarship (academic or professional), media literacy and communication and collaboration (i.e. participation in digital networks) JISC (2015). White and Le Cornu (2011) distinguish between those with the confidence to use digital technology (digital residents) and those who are just beginning to engage with technology (digital visitors). Skills and knowledge to navigate, select and interact with digital technology comfortably and with confidence are essential in this new landscape (Belshaw 2011) and specifically for social workers (Watling and Rogers 2012).

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Advances in technology and digital citizenship are also pushing forward the development of new ways of consulting with and gaining feedback from people who use social services. Research has established that local authorities are using digital technologies in customer services orientated aspects of their work (BDO 2012; BDO 2013) however they need support to try out ideas and implement new methods of working with people who use public services, as well as strategies to guard against stress for workers of using new technologies in the workplace (Bucher, Fieseler, and Suphan 2013).

Thackray (2014) argues that students digital skills are not homogenous she also highlighted that there were many technical issues that students needed to be able to understand and navigate to use new technologies for their learning and development and to appreciate the issues related to personal/professional boundaries recommending that student social workers might benefit from having separate online profiles.

### **Social media in social work education**

There is a growing evidence base for the inclusion and benefits of social media in higher education in social sciences and in healthcare (Lupton 2014; Smith and Lambert 2014; Poore 2014) and specifically in social work education (Rosental Gelman and Tosone 2010; Rafferty 2011; Kimball and Kim 2013; Westwood 2014; Mishna *et al.* 2014; Brady, McLeod and Young 2015). Fang *et al.* (2014) suggest several benefits to social work students of including; facilitating interactions between academics, enhancing peer to peer education, promoting the sharing of knowledge, ideas and interests in specific topic areas, and encouraging reflective and participatory learning experiences, supporting student engagement beyond the traditional boundaries of the classroom, enabling students to connect to tutors, and to academics (Young 2014). There are also potentials for developing communities of learning and exploring boundaries issues (Singh Cooner 2013a) supporting acquisition of knowledge skills and values using Facebook (Singh Cooner 2014; Taylor 2014) connecting online with students during application and induction periods (Iverson Hitchcock and Battista 2013; McKendrick 2014) and with students in remote areas (Kilpeläinen, Päykkönen and Sankala 2011). There are also examples of social media platforms being used to enhance students learning and development in UK and international social work education programmes (Megele 2012; Singh Cooner 2013b; Singh Cooner 2014; Westwood, Taylor and McKendrick 2014; Singh Cooner 2015; Taylor 2015).

Academic advocates of social media in social work education argue that it supports students to develop a professional online identity commensurate with social work values, provides a wealth of opportunities to the profession in terms of promoting social justice, developing users' e-literacy to stay updated on policy and legislation changes which affect their practice (Iverson-Hitchcock and Battista 2013). There is a need for the development of specific detailed guidance and training to prepare students and newly qualified social workers for the ethical challenges that arise in the global social media arena given the technological advances being made which influence and shape social work

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practice, and as well as a greater awareness of the barriers to use and the risks involved. (Harbeck, Voshel and Wesala 2014; Westwood, Taylor and McKendrick (2014). Smith and Lambert (2014), whose systematic review focussed on the use of social media platforms in university based healthcare education, reported that there is a lack of research data to quantify the time and resources needed to develop these approaches to learning and teaching strategies.

## **Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship**

Creativity and innovation in social work education is embedded in the skills which social work students develop and draw on in practice to engage with and deliver effective, flexible and person centred services (Trevithick 2005), although the term creativity is little used (Jackson and Burgess 2005). Examples include study tours, service user inputs to programmes, role play assessed interviews, oral examinations, community mapping, group work activities, problem solving, arts based activities, storytelling drama, self-observation, presentations, and case study explorations. Kirkendall and Krishen (2014) argue that creative approaches to social work education facilitates an interpersonal and emotional connection which engender a deeper and sustained learning experience.

Creativity and innovation skills is also evident in the wide range of disciplinary knowledge available to the profession (e.g. health, sociology, psychology), and theories (group work, person centred approaches, empathy, attachment, psychosocial models, systems theories, solution focussed approaches etc....) available to social work students. Working with service users creatively involves partnership models of practice, multi-agency collaboration and requires reflection, imagination and vision to do things differently, whilst also helping people to deal with complexity, the impact of oppression, disadvantage and abuse (Jackson and Burgess 2005).

Examples of creativity are clearly evident in students' assessed academic work and in their practice learning reports and portfolios of evidence. Finding new solutions to existing social issues through creation and innovation in social work education might include using play therapy techniques and approaches when working with children, and communication strategies working with adults with learning disabilities (visuals materials and digital resources). Creativity also relies on the quality of relationships between agencies, practitioners and service users and their inclusion in social work education programmes as well as funding to support these approaches. The demands of the current curriculum to ensure that students can achieve the standards required versus the need to develop creative and innovative approaches in their work can act as a barrier to including these skills in social work education. Creativity and innovation skills in social work education are not as explicit as they could be and this is recognised in the literature.

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In their study Kirkendall and Krishen (2014) found that the classroom was perceived as a safe place to explore creativity promoting a wider understanding of the social work profession an ability to think 'outside of the box'. Specifically group activities bring increased exposure to new ideas with long lasting effects. Students in the study described creative learning as having opportunities to undertake atypical assignments, taking risks without the fear of being judged, and promoting high levels of independence a willingness to use their initiative and being flexible so as to respond to the complexity of practice. Creativity can also be seen in the personalised learning processes common in social work education which puts students in touch with their own learning and development needs, increases self-awareness (better understanding of social issues) deeper levels of learning and retention of knowledge.

In the UK social services have been provided by a mixed economy with contributions from the state, private for profit organisations and from charitable organisations and sponsor donation. There is a long tradition of criticism of the way in which politicians assume that state funded provision reduces the imaginative and creative, innovative capacity of employees in public services and specifically in social work. A social worker turned entrepreneur describes their experience of working with responsible committed social workers willing to think about and implement creative solutions, and continuing to do this as the owner of a Community Interest Company (Cic) (Whitwell 2012). Innovation funding for new ways of tackling social problems has led to the development and transformation of practice in some instances and individual and collaborations of social workers have begun to orient themselves towards working for themselves becoming directors and owners of companies rather than employees. Entrepreneurship marries business acumen with a social mission (Berzin 2012). Social work education has yet to fully embrace entrepreneurship principally because profit making from other people's disadvantage and oppression is incongruent with the wider social work mission (Germak and Singh 2010).

Entrepreneurship and innovation require some risk taking on the part of social workers in order to stretch and indeed transgress boundaries and traditional approaches to delivering social services. Currently qualifying social work education in Scotland is designed to equip students with skills for practice in public sector agencies (local authorities) and in third sector organisations. The inclusion of innovation and entrepreneurial skills requires shifts in the curriculum to allow students with opportunities to develop these and implement them. Whilst third sector agencies have some degree of flexibility to innovate the economic climate acts as a barrier to implementation, rather than a facilitator.



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## Other sources of data used in the study

Ethical approval for the project was granted in December 2016 and a brief review of the literature was undertaken. The online audit tool for HEIs was designed by IRISS our partners in this project and was launched in January 2016. The audit included 24 questions and took about 30 minutes to complete. The online quantitative survey tool for Social work students, newly qualified social workers and employers/managers was also launched again in January 2016.

### Demographic data: survey participants by role and gender

Participants	Number	Percent %	Female	Male
Student	77	52.4	64	13
Newly Qualified Social Worker	29	19.7	23	6
Employer/manager	41	27.9	34	7

In all categories of role it was mostly females who responded to the survey, and most of the responses (52.4%) came from student social workers.

## Outline of key themes

### Student, NQSW and Employer/manager Survey findings

The survey was designed to capture responses from student social workers, newly qualified social workers (NQSW) and employers/managers. The survey questions did not distinguish where the social work education took place, but simply asked about the course or social work study and so responses refer to all aspects of the course both University based and field work that is the standard educational provision for social work students in Scotland. The questions gathered data in the following areas: basic demographics, digital skills, social media skills and abilities, as well as innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. Participants were asked to rate their abilities in certain areas and were invited to expand on examples of where innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship had been demonstrated (see Appendix 1 for the Survey questions).

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## **Digital Competence and digital literacy**

### **Statistical skills: basic statistical techniques (correlations, producing graphs)**

Nearly a third (31.7%) of employers/managers reported that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the basic statistical skills of NQSWs. The majority of NQSWs (89.2) reported that they hardly or never needed these skills. A third (33% of students rated themselves poorly in this area with only 30% stating that their courses equipped them with these skills.

### **Spread sheets (keeping track of information)**

Nearly 40% of students rated themselves poorly in this area, and 60% of NQSWs reported that this skill was not needed or hardly needed in practice. Almost 30% of employers/managers were satisfied or quite satisfied that NQSWs were sufficiently equipped with these skills.

### **Using the internet to search for information**

Nearly all (95.2%) of employers and managers surveyed were very satisfied or satisfied that NQSWs had these skill. Similarly the vast majority (94.7%) of students rated their internet search skills as very good or good, with 68% stating that their social work courses equipped them with these skills. Almost 70% of NQSWs reported that their social work courses equipped them with these skills and the majority (almost 86%) reported that they needed these skills for practice.

### **Online tutorials**

Almost two thirds (63% of employers/managers were satisfied or very satisfied with NQSWs having online tutorial/problem solving skills. Just over a third (34%) of students and 55% of NQSWs reported that their social work courses equipped them with skills to access and use online tutorials for problem solving. Almost two thirds (60% of students rated themselves as having good or very good skills in this area, whilst 65% of NQSWs reported that they hadn't needed these skills for practice.

### **Critically assess online information**

Over three quarters (77%) of current social work students rated their ability to critically assess online information as very good or good, and half of the NQSWs reported that they needed these skills a lot or quite a lot in social work practice.

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Over a third (36%) of employers/managers were satisfied or very satisfied with NQSWs skills in this area, but over a quarter (27%) were dissatisfied.

## **Social media and online professionalism**

### **Professional representation on social media**

The majority (86%) of students and 93% of NQSWs reported that their social work course equipped them with the knowledge to represent themselves professionally on social media. Conversely though 40% of employers/managers reported that NQSWs did not have sufficient awareness of this.

### **Ethical issues surrounding contact with service users via social media**

Almost three quarters of students and nearly 80% of NQSWs reported that their social work course equipped them with the knowledge regarding social media contact with service users. Almost half (48%) of employers /managers reported that NQSWs did not have enough awareness of these issues.

### **The privacy rights of service users online**

Over half of employers/managers (55%) reported that NQSWs did not have sufficient awareness of these issues, and almost 38% of NQSWs. 56% of student social workers reported they had sufficient awareness of these rights of service users.

### **Creating online professional connections**

Only a minority of students (17%) and NQSWs (21%) reported that their course equipped them with knowledge regarding online professional connections. Over a third of students surveyed reported that they had very good or good knowledge in this area. Less than 20% of NQSWs reported that they needed this knowledge very much for social work practice. A third of managers surveyed reported that this knowledge was needed for practice.

### **Initiate or participate in group chats on social media with social work peers**

Almost half (49%) of students surveyed reported that their course had equipped them with these skills, and 58% reported having very good or good skills in this

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area. 44% of NQSWs reported having skills in this area but over half reported that they did not need these skills in social work practice. Just over a quarter (27%) of employers and manager surveyed reported that they were satisfied with NQSWs abilities in this area.

### **Using a Twitter hashtag (to participate in or contribute to a discussion using Twitter)**

Almost a third of employer/managers reported that this was a skill needed by NQSWs. Just under half of students (47%) surveyed reported that they had very good or good abilities in using twitter hashtag, and just over 10% of NQSWs.

### **Share documents online which peers can edit**

Over three quarters of employers/managers were satisfied or very satisfied in NQSWs abilities in this area. 39% of students and 38% of NQSWs reported that their social work course equipped them in this area, with almost 70% of students rating their ability in this area as very good or good. 44% of NQSWs however felt that this was not needed for social work practice.

## **Entrepreneurial skills, creativity and innovation skills**

### **Entrepreneurial Skills (starting or running businesses/project, especially when this involves taking risks)**

Nearly three quarters of the employers/manager surveyed (70.2%) reported that these skills are important or very important for practice.

Students and NQSWs were asked about how their social work studies assisted them to develop entrepreneurial skills: 82% of NQSWs and 70% of students reported that they were not sufficiently covered or not covered at all.

### **Creativity (the ability to use skills and imagination to produce something new)**

The majority (78%) of employer/managers reported that creativity skills were important for social work practice whilst almost 68% of NQSW and almost 66% of social work students reported that their social work studies had helped them to develop these to a great or to some extent.

## **Innovation (coming up with new ideas to improve practice)**

The majority (78%) of employers/managers rated innovation skills as important for social work practice, and 65% of NQSW and 75% of student social workers reported that their social work studies developed these to a great or some extent.

## **HEI audit**

This was circulated to all HEI providers of qualifying Social Work education in Scotland and was completed by 5 of them.

Table 1 to show summary of responses to questions about digital skills included in social work courses in Scotland

<b>Searching and selecting relevant information using online search engines</b>	
Using search engines (e.g. Google) to look for information on the web	Four HEIs provided support for this for students, one respondent reported that students were expected to know how to do this themselves
Assessing the accuracy of information found on the web	All respondents reported that training or support was provided in their department or was available in the HEI
Students use online help to diagnose and solve problems they encounter using web-based tools	Two of the three responses to this question reported that support is offered including by their University IT departments. One respondent deemed this as a matter for each student.
Students know how to install and use a web browser other than the default	This was reported in one HEI, but wasn't known in the three other responses.
Students receive training in online safety, responsibility and ethical issues	All respondents reported that this training was available either in the department or in the university library.
Using bookmarking services (e.g. Diigo, Pocket, Instapaper) to 'remember' useful websites	Three HEIs reported that training was provided in the department whilst two reported that students were expected to know how to do this.
<b>Using social media to support and enhance student learning</b>	
Guidance on using social media (SSSC and/or BASW)	All respondents reported that this was included in their course.
Professional boundaries regarding social networking	All respondents reported that this was included in their course.
Identity management	Two respondents did not know if this was available on the course, whilst two reported that it wasn't a part of the course.

Risks of sharing content	Three respondents reported that the risks were covered in the course, with one reporting that this information wasn't included.
Ethics of sharing : friending and tagging	Two respondents did not know if this was available on the course, whilst two reported that it wasn't a part of the course.
Creating and using blogs	Three respondents reported that training was provided in the department or was available in the HEI and one reported that students were expected to know how to do this. One respondent also reported that students had their own Facebook sites (microblogging) and courses used Wikis to communicate with them.
Participation in global networks and professional communities, e.g. LinkedIn, Mendeley, Academia.edu	Only one HEI reported that training or support was available for this in the HEI from the Careers department and in a booklet on professional writing which also covers the basics of online communication, whilst other respondents reported that students were expected to know this, or did not deem it relevant.
Using tools and services such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Scoop.it, Diigo, Pocket and Facebook for current awareness and personal learning	Three HEIs reported that students were expected to know how to do this, with only one reporting that they offered support/training for this in their department.
Students create media sharing accounts, e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Instagram	Two of the respondents did not know if students used these skills, one respondent thought it wasn't relevant and one reported that it wasn't relevant. Respondents commented that this was not a specific requirement of the course and that perhaps a large majority of students might be doing this individually for personal use, but this was not shared with the social work staff. This would not be a specific requirement for the course but each student individually would create an account if they see it as necessary.
Students have support to build a digital profile, CV, learning journal or portfolio	Three respondents reported that training was provided in the department or was available in the HEI and one reported that students were expected to know how to do this. One respondent reported that the University's career service supported final year students for their future career and this included CV preparation, writing job applications, succeeding at interviews etc. as well as involving social work alumni to share their experience of succeeding at interviews, post-qualifying work experience etc. Students are also encouraged to keep a portfolio of their learning

Students create collaborative documents, e.g. using Google Docs	Three respondents reported that this was integral to several elements of successful completion of the course specifically in group work and action learning sets. One respondent reported that this was not a requirement.
Students use online tutorials to learn simple tasks, e.g. how to set up a blog or how Twitter hashtags work	Three respondents reported that they support and encourage these skills. Respondents reported that students are expected to have basic IT skills and there was online training offered and links to relevant existing online material for use within blogs and portfolio creation where necessary. One respondent reported that this was a matter for each student.
<b>Digital skills for teaching and learning</b>	
Open access publishing. What is it, what does it mean?	Three HEIs reported that training for this was available in their institutions' libraries and one reported that they did not deem this relevant.
Teaching staff have skills in online facilitation (e.g. moderating online forums or communities of practice)	Three respondent reported that training was provided in the department or in the HEI whilst one reported that staff were expected to have these skills
Our course tasks make use of digital resources, e.g. video, podcasts, images/photos	All respondents reported that their courses make use of digital resources, e.g. video, podcasts, images/photos, Youtube, TED talks, images from the internet, film clips, photos and podcasts. One respondent commented that they are starting to explore ideas for making case studies more interactive using digital resources

## Analysis and recommendations

### Digital competence and literacy

Digital competence and literacy are included in University based social work education, and access to this is enabled at programme level or across the institution for example in student learning and development services. These include access to training on using search engines, online tutorials and critically assessing online information. Certain digital literacy skills however are not included, for example student rated themselves poorly on basic statistical techniques, reporting that their courses did not equip them with these skills. Student and NQSWs also rated themselves poorly in their use of spreadsheets, with NQSWs stating that these skills were not needed for practice. Only 30% of employers/managers were satisfied with these digital skills in their newly qualified workforce, in addition they were dissatisfied with NQSWs ability to critically assess online information. These findings suggest that there is a difference between the expectations of what students and NQSW deem important for practice in terms of digital literacy and employer's perceptions.

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## **Social media and online professionalism**

Students and NQSW reported that this was included on their programmes, but as above employers/managers had different views with 40% of them reporting that NQSW did not have sufficient awareness of privacy rights of service users, or professional representations, and 48% reporting that NQSW lacked awareness of ethical issues regarding social media contact with service users. Qualitative responses from students suggested that some programmes are including social media education, helping them to become innovative in practice, whilst others have received little input in this area beyond warnings provided about keeping personal information private. The potentials and opportunities for using social media in practice for professional engagement and developing personal learning networks are limited if students (and practitioners) are not encouraged to explore the possibilities that using social media provides in practice. Similarly a blanket ban by agencies on staff using social media in the workplace as reported by one employer/manager is unhelpful given the evidence that social media use shows no signs of stopping or slowing down and there are examples of how these platforms and tools can be used in practice as discussed earlier.

## **Innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial skills**

Employers and manager reported that innovation, creativity and entrepreneurial skills were seen as important future skills for practice, with over three quarters of all employers /managers stating that these were required. Innovation in the context of austerity was noted by one respondent along with an improved understanding organisational context, and students being perceived by employers/managers as innovators and experts in using digital technologies and social media. Innovation skills in NQSWs was the exception rather than the rule according to one employer/manager and whilst there was a willingness to support innovation: *"due to the size and culture in my local authority... newly qualified staff don't get many opportunities to demonstrate these skills/abilities during their practice"*. One respondent stated that students could be encouraged to educate their managers and existing staff teams in the potentials for inclusion of digital and social media skills in practice. It was also noted by an employer /manager respondent that working innovatively and creatively required a great deal of confidence and imagination but when successful could be utilised to influence procedures and processes.



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## **Where and in what format can social work qualifying programmes embed future skills training and education?**

### Recommendation 1:

Current 3 yearly HEI reporting mechanisms for SSSC could include reference to the range of and location of digital literacy skills included in Qualifying Social Work education programmes.

### Recommendation 2

Current 3 yearly HEI reporting mechanisms for SSSC could include a statement about the inclusion of social media in Qualifying Social Work education programmes, with specific reference to professionalism online, ethical and values issues when using social media and developing online professional profiles.

### Recommendation 3

HEIs could engage with stakeholders including service user groups and agency partners to develop principles for the inclusion of social media education and awareness specifically for its use in professional practice (e.g. engaging with peers, professional networking, privacy and service user rights).

### Recommendation 4

HEI social work education programmes go through an annual cycle of review and evaluation for institutional quality assurance purposes. These cycles might include specific attention to the future skills covered in this report to make explicit where the skills are taught and assessed, and illustrate ways in which students can demonstrate them both in their assessed academic work and in their practice learning.

### Recommendation 5

HEI social work education programme leads might consider how to include entrepreneurship in their programmes working alongside business/management disciplines/schools developing joint curriculum initiatives which build on the social justice imperative central to social work practice and the flair, risk taking and innovation that characterises emerging social entrepreneurship business models.

### Recommendation 6

The time and resources required to develop and integrate social media into social work education might benefit from some financial/cost/benefit analysis at HEI level.

### Recommendation 7

Practice learning requirements for qualifying social work education might include specific reference to innovation and creativity in practice.

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#### Recommendation 8

NQSW conference might be themed in future to explore creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in practice to better tease out the barriers and facilitators for implementing these skills in practice, and to raise awareness of the value of these skills across the sector.

#### Recommendation 9

Practice educators work across statutory and third sector organisations and are well placed to contribute to identifying learning opportunities which promote future skills, their development and implementation/evaluation in practice learning contexts.

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## Appendix

HEI Audit tool

Survey Social work students, Newly Qualified Social Workers and Employers/Manager