Department
for Education

Report for social work assessment and accreditation system: proof of concept

Proof of concept and analysis conducted by KPMG-led consortium

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A. Executive summary

A1 Introduction

This report, published by the Department for Education (DfE), summarises the KPMG findings and the analysis of social workers' performance carried out as part of a proof of concept (PoC) phase for a new assessment and accreditation system for child and family social workers. The proof of concept work was carried out by a KPMG-led consortium. The findings and analysis in this report are drawn from advice provided by the KPMG-led consortium.

A2 The proof of concept phase

The PoC phase was conducted by a KPMG-led consortium initially comprising Leo Learning, Morning Lane Associates and the University of Leeds, and later including the Family Rights Group, Michael Browne Associates (a company supplying professional actors), Research in Practice (in association with the University of Sussex) and BECOME (formerly known as the Who Cares? Trust). This phase ran from late March 2015 until the end of April 2016.

For the PoC the consortium:

- designed and developed the components of a trial assessment system
- enlisted volunteer employers to test the assessment system which took place between mid-December 2015 and the end of February 2016;
- consulted with social workers on their experience of the trial assessment process;
- held review sessions with service users, care leavers and Principal Social Workers to view a sample of videoed simulated observations; and,
- analysed and reported on the results of the trial assessment

A3 The proof of concept participants

Selected employers were invited to take part in the PoC phase. The sample of volunteer employers was broadly representative of local authority type, size, Ofsted rating and also had a geographical spread. The employers covered 22 local authority areas and Cafcass. The local authority areas were Bedford, Birmingham, Doncaster, Durham, Hartlepool, Kent, Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames (covered by Achieving for Children), Lambeth, Leeds, Liverpool, Luton, Northamptonshire, North East Lincolnshire, North Somerset, Nottinghamshire,

Sunderland, Tri-borough (covering Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster), Wakefield and Worcestershire.

For the PoC phase all Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registered child and family social workers were eligible to participate. Therefore, the sample included social workers who were not statutory case holders, newly qualified social workers and those undertaking the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and agency workers working in the volunteer employers during the PoC.

A4 The proof of concept assessment

The PoC trial assessment comprised:

- a digital (online) assessment including:
    - 60 social work related general knowledge questions which were factual with right and wrong answers;
    - ten applied knowledge questions for child and family practitioners (CFP) (nine for practice supervisors (PS)) based on situational case studies; and,
    - three scenarios for CFP, of which two were video based, requiring decisions to be made about the presenting case. PS received two scenarios, one of which was video based.
- simulated observation using three scenarios working with professional actors, a written exercise and a reflective conversation between a social worker and an independent observer;
- an employer rating in which we sought feedback on social workers' performance in their current job role; and, for the purpose of validating the results of the assessment; and
- a direct practice observation of either a social worker's visit to a family or supervision meeting with a subordinate. Direct practice observation was used for the purpose of validating the results of the assessment.

All elements of the assessment were underpinned by the knowledge and skills statements (KSS) for child and family practitioners and practice supervisors and each element assessed different aspects of the KSS. This was necessary because the range of expertise and behaviours embedded in the KSS could not be assessed adequately by a single method.

For the digital assessment 159 sessions were held and for simulated observation 36 sessions. Independent observers (from Morning Lane Associates) assessed social workers in the simulated observation scenarios, including three scenarios working

with actors from Michael Browne Associates. Morning Lane Associates also carried out the direct observations, either on a family visit or in a supervisory session.

The following table shows the number of CFP and PS who took various parts of the trial assessment. Participation by social workers was voluntary. For the digital assessment social workers were selected at random from lists of HCPC registration numbers provided by employers. 25% of these social workers were randomly selected for simulated observation. Employers were asked to return a rating form for each social worker in this subset. Finally, direct observations were carried out on a sample of social workers who had also gone through simulated observation.

Assessment element	CFP	PS	Total
Digital assessment	762	192	954
Simulated observation	161	43	204
Employer rating	145	32	177
Direct observation	49	9	58

Table A4.1.1: Social worker assessment – participation in the proof of concept

A5   Trialling the assessment system

The PoC attempted to determine whether the social worker assessment, as trialled, was valid and reliable. Results of the PoC suggest the component parts of the assessment, as trialled, provide the basis for a good test method of knowledge and skills of child and family social workers. This conclusion was based principally on evidence that:

- it reflected the role of social workers and represented the 'real world'. This was evidenced mainly by feedback from social workers;
- there was some evidence that the assessment was fair and applied consistently but many social workers in specialist teams expressed the view it was not wholly relevant to them;
- both the digital assessment and simulated observation parts of the assessment were required to test a social worker's all-round ability. There was a relationship, but not a strong one, between the different parts of the assessment suggesting that each of them may play in important part in assessment of the KSS in full; and there was no significant relationship between social worker performance on different parts of the assessment; and,
- it was an accurate reflection and good predictor of how well social workers performed in practice with a moderate to high degree of consistency between employer's ratings and test performance.

Participating social workers were overwhelmingly positive about the more practical elements of the assessment. For example, 86% of CFP and 84% of PS participants felt that the digital assessment scenarios were appropriate and were enhanced by the use of video. Similarly, around 95% of CFP and 85% of PS said the simulated observation situations were appropriate. 95% of social workers commented very favourably on the realism of the actors.

Social workers expressed concern about the difficulty of some questions, the appropriateness of them to their job role and the time to complete the digital assessment.

Approximately 50% of social workers rated the general knowledge questions as 'somewhat or very difficult', a figure which fell to 40% for applied knowledge and 30% for scenarios.

Nearly 40% of social workers, especially those in specialist teams such as fostering and adoption and leaving care, questioned the relevance of some of the knowledge questions to their job role.

The analysis of performance by individual questions suggests that modifications need to be made to the format of some multiple choice questions for rollout, with additional effort being put into developing a bank of questions produced using standard test development techniques and tested for validity before being rolled out. This is being picked up by the DfE through the process for selecting a content development partner.

Although 60% of CFP and 70% of PS were content with the length of time allowed for the component parts of the digital assessment, over 20% said that combining these components into a single session made it too long. Nearly 10% of social workers failed to complete the digital assessment because they ran out of time.

Twelve characteristics of social workers and features of their employers were analysed:[1]

- age;
- ethnicity;
- type of qualification;
- service area;

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[1] In addition to these 12 characteristics tested, the relationship between social workers' scores and various Key Performance Indicators for their employers was also examined.

- english as a first language;
- post qualification years in service;
- length of service with current employer;
- Ofsted rating of employer;
- employer type;
- permanent and agency social workers;
- gender; and,
- geographic location.

Social workers' scores and ratings on all parts of the assessment varied widely. However, on the digital assessment only 15% of the variation could be modelled by these factors.

Some of these factors were, however, important (statistically significant) in contributing to the explanation of the 15% variation:

- *Ethnicity* – the 'white' group (however defined) outperformed all other groupings of ethnic categories.[2]
- *Age* – performance generally declined between the different age bands tested, with social workers in older groups performing worse.
- *Gender* – female social workers performed better in both the digital scenarios and the simulated observation, but there was no difference in the general and applied knowledge.
- *Service area* – social workers in specialist teams performed less well
- *Ofsted rating of employer* – social workers in employers rated as 'inadequate' performed less well.

The difference in results for each of the characteristics tested and for each of the elements of the assessment is contained in Appendix E.

Additional work to understand the causes behind the differences in performance in relation to protected characteristics will be carried out, as discussed in the Equalities Impact Assessment published with this report.

Each part of the assessment process was designed to test different elements of the KSS. A statistically significant positive relationship in social worker performance

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[2] Three different categories of the 'white' group are used throughout this report: 'White British', 'White British/Irish' and 'White All' (where 'White All' includes 'White British', 'White Irish' and 'Other White Background')

was found between the component parts of the assessment. However, the strength of that relationship suggested that the performance of a social worker on one part of the assessment was not necessarily a good predictor of their performance on another. This points to the need to retain both the digital assessment, and the simulated observation part of the assessment in order to provide a balanced and comprehensive assessment. If one or more of the testing methods is removed the content of the remaining methods, and how they are aligned with the KSS, would need to be adjusted in order to not risk jeopardising the validity of the assessment.

There was a moderate to high level of consistency between employers' assessment of their social workers and the performance of those social workers in the PoC. However, employers' ratings differed from the independent observers' ratings in about 20% of cases. For example, in 34 of 171 cases the external assessor rated a participant's simulated observation as not meeting the required standard, in contrast to the endorsement received from their employer.

Also, when employers' ratings were analysed against personal characteristics, different conclusions were reached on the relationship between some characteristics and performance. For example, social workers with fewer years of service did better on the digital assessments but more experienced workers were more likely to be highly rated by employers. The relationship between employer assessments and test performance will be explored in greater detail in the next phase.

B. Methodology

B1 Sampling of employers and social workers within employers

This section provides an overview of the PoC conducted from March 2015 to April 2016.

The PoC was designed to test the validity of potential assessment methods. The consortium was led by KPMG and comprised LEO Learning (a learning technologies firm), Morning Lane Associates (a consultancy specialising in social work practice) and the University of Leeds. A number of other organisations and stakeholders were involved throughout the PoC during periods of consultation, as subject matter experts and independent reviewers. The original consortium was later extended to include the Family Rights Group, Research in Practice (in association with the University of Sussex) and BECOME.

The assessment methods involved in the PoC were underpinned by the KSS for the two statuses involved; child and family practitioners (CFP) and practice supervisors (PS).

Prior to the start of the design period information was sought from local authorities (LAs) and other social work organisations about various assessment methods already used within their organisations. Initial views and feedback on the proposed methodology was also gathered.

The testing period ran from mid-December 2015 to February 2016. This was followed by a period of analysis and reporting.

B2 Description of the assessment methods

The PoC involved two principal assessment methods: a digital assessment and simulated observations. Employer ratings and direct observations on a sample of participants were used to help test the reliability and validity of the rest of the assessment. Each of these methods is described in detail below.

B2.1 Digital assessment

The digital assessment comprised three parts:

- general knowledge questions;
- applied knowledge questions; and,

- scenario based questions.

Each part of the assessment was designed to assess different aspects of the KSS associated with the specific statuses.

The general knowledge section comprised 60 multiple choice questions (in different formats) with each question designed to test an element of the KSS. Every social worker (CFP and PS) received the same set of questions regardless of, for example, their job role or level of experience. Questions had a clear correct/incorrect factual answer(s). Of the 60 questions 37 had 'binary' answers, e.g. yes/no or true/false questions – they could be answered wholly correctly or incorrectly. The other 23 questions contained sub-questions and thus could be answered in a partially correct way. For example, participants were asked to indicate whether a series of statements were true or false (so they could answer some, none or all correctly). Similarly, they could have been asked to select 'all that apply' from a list of options and again they could have selected some, none or all correctly.

The applied knowledge questions were longer than the general knowledge questions, providing more situational context and requiring a more analytical approach to answer them. They were intended to test social workers' responses to realistic and challenging situations. The questions were case-based assessments which tested the participant's understanding of their role, the guidance and the statutory framework and how these should be applied in practice. The assessment for each status had a different set of applied knowledge questions: ten for CFP and nine for PS.

The scenario based questions simulated a realistic 'first-person' working situation in which the participant had to deal with a statutory case. These scenarios tested the participant's ability to bring about a best practice outcome, alongside critical thinking and decision making. Some were purely text based whilst others used video and sound. Within each scenario there were a series of questions (or decision points) requiring an analytical and practical response from the social worker – CFP participants completed three scenarios and PS two.

No questions within the digital assessment required free text answers. The assessment was designed to be as easy to access as possible with minimal IT skills required to participate.

The digital assessment was taken on a digital platform which was built using Moodle (an open source learning management system) and a bespoke authoring tool (Morpheus). All participants were registered directly into the digital platform which also captured all responses to questions in the digital assessment. The results were then exported to a database for analysis.

B2.2   Simulated observation

Each simulated observation assessment comprised three ten minute scenarios working with professional actors and observed by an independent observer, one written exercise and one reflective conversation with the observer. Simulated observation scenarios were designed to examine the more behavioural elements of the KSS for both the CFP and PS status. For CFP all elements were based on one family's case and the scenarios were iterative. For PS each scenario was discrete and based on a separate case or situation. This difference was intended to reflect the respective roles of these two statuses.

Before each scenario participants received a short written briefing on the scenario they were about to experience, including some background to the case and who they would be meeting with and they were given time to prepare for this. After the first two scenarios they completed a written exercise (either on paper or screen, depending on the social worker's choice) related to their aims and objectives for the third scenario. Immediately following the third scenario the social worker had a reflective conversation with their observer, exploring his/her hypotheses and their understanding of the individuals involved in the scenarios.

Simulated observations lasted about 3.5 hours for each participant, including time for briefing, preparation, breaks and feedback at the start and end of the assessment.

B2.3   Employer ratings

Employers were asked to complete and return a rating form for each social worker who took part in simulated observation. They were asked to assess their social workers on a scale from 1 to 7, the same method used for simulated and direct observation. This was to test the scoring reliability and validity of the assessment, comparing employers' perceptions to the results of the assessment. Whilst there wasn't a standard approach employers were asked to set out what types of evidence they had used.

B2.4   Direct observation

Independent social workers from Morning Lane Associates (MLA) carried out a small number of direct observations – approximately a third of those who took part in a simulated observation. Where possible these observations involved a family visit for CFP participants and a supervision session for PS participants. Consent was sought from the relevant service user or team member before the observation. Prior to the session the observer and participant had a brief discussion to share the objectives, background information on the family and other relevant information.

Following an observation, when considered necessary, the social worker and observer held a reflective conversation which was not scored.

Observers followed the same scoring methodology for simulated observations and employer ratings.

B3   Sample of employers and social workers

This section describes the selection of employers worked with in the PoC and the sample of social workers from each employer.

B3.1   Sampling strategy

The following criteria were used to select a broadly representative sample of employers of child and family social workers in England:

- geographical distribution (North, South, Midlands, London);
- size (small, medium, large), defined both in terms of the number of children and the number of social workers (FTEs); while the former was used they are broadly equivalent in terms of measuring size;
- type of local authority (unitary, metropolitan district, county council, London borough);
- performance (inadequate, adequate/requires improvement, good, outstanding), as measured by the Ofsted rating as at 10 June 2015; and,
- population density (rural, urban).

The DfE invited a randomly selected group of 24 local authorities and three other employers: one from the voluntary sector, one from the private sector (provider of agency workers) and one non-departmental public body (Cafcass). 20 employers agreed to take part. The table below lists participating entities and their organisation type. Of these, two (Cafcass and Sunderland) participated only in the digital part of the assessment.

Entity name	Organisation type
Bedford	Local authority
Birmingham	Local authority
Doncaster Children's Services Trust	Trust
Durham	Local authority
Hartlepool	Local authority

Entity name	Organisation type
Kent	Local authority
Achieving for Children	Social enterprise comprising two local authorities (Kingston and Richmond)
Lambeth	Local authority
Leeds	Local authority
Liverpool	Local authority
Luton	Local authority
North East Lincolnshire	Local authority
Northamptonshire	Local authority
Nottinghamshire	Local authority
North Somerset	Local authority
Sunderland	Local authority
Tri-Borough	Strategic partnership comprising three local authorities (Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster)
Wakefield	Local authority
Worcestershire	Local authority
Cafcass	Non-departmental public body

Table B3.1.1: Final sample of employers for proof of concept

Whilst no private sector employer took part agency workers were included in the random samples selected from each employer. A small sample of social workers from NSPCC, Barnardos, Action for Children and Coram also took part in the digital assessment.

For each employer social workers were selected at random from a list of Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registration numbers. The target was a 4% sample of all registered child and family social workers, equivalent to about 1,030 CFP and 250 PS social workers.

It was made clear to all employers and their social workers that participation in the PoC phase was voluntary. When individual social workers opted not to take part, or

had exceptional reasons for not doing so, e.g. long-term sickness or maternity leave, a random replacement was nominated.

The figures above relate to social workers asked to sit the digital assessment. Of those asked to sit the digital assessment, 25% were asked to take part in a simulated observation assessment. To supplement the digital assessment and simulated observation, as well as to help triangulate evidence, employers were asked to complete a rating form – their own assessment of performance – for each social worker who took part in simulated observation.

Finally, in addition, independent social workers from MLA carried out a small sample of direct practice observation visits. The primary purpose of these visits was to help test the reliability and validity of the other assessment methods.

B4   Scoring methodology

B4.1   Digital assessment

This section describes the scoring mechanism for each part of the assessment process. Participants were not made aware of the scoring regime.

B4.1.1   General knowledge questions

There were a total of 60 questions for both CFP and PS. Of these, 37 were binary and therefore either scored a 0 (if incorrect) or a 2 (if correct). Binary questions are those considered to have a single correct answer and one or more incorrect answer(s). The remaining 23 questions allowed for partially correct answers and therefore could have intermediate scores e.g. participants could score a number between 0 and 2 based on the answer(s) they selected. For questions where participants were invited to select 'one or more' options, a penalty was applied to incorrect chosen options. This section had a maximum score of 120 for both statuses.

B4.1.2   Applied knowledge questions

This section varied between CFP and PS. CFP participants answered ten questions with a maximum score of 2 for each and a total maximum of 20. PS participants answered nine questions with a maximum score of 2 for each question and, therefore, had a maximum score of 18 in this section.

B4.1.3   Scenario-based questions

As with the applied knowledge section the scenario-based questions differed between the CFP and PS statuses. CFP participants worked through three

scenarios and were able to gain a maximum score of 96. PS participants undertook two scenarios and could get a maximum score of 86.

B4.2   Simulated observation

An exercise was held to translate the KSS into observable behaviours – 'what good social work looks like'. This process was informed by focus groups held with social work professionals, the Family Rights Group and BECOME. The score awarded to each of the five elements of the simulated observation, i.e. the three scenarios, the written exercise and the reflective conversation, was informed by the observable behaviours shown and performance demonstrated relating to each KSS.

Simulated observations involved a team of three observers from MLA, with one of these acting as lead observer. Each participant who undertook a simulated observation was seen by one observer for each scenario and was therefore seen by two or three different observers. The final three components of the assessment (written exercise, scenario three and reflective conversation) were always marked by the same observer.

The observer rated each of the five component parts on a scale from 1 to 7. The lead observer then agreed an overall rating (again on a scale from 1 to 7) by considering all of the feedback comments the observer had made and also by discussion with each of the observers. Observers were required to assess the behaviours displayed by participants and make a judgement of their ability overall.

Observers went through a rigorous training and moderation process to fully understand how the KSS should translate into social work practice. Observers were qualified once they had demonstrated a high level of correlation with other evaluated observers. This required observers to give the same rating of 'not met', 'met' or 'exceeded' as other evaluated observers at least eight times out of ten.

A number of simulated observation assessments were videoed and these recordings were later reviewed by service user panels of parents, kinship carers or care leavers who made their own assessment of the performance of the social worker. The results demonstrated a general level of agreement of the scores awarded by observers and by service users. Similarly, these videos were reviewed by a group of Principal Social Workers. There was an extremely high level of consensus (generally 100%) between their assessments of the performance of the social workers and the assessment given by the observer. The following scoring system was used.

Score	Description	Category
1	Poor performance with very little or no skill shown	Not met
2	Weak performance but exhibited a few signs of required level of skill	Not met
3	Unsatisfactory performance but showing some skill of the level required	Not met
4	Satisfactory performance showing required level of skill	Met
5	Good performance typically showing considerable skill	Met
6	Very good performance consistently demonstrating high level of skill	Exceeded
7	Outstanding performance, consistently showing exceptional level of skill	Exceeded

Table B4.2.1: Scoring system for practice observation methods

Each participant received a score out of 7 for each of the five elements of the assessment (three scenarios one written exercise and one reflective conversation), with a maximum combined score of 35. Observers also wrote a narrative 'statement of observation'. The narrative statement captured the complexity and inter-relatedness of the social work role within the individual's performance. This approach ensured that participants were not assessed on individual behaviours but instead on how they use them in interdependent and relevant ways within each scenario.

At the end of a simulated observation each participant had five separate scores and narrative statements relating to each element of the assessment. The lead observer assessed their overall performance as being exceeded, met or not met and awarded an overall score of 1-7.

Observers based their overall scoring on a holistic assessment and not the frequency, mean or modal value of the scores for the five component parts. There was no formulaic connection between the five independent scores and the overall mark. Instead, lead observers based the overall mark on the five scores, corresponding narratives and consultation with their fellow observers.

B4.3   Direct observation and employer ratings

The scoring mechanism used for simulated observation for both direct observation and employer ratings was the same: i.e. the 7 point scale as outlined in Table B4.2.1. Observers and employers were provided with a set of observable

behaviours to help inform their score and asked them to provide further commentary/evidence to support their assessment (this was optional for employer ratings). Direct observations were arranged by MLA in conjunction with employer co-ordinators and participants themselves so that appropriate appointments and timings could be agreed.

B5   Overview of assessment sessions held with employers

In total 22 employers took part in the PoC. The number of participants who undertook the assessment was as follows:

Digital Assessment	Simulated Observation	Employer Rating	Direct Observation
954	204	177	58

Of the 159 digital test sessions held 75% of these were held in internal employer owned venues and 25% required external venue hire. Of the 36 simulated observation assessment days 75% were held in employers' own facilities and 25% in an external venue.

C. Detailed findings

Some of the tables and figures presented throughout this detailed findings section and the related appendices may not tally or add up to 100% due to rounding.

C1 Quantitative analysis

C1.1 PoC phase: sample of social workers

This section summarises the characteristics of the social workers who took part in the trial assessment from December 2015 to February 2016 and statistically tests whether they were representative of the social worker population in England.

In total 777 CFP and 197 PS participated in some part of, but not necessarily all, the assessment. These figures are different to those in Table C1.1.1 as there was a small group of social workers who participated in the simulated observation but not the digital assessment.

1,030 CFP and 250 PS were randomly selected to take part in the PoC of whom 777 CFP and 197 PS eventually took part. There are two reasons why the actual sample size was less than the number selected. First, participation in the PoC phase was voluntary and, as a result, some social workers opted not to take part. Where this was known in advance replacements were nominated, again at random. Second, despite registering for the digital assessment or booking a simulated observation session, some social workers did not attend on the day of their assessment for a variety of reasons, e.g. court appearances, family emergencies.

Table C1.1.1 summarises the number of participants who completed each part of the assessment.

	GK	AK	SC1	SC2	SC3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
CFP	761	757	731	672	667	622	161	145	49
PS	192	192	188	179	n/a	178	43	32	9
Total	953	949	919	851	667	800	204	177	58

Table C1.1.1: Number of CFP and PS participants by component of the assessment

C1.1.1 Representativeness of the sample

As outlined in section B3.1, the sample of social workers was selected at random from lists of HCPC numbers provided by a set of volunteer employers. Because of withdrawals for various reasons over 25% of selected social workers did not take part in the digital assessment.

In February 2016 the DfE published its Children's Social Work Workforce Statistical First Release (CSWFR) for the year ending 30 September 2015. Where the classifications and bandings in these statistics coincided with those used in the PoC phase tests of representativeness were carried out. These areas are:

- employing organisation type;
- age band;
- CFP/PS role types; and,
- length of service with current employer.

Some small differences between the sample of assessment participants and national data were detected. In interpreting these differences there are several general points to bear in mind:

- the withdrawals from the original random list may have slightly biased the sample but the personal characteristics of those social workers who withdrew are not known and it is therefore not possible to test this hypothesis;
- the representativeness of the sample was tested against the national population of social workers, not against the aggregate returns from volunteer employers – employers were selected to be broadly representative of employers nationally, but inevitably there may be some minor differences; and,
- the DfE's statistics are based on local authority returns - two employers in the sample 'challenged' the total number of social workers reported in these statistics.

Specifically, with reference to the four characteristics:

- agency workers were slightly under-represented. This is not a surprising finding because this cohort will have a higher turnover, and therefore the probability of an agency worker being with the same employer throughout the whole assessment process is lower than for a 'permanent' employee;
- younger social workers (in the 20-29 age band) were over-represented. It is conceivable that younger social workers were more likely to participate;
- more CFPs than expected were assessed and fewer PS. The allocation of social workers to these two statuses was at the discretion of employers, and (with the exception of the general knowledge questions) their assessments were different. Moreover, the CSWFR is based on data provided voluntarily by employers and is therefore a sample in itself; and,
- social workers with less than five years' experience with their current employer were slightly over-represented. As with age, one possible explanation is that such social workers were more likely to participate when randomly selected.

Overall, the make-up of the sample compared with the reported national data is sufficiently representative.

C1.2   Validity and reliability of the assessment

The PoC phase aimed to determine whether the social worker assessment (as trialled) was valid and reliable**.**

There are various definitions of validity and reliability. For the purposes of the PoC they were defined as follows:

- *Validity:* It is fair and reasonable in that the content is representative of, and reflects the role of, social workers. It is seen as credible in that it represents the 'real world'. It is applied to all social workers in a consistent manner; and,
- *Reliability:* Reliability refers to repeatability and replicability of findings i.e. stability of measurement over time. It is an accurate reflection and good predictor of how well social workers perform in practice.

The tests of validity and reliability were carried out solely based on data generated from within the PoC itself. In other contexts this might have been done against an external measure of quality, with the test validated that way. There is no such agreed benchmark of quality of practice for the social work profession at this stage and there was therefore no external benchmark against which results of the PoC could be compared. The employers' ratings and independent observations were used to provide an element of external validation to the assessment.

This section sets out the tests conducted to evaluate the assessment's validity and reliability.

C1.2.1   Tests to evaluate the assessment's validity and reliability

The summary table below lists the tests of validity and reliability applied; how they were tested and the evidence used. The column headed 'V/R' indicates whether this was a test of validity (V) or reliability (R) or both (V/R).

Test	V/R	Method	Evidence
1. Reflects the role of social workers and represents the 'real world'	V	Consultation on (1) KSS and (2) the assessment content with social worker focus groups, a group of Principal Social Workers, parents and carers through the Family Rights Group, and care leavers through BECOME. Social worker feedback survey following digital assessment and simulated observation Post assessment social worker focus groups	Feedback on whether the right areas were being covered in a balanced way, and were being tested in the right manner Social workers' views on the appropriateness of the knowledge questions, the on-line scenarios, and the simulated observation to their role Extent to which social workers agreed that the knowledge questions, on-line scenarios, and simulated observation reflected typical social work
2. Fair to all social workers and applied consistently	V/R	Statistical testing of assessment results Social worker feedback survey following digital assessment and simulated observation Post assessment social worker focus groups Reviews of videoed simulated observation sessions	Extent to which variation in social worker scores can be explained by personal characteristics. Extent of social workers' satisfaction with various parts of the assessment Extent to which views of a group of PSWs, service user panels and care leavers agreed with independent observers' ratings of simulated observation sessions
3. Stability and consistency of measurement	R	Statistical analysis of social workers' assessment scores and ratings	Extent to which social worker scores in one part of the assessment were correlated with scores in another part Extent to which social workers' scores reflected (the proxy measure) of Ofsted ratings Extent to which social worker scores reflected operational KPIs of their employer Extent to which social worker

Test	V/R	Method	Evidence
			simulated observation scores were not influenced by independent observers
4. Accurate reflection and good predictor of how well social workers perform in practice	V/R	Statistical analysis Direct practice observation of a subset of social workers	Extent to which Employer Ratings of their social workers correlated with the scores and ratings in the trial assessment

Table C1.2.1: Proof of concept assessment – tests of validity and reliability

Test 1: Reflects the role of social workers and represents the 'real world'

Analysis of feedback from participants showed high levels of positive comments on their experiences in both the digital assessment and the simulated observation.

The full analysis of social worker feedback can be found in section C2.1. Highlights from their feedback are provided below.

Digital assessment

In the general knowledge section, a small majority of participants (51% of CFP and 59% of PS) felt the questions were appropriate for the KSS for their status.

In the applied knowledge section, 63% of CFP and 70% of PS participants reported that the questions were completely or somewhat appropriate for the KSS for their status. 81% of CFP and 82% of PS participants felt the applied knowledge questions were somewhat or completely appropriate to the work of child and family social workers.

Social workers in specialist teams such as fostering and adoption, leaving care and looked after children, performed significantly worse on the digital assessment compared with peers in mainstream safeguarding roles.

Nearly 40% of all social workers, but especially those in specialist teams, questioned the relevance of some of the knowledge questions to their service area.

In the scenarios the majority of CFP (68%) and PS (69%) participants thought the level of questions were appropriate to their status. Similarly, 72% of both CFP and PS participants felt that the content was appropriately aligned to the KSS for their status. A large majority of CFP (86%) and PS (84%) participants felt that the scenarios were appropriate to the work of child and family social workers, with 75% of CFP and 74% of PS participants stating that the representation of characters was somewhat or completely realistic.

Simulated observation

In the simulated scenarios, a majority of CFP (87%) and PS (81%) participants felt that the content of the assessment was somewhat or completely appropriate when considering the KSS for their status. A majority of CFP (94%) and PS (81%) participants felt that the situations described were somewhat or completely appropriate to the work of a child and family social worker.

In the written assessment, a majority of CFP (91%) and PS (95%) participants felt the content of the written assessment was appropriate with regards to the KSS for their status.

In the reflective session, around two thirds of CFP and PS participants (65% of each) felt that they had sufficient or ample opportunity to explain the rationale for their actions.

Test 2: Fair to all social workers and applied consistently

As a first step, variation in social workers' performance was analysed using statistical regression models. In these models a number of independent variables (characteristics of social workers and employer features) were used to predict the value of a dependent variable (social worker scores). The statistical result shows what percentage of the variation could be modelled by these independent variables working together.

In the case of the general knowledge scores in the digital assessment, even by loading the model with many different factors that proved to be statistically significantly associated with scores individually, only around 15% of the total variation could be modelled. It was conceivable that an important factor which would have increased the proportion of the variation that could be modelled was omitted, although consultation was carried out on which factors should be included. From a statistical perspective it was also possible that the association between the scores and the various factors was far more complex (or non-linear) but additional analysis (using a logarithmic transformation of the score data) suggested this made little difference. This suggests that the vast majority, around 85%, of variation in performance in the assessment could not be modelled statistically by reference to either the characteristics of social workers or to the features of the employers they worked for.

Several personal characteristics of social workers were statistically significant in modelling some of the variation in scores and ratings for the digital assessment and the simulated observation. The main factors were:

- *ethnicity* – the 'white' group (however defined) outperformed the BAME group which also took longer to complete the digital assessment;
- *age* – performance generally declined across the age band tested and older social workers took longer to complete the digital assessment;
- *gender* – female social workers performed better in both the digital assessment scenarios and the simulated observation;
- *language* – those who said English was not their first language took longer to complete the digital assessment; and,

- *service area* – social workers in specialist teams performed less well.

With the exception of service area, no bias was detected related to these factors in either the content or format of the digital assessment or the scenarios used in simulated observation.

A number of simulated observation assessments were videoed and these recordings were later reviewed by service user panels of parents, kinship carers or care leavers who made their own assessment of the performance of the social worker. The results demonstrated a general level of agreement in the scores awarded by observers and by service users, thus supporting the reliability of the simulated observation assessments.

Similarly, these videos were reviewed by a group of Principal Social Workers. There was an extremely high level of consensus (generally 100%) between their assessments of the performance of the social workers and the assessment given by the observer.

Test 3: Stability and consistency of measurement

For CFP and PS participants the correlations between the component parts of the digital assessment and simulated observation were examined.

Two tests were used: Pearson's Correlation (parametric) and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (non-parametric). Unless otherwise stated the results of the two correlation tests are very similar. Pearson's Correlation Coefficients have been presented unless otherwise stated. For the scenarios only social workers who completed all three scenarios, equivalent to 82% of CFP and 93% of PS were included in the analysis.

The results are divided into three sections:

- the relationship between the component parts of the digital assessment;
- the relationship between the component parts of the simulated observation; and,
- the relationship between digital assessment and simulated observation.

Relationship between the component parts of the digital assessment

Statistical analysis shows that there was a significant positive correlation between the scores for different parts of the digital assessment. All the correlation coefficients were significant at the 1% level (p less than 0.01). At the same time the correlation coefficients shown in Table C1.2.2 below were not especially high, at less than 0.4 with one exception. Therefore, the achieved score in any one component was not necessarily a reliable predictor of the achieved score in another component.

Relationship	CFP	PS
General knowledge vs. applied knowledge	0.288	0.313
Scenario 1 vs. scenario 2	0.352	0.395
Scenario 1 vs. scenario 3	0.386	n/a

Relationship	CFP	PS
Scenario 2 vs. scenario 3	0.317	n/a
General knowledge vs. scenarios total	0.439	0.367
Applied knowledge vs. scenarios total	0.279	0.206

Table C1.2.2: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients between all scores in the digital assessment

Relationship between the component parts of the simulated observation

Table C1.2.3 summarises the statistical relationship between each part of the simulated observation. The first three relationships comprise the early parts of the simulated observation, the next three relationships comprise the latter parts and the last four relationships compare the early and latter parts of the simulated observation.

Relationship	CFP	PS
Scenario 1 vs. scenario 2	0.389	0.415
Scenario 1 vs. scenario 3	0.408	0.557
Scenario 1 vs. reflective conversation	0.349	0.439
Scenario 1 vs. written assessment	0.302	0.601
Scenario 2 vs. scenario 3	0.354	0.420
Scenario 2 vs. reflective conversation	0.363	0.230
Scenario 3 vs. reflective conversation	0.765	0.742
Scenario 3 vs. written assessment	0.566	0.520
Written assessment vs. reflective conversation	0.527	0.646

Table C1.2.3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients between all scores in the simulated observation

All the correlation coefficients are significant at the 1% level (p less than 0.01), with two exceptions. For PS, there are weaker relationships between scenario 2 and the written assessment ($p = 0.0736$) and between scenario 2 and the reflective conversation ($p = 0.1820$). Compared with the digital assessment there is a wider range of correlation coefficients, from around 0.3 to 0.75.

- for CFP participants, there is a relatively higher correlation between the ratings for the latter part of the simulated observation. Possible explanations for this finding are that these parts are not independent of one another and then reflects on what took place;
- these parts are rated by the same observer;
- it also may have taken social workers a while to adjust and settle into the pattern and rhythm of the simulated observation; and gained confidence in handling the case as the process evolved.

The greater variability in performance in the early stages might have been the result of the more challenging and confrontational nature of scenario two.

For PS (who had a similar structure to their simulated observation, but entirely different scenarios) the results were slightly different in that they were rated as performing more consistently across the component parts. Again, there were highly significant correlations between the three latter stages of the simulated observation. However, when compared with CFP participants, there were higher correlations between the earlier and latter stages.

The lowest set of correlations for PS was for scenario 2 against each of the other four parts separately. Scenario 2 was arguably the most challenging and confrontational of the three PS scenarios. It would seem to have resulted in a more varied performance which was less well correlated with the remainder of the simulated observation.

Relationship between the digital assessment and simulated observation

When comparing the digital assessment and simulated observation results a weak correlation was found between the overall scores (0.220 for CFP and 0.308 for PS). The above evidence shows there was a statistically significant positive relationship in performance between some of the component parts of the assessment, but the correlation coefficients themselves show that the performance of a social worker on one part of the assessment (i.e. digital) was not necessarily a good predictor of their performance on another part (i.e. simulated observation).

Overall, the finding of little correlation between the digital assessment and simulated observation scores could be interpreted as confirmatory evidence that, as designed, they were testing (at a detailed level) different skill sets and behaviours of social workers. This finding deserves further exploration during the rollout phase.

Test 4: Accurate reflection and good predictor of how well social workers perform in practice

The development of the assessment is hindered by the lack of an external and universally agreed benchmark of good practice. In order to overcome this limitation we collected independent assessment by employers and conducted some independent observations.

Each employer was asked to assess their own social workers that had gone through the digital assessment and simulated observation and provide a rating on a scale from 1 (poor) to 7 (outstanding).

Figure C1.2.4, Figure C1.2.5 and Figure C1.2.6 show the data broken down by the seven levels of employer rating and (respectively) the seven levels for direct observation, the seven levels for simulated observation, and the (assumed) three levels for the digital assessment.

Relationship between direct observation and employer rating

There were only 49 observations of social workers where an independently observed direct observation was carried out and an employer rating was received. For this sample there was a consistency rating of 84%. Figure C1.2.4 shows that in 63% of cases (31 out of 49) the employer rating was either the same as the observer rating or varied by one level.

Figure C1.2.4: Distribution of employer rating and direct observation

Relationship between simulated observation and employer rating

There were 171 observations. Overall consistency remains high at 78% but there was more employer variation. There were three cases where employers rated their own social workers as not meeting the standard but where the independent observers suggested they performed better on the simulated observation. In the case of the more detailed breakdown Figure C1.2.5 shows that in two-thirds (67%) of cases the employer rating was either the same as the lead observer rating or varied by one level.

Employer Rating

Simulated Observation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1				1			
2		1		1	1		
3			1	8	11	11	1
4			2	13	32	20	4
5				8	18	17	3
6			1	2	8	6	1
7							

171 observations

Figure C1.2.5: Distribution of employer rating and simulated observation scores

Relationship between digital assessment and employer rating

For the digital assessment there was no 'pass' mark for the PoC phase. Therefore, assumptions needed to be made when distributing the scores to the three categories of 'not met', 'met' and 'exceeded'. In the example shown below the distribution of scores is described as follows:

- *Not met* – lowest 10% of social workers;
- *Met* – next 80% of social workers;
- *Exceeded* – top 10% of social workers.

Other ways of apportioning the digital assessment scores may be equally valid.

With the above caveat in mind there was a strong correlation between employer ratings and digital assessment performance. The consistency measure is 91% and whilst employer variation was still 40% there was a discrepancy for only 12 of the 131 social workers (there were only 131 observations as only those who completed the digital assessment were included in this analysis).

Figure C1.2.6: Distribution of employer rating and digital assessment scores

In summary, these comparisons indicate that there was a strong relationship between employer ratings and social worker performance on the assessment, with consistency measures as follows:

- Employer rating vs. direct observation – 84%
- Employer rating vs. simulated observation – 78%
- Employer rating vs. digital assessment – 91%

This provides evidence of the reliability of the tests although further attention needs to be given during rollout to the extent to which the assessment reflects the quality of practice, e.g. by allowing a system where additional evidence from employers is considered as part of the assessment in instances where there are stark differences between the assessment outcomes and the employer's experience of the quality of practice, e.g. by videoing all simulated observations.

C1.3   Time to complete and completion rate analysis

This section analyses the time it took social workers to complete the digital assessment. Social workers took the digital assessment in a controlled examination environment. The time it took them to complete each component of the assessment was recorded. 16% (154 of 954) failed to complete the full digital assessment. The non-completion rates for CFP and PS were 18% and 7% respectively. The analysis of the time to complete is important when considering the fair time to offer social workers for completion during

rollout and in particular to address some of the issues in relation to personal characteristics identified in the PoC phase.

This section:

- presents the descriptive statistics from the Time to Complete (T2C) distributions;
- discusses the regression analysis that was carried out for T2C:
  - an analysis of the variation in social workers' T2C in the knowledge section of the digital assessment i.e. the general knowledge plus applied knowledge components; and,
  - this same variation for the scenario component; and,
- analyses the numbers and make-up of social workers who did not complete the digital assessment

If analysis was based exclusively on those social workers who completed the whole digital assessment there would be a biased estimate of real T2C. Therefore, for non-completers a forecasting method to predict how long they would have taken on each component that they did not complete has been used. In short, this estimation method uses a social worker's relative time taken to the mean for those components they did complete. It is described in greater detail below.

C1.3.1 Analysis of time to complete (T2C) statistics

Table C1.3.1 and Table C1.3.2 show (for CFP and PS respectively) data on the distribution of T2C for social workers who finished the whole assessment. Based on the design and early trialling of the digital assessment an indicative target time of 165 minutes had been set. This proved a challenging target for CFP as only 46% of social workers were inside this target time and 60% of PS participants were inside the target time.

CFP - minutes	GK	AK	GK+ AK	SC1	SC2	SC3	All SC	Total Time
Minimum	20.3	2.4	30.5	17.0	13.0	6.0	49.0	95.6
Lower quartile	42.5	22.7	66.9	36.0	25.0	18.0	80.0	146.8
Median	52.5	27.6	80.9	41.0	30.0	21.0	91.0	168.2
Mean	54.4	28.6	82.9	42.3	30.2	20.9	91.3	169.2
Upper quartile	64.0	33.0	95.8	47.0	34.0	23.0	101.0	190.6
Maximum	141.0	83.0	185.0	104.0	70.0	42.0	158.0	257.8

Table C1.3.1: CFP: Analysis of Time to complete (digital assessment completers only)

PS – minutes	GK	AK	GK+ AK	SC1	SC2	All SC	Total Time
Minimum	23.9	10.3	34.2	25.0	14.0	42.0	76.2
Lower quartile	41.7	17.6	59.9	45.0	29.0	77.0	135.4
Median	49.0	21.6	70.6	50.0	35.0	85.0	159.5
Mean	51.9	22.8	74.7	50.9	35.3	85.7	157.1
Upper quartile	61.0	26.2	85.9	56.0	41.0	95.0	179.9
Maximum	114.0	68.0	153.4	81.0	59.0	132.0	229.7

Table C1.3.2: PS: Analysis of Time to complete (digital assessment completers only)

For CFP nearly 25% of the variation between social workers in the time taken to complete the digital assessment can be modelled by personal and employer characteristics. Several factors were significant in contributing to this result, with ethnicity, age and qualification (MA or MSc against other types) being the principal factors. For PS the explanatory power of the best model was even higher, explaining over 26% of the variation.

The analysis suggests that 75% of the variation could not be modelled by reference to either a social worker's characteristics or their employer's features. This indicated that there was a true difference in individual test performance which was independent of their personal characteristics.

Appendix E1.5 contains the detail on the T2C for social workers in relation to (1) their personal characteristics and (2) employer features of the employers they work for.

C1.4   Analysis – Digital Assessment

This section is divided into the following parts:

- a description of the digital assessment;
- an assessment of the overall variation in social worker performance;
- an analysis of various social worker characteristics and employer features on performance. There are separate sections for general knowledge, applied knowledge and the scenarios. More details are provided in E1.8, E1.9, and E.10; and,
- an analysis of social worker performance by individual question.

C1.4.1   Description of the digital assessment

To put the digital assessment in perspective the table below shows the breakdown of the three component parts and the maximum score available for each component. Two elements combined, general knowledge and the scenarios, accounted for over 90% of the total available score for both CFP and PS.

Digital assessment component	CFP max score for each component	CFP % of total score for each component	PS max score for each component	PS % of total score for each component
General knowledge	120	50.8	120	53.6
Applied knowledge	20	8.5	18	8.0
Scenarios	96	40.7	86	38.4
Total Digital Assessment	**236**	**100**	**224**	**100**

Table C1.4.1: Digital assessment – Breakdown of available scores

As explained in section C1.3 not all social workers completed the whole digital assessment. Some were unable to complete the assessment within the 4.5 hours available. A minority of those who ran out of time experienced technical issues. Table E1.6.2 gives the analysis of reasons for non-completion. 82% of CFP and 93% of PS completed the whole digital assessment.

C1.4.2   Performance

Table C1.4.2 shows an analysis for both CFP and PS of the distributions of percentage scores for general knowledge and applied knowledge.

Percentage scores	GK – CFP	AK - CFP	GK - PS	AK - PS
Minimum	38.8	21.9	42.7	43.6
Lower Quartile	62.2	56.3	65.2	76.7
Median	67.1	64.8	70.1	83.8
Mean	66.5	63.7	69.3	82.3
Upper Quartile	71.4	72.3	73.9	88.2
Maximum	83.5	92.2	82.4	97.2

Table C1.4.2: Digital assessment – Performance on general knowledge and applied knowledge

The following observations are made:

- analysis showed that with the exception of PS (applied knowledge) the underlying distributions were approximately normal i.e. classic bell-shaped curves. This fact is evidenced further by (1) the mean and median values being similar and (2) the lower and upper quartiles being roughly equidistant from the median;
- the questions were based on the KSS. It was expected that social workers should have the necessary knowledge and skills to answer them correctly. The finding that the mean and median values of the scores lied in the range from 63% to 70% indicated that social workers did not find the questions too easy;

- for PS applied knowledge the scores were significantly higher indicating either that these questions were relatively easier for them, or that as more experienced practitioners, they were demonstrating greater levels of knowledge;
- for CFP applied knowledge had more variability in the results than general knowledge. This fact is evidenced by the 'flatter' normal distribution and an inter-quartile range of 16 percentage points for applied knowledge compared with 9 for general knowledge. However, it should be noted that there were 60 general knowledge questions compared to only ten applied knowledge questions; and,
- for general knowledge PS outperformed CFP by approximately 2.5 to 3 percentage points, as evidenced by a comparison of the respective values of the quartiles (note that CFP and PS completed the same 60 GK questions). This difference was statistically significant (unpaired t-test).

Table C1.4.3 and Table C1.4.4 show the analysis of performance in scenarios for both CFP and PS.

Percentage scores	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	All scenarios
Minimum	24.4	52.8	28.7	49.1
Lower Quartile	58.4	72.6	70.9	69.4
Median	66.1	77.7	79.3	74.8
Mean	65.9	77.1	77.9	74.0
Upper Quartile	73.9	82.8	86.3	78.9
Maximum	95.6	93.8	97.8	91.2

Table C1.4.3: CFP: Digital assessment – performance on scenarios individually and collectively

Percentage scores – PS	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	All scenarios
Minimum	58.8	30.3	50.9
Lower Quartile	73.1	65.6	70.6
Median	77.2	72.0	74.5
Mean	77.0	70.6	74.3
Upper Quartile	81.2	76.7	78.4
Maximum	96.6	88.0	90.8

Table C1.4.4: PS: Digital assessment – performance on scenarios individually and collectively

The following observations were made:

- both distributions for all scenarios approximated to normal, as evidenced by the inter-quartile ranges, although there was some skewness in CFP scenario 3 and PS scenario 2;

- CFP participants found the first scenario considerably more difficult than the other two, as evidenced by the lower percentage scores for all parameters of the distributions;
- the CFP scenarios tended to be more discriminating than the PS ones, as measured by the relative size of the inter-quartile range.

The following sections contain the analysis of the results in relation to the individual social workers and employers' characteristics for each area of the assessment. Further details of the outcomes of the digital assessment, including the mean and median scores for each group, are contained in Appendix E.8., E.9. and E.10.

The Equalities Impact Assessment published with this report contains additional information on the analysis of the protected characteristics and how the DfE plans to go about addressing the issues identified in PoC during rollout.

C1.4.3   General Knowledge

Several statistically significant relationships between general knowledge scores and social worker characteristics and features of their employers were identified. CFP and PS participants answered the same 60 general knowledge questions and so their results were directly comparable.

General Knowledge - Personal characteristics and employer features – the headlines

Table C1.4.5 shows for CFP the effects of personal characteristics and employer features on general knowledge scores. For this and subsequent analyses either unpaired t-tests one tailed (e.g. for gender, ethnicity) or one-way ANOVA, as appropriate, have been used. In the headline tables these factors are set out in descending order of importance (as measured by the p-value). Using conventional statistical norms, a p-value of 0.01 or lower has been described as 'highly significant' and a value greater than 0.01 but less than or equal to 0.05 as 'significant'. As with all such tests some practical interpretation of the statistical outcome is often required.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Age band	Highly significant	Older social workers generally perform worse	<0.0001
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The 'white' group (however defined) perform better	<0.0001
Type of qualification	Highly significant	Social workers with an MA degree perform better	<0.0001
Service area	Highly significant	CIN/long term/locality the best, leaving care the worst	0.0003
English as a first language	Highly significant	Those with English as a first language score higher	0.0014

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Post qualification years in service	Highly significant	Improves to 3-5 years band, then drops	0.0022
Length of service with current employer	Significant	Improves up to ten years of service and then dips significantly	0.0159
Ofsted rating of employer	Borderline	Social workers in 'good' and 'outstanding' LAs do better	0.0455
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.1108
Type of employment	Not significant	Agency workers average is 1.75% lower than permanent employees	0.1347
Gender	Not significant		0.1416
Geographic location	Not significant		0.5828

Table C1.4.5: CFP: General knowledge scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Table C1.4.6 shows the equivalent table for PS with the characteristics and features in descending of importance.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The 'white' group (however defined) perform better	0.0005
Service area	Highly significant	CIN/long term/locality performed the best, fostering and adoption and leaving care performed the worst	0.0005
Age band	Significant	30-39 performed best, then 40-49	0.0190
Type of qualification	Not significant	Master degrees (combined) performed better than BA/BSc	0.0681
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.0869
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant	'Inadequate' group lower	0.1810
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.2649
Geographic location	Not significant		0.2891
English as a first language	Not significant	Only 11 (of 183) with English not as a first language	0.3605

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.3935
Type of employment	Not significant	Scores virtually identical	0.4059
Gender	Not significant		0.4705

Table C1.4.6: PS: General knowledge scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Four factors (age band, ethnicity, service area and post qualification years in service) were common to both CFP and PS in being significant or highly significant. Four factors (type of qualification, English as a first language, Ofsted rating, length of service with current employer) were significant for CFP but not for PS. Appendix E1.8 discusses each characteristic and feature, in the order of their significance for CFP.

C1.4.4   Applied Knowledge

For CFP the applied knowledge section comprised ten questions each carrying a maximum score of 2 and therefore an available total score of 20. For PS there were nine questions each carrying a score of 2 and hence an overall total score of 18. For both CFP and PS the applied knowledge section accounted for less than 10% of the total available score for the digital assessment as a whole.

Personal characteristics and employer features – the headlines

Table C1.4.7 shows for CFP the effect of personal characteristics and employer features on applied knowledge scores. They are in descending order of importance (as measured by the p-value).

As for general knowledge there were several significant factors. Ethnicity, English as a first language, age band, Ofsted rating of employer and length of service with current employer were common to general knowledge and applied knowledge. The difference between employment types was an additional factor here, although agency workers scored lower on the general knowledge section.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The 'white' group outperformed the BAME group by 7-8.5 percentage points	<0.0001
English as a first language	Highly significant	Those social workers with English as a first language performed significantly better	<0.0001
Ofsted rating of employer	Significant	Social workers from 'inadequate' local authorities performed worse	0.0033

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Types of Employment	Highly significant	Permanent social workers performed better	0.0086
Age band	Significant	Like general knowledge the average score declined with age band but then increased slightly with the 60+ age group	0.0147
Length of service with current employer	Significant	Score tended to increase with length of service and variation in scores narrows as it did so	0.0273
Geographic location	Not significant		0.1675
Gender	Not significant		0.1935
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.2008
Qualification	Not significant	MA qualified social workers slightly outperformed the remainder	0.2023
Service area	Not significant	Leaving care social workers were the lowest	0.3692
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.5000

Table C1.4.7: CFP: Applied knowledge scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Table C1.4.8 shows the equivalent table for PS with the characteristics and features again in descending order of importance. There was no statistically significant relationship between applied knowledge scores and any personal characteristic or employer feature. The first apparently significant result is spurious because of the inclusion of three outlier social workers in the ANOVA test, but once excluded there was no difference between types of employment. Although females slightly outscored males it was not possible to conclude with statistical confidence that there was a real difference.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Type of employment	Highly significant	This is potentially a misleading result as it is influenced by three outliers with very low scores. When excluded, there was no difference between type of	0.0067

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
		employment	
Gender	Borderline	Females had a slightly higher average score	0.0460*
Geographic location	Not significant		0.0586
Service area	Not significant		0.2241
Ethnicity	Not significant		0.2637
English as a first language	Not significant		0.3561
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant		0.4052
Qualification	Not significant		0.4155
Age band	Not significant		0.4335
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.4274
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.8027
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.8247

Table C1.4.8: PS: Applied knowledge scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

*Note: * An unpaired t-test (assuming unequal variances) is not significant*

Appendix E1.9 discusses the significant characteristics in descending order of importance for CFP and, where appropriate, for PS.

C1.4.5   Scenarios

For CFP this part of the digital assessment comprised three scenarios carrying a total of 96 marks and for PS two scenarios carrying a total of 86 marks. Some scenarios were just analytical and text based whilst others used video.

Personal characteristics and employer features – the headlines

Table C1.4.9 shows for CFP the results of statistical tests for a variety of personal characteristics and employer features and their effect on the scenario scores. As for general knowledge and applied knowledge, they are in descending order of importance (as measured by the p-value following a t-test or ANOVA test).

For CFP many factors proved to be highly significant, more so than for any other part of the digital assessment or simulated observation.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	Large difference, especially between ''white' All' and BAME	<0.0001
Age band	Highly significant	Performance declined consistently with age band	<0.0001
English as a first language	Highly significant	Social workers declaring English as a first language performed significantly better	<0.0001
Ofsted rating of employer	Highly significant	Scores improved with higher Ofsted ratings except for Durham (the only outstanding LA)	<0.0001
Service area	Highly significant	Social workers in some specialist teams scored lower than those in mainstream safeguarding	<0.0001
Post qualification years in service	Highly significant	Score reduced for those with 5 and more years post-qualification	0.0003
Qualification	Highly significant	Social workers with an MA outperformed others. The 'Other' group is lowest	0.0006
Geographic location	Highly significant	Social workers obtained significantly different scores based on the geographic location of their employer	0.0042
Length of service with current employer	Just significant		0.0456
Gender	Just significant		0.0472
Type of employment	Not significant		0.2198
Employer type	Not significant		0.6320

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
(of council)			

Table C1.4.10 shows the equivalent table for PS, which shows that fewer factors are significant, reflecting in part the smaller number of participants.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ofsted rating of employer	Highly significant	Performance was lower for social workers in the 'inadequate' cohort	0.0011
Ethnicity	Highly significant	'white' group performed higher than BAME group by 2 to 3 percentage points	0.0061
Employer type (of council)	Significant	County council social workers scored highest and those in London boroughs the lowest	0.0182
Service area	Just significant		0.0440
Geographic location	Not significant		0.0550
Qualification	Not significant		0.1121
Gender	Not significant		0.1983
English as a first language	Not significant		0.2795
Age band	Not significant		0.3837
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.4158
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.6404
Type of employment	Not significant		0.9563

Table C1.4.10: PS: Scenario scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features – headlines

Appendix E1.10 discusses the significant characteristics and features in descending order of importance for CFP and, where appropriate, for PS.

C1.5   Analysis – Simulated Observation

This section summarises the analysis of the simulated observation. It is divided into the following parts:

- a description of the simulated observation;
- an assessment of the overall variation in social worker performance; and

- an analysis of the effect of various social worker characteristics and employer features on performance.

C1.5.1 Description of the simulated observation

The simulated observation consisted of five component parts: three scenarios using professional actors, a written assessment and a reflective conversation.

Independent observers rated each of the five component parts on a scale of 1 to 7. A social worker's total simulated observation score could vary from 5 to 35. The independent lead observer agreed an overall score by considering all of the feedback comments the observers had made and also by discussion with each of the observers (on a scale from 1 to 7). The overall score was not derived in any formulaic way from the five constituent scores but reflected the social worker's performance overall. See section B4.2 for further information on methodology.

An analysis was made of the variation in scores to determine whether they were correlated with either the personal characteristics of social workers or by employer features. In contrast to the digital assessment, fewer social workers went through simulated observation – 161 CFP and 43 PS – which could affect the significance level and/or confidence level of the results. Also, as with the digital assessment, feedback was gathered from social workers in relation to their experience of the simulated observation. The correlation between the evaluation feedback (score) and the scores achieved in the simulated observation is examined in section C2.1.

In the PoC phase 15 independent observers were used, with six observers completing over 70% of all assessments. There were also 25 actors. All actors and observers participated in two training sessions involving mock-up scenarios.

Despite this preparatory work there remained a residual risk that observers would score inconsistently. Taking into account the scoring on scenario 2 which was generally lower (see Table C1.5.3) we could find no obvious bias.

C1.5.2 Performance

Social workers' performance for simulated observation is outlined in Table C1.5.1 and Table C1.5.2. Over 1 in 5 CFP (21.3%) did not meet the required standard, while 7.5% were judged to have exceeded it. By contrast, albeit with a much smaller sample, 1 in 6 (16%) of PS did not meet the required standard, but a much higher proportion (21%) exceeded it.

	Not Met			Met		Exceeded	
Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Number	1	3	30	70	44	12	0
%	0.6	1.9	18.8	43.8	27.5	7.5	0

Table C1.5.1: CFP: Overall ratings

Note: Table C1.5.1 excludes one very newly qualified social worker who had recently taken up employment. The lead observer considered it was not possible to give an overall rating.

	Not Met			Met		Exceeded	
Rating	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Number	0	0	7	16	11	9	0
%	0	0	16	37	26	21	0

Table C1.5.2: PS: Overall ratings

Further insight into the ratings social workers received for each component part of the simulated observation is shown for CFP and PS participants in Table C1.5.3 and Table C1.5.4. For simplicity, results have been aggregated into 'not met', 'met' and 'exceeded'.

SO component	% not met	% met	% exceeded
Scenario 1	23.0	62.7	14.3
Scenario 2	38.5	57.1	4.4
Scenario 3	26.7	58.4	14.9
Written exercise	29.2	62.1	8.7
Reflective conversation	23.0	60.9	16.2
Overall rating	21.3	71.3	7.5

Table C1.5.3: CFP: Analysis of ratings by the component parts of the simulated observation

The results show that there was not a significant difference in assessed performance between the component parts, with the exception of scenario 2. This particular scenario was designed to be a more challenging and confrontational situation for social workers. The observers determined that nearly 40% of social workers did not meet the required standard.

SO component	% not met	% met	% exceeded
Scenario 1	16	63	21
Scenario 2	19	63	19
Scenario 3	14	70	16
Written exercise	14	70	16
Reflective conversation	7	69	24
Overall	16	63	21

Table C1.5.4: PS: Analysis of ratings by the component parts of the simulated observation

The distribution of the aggregated scores of the five components (which can range from 5 to 35) are shown in Figure C1.5.1 and Figure C1.5.2 for CFP and PS. In both cases there was an emerging normal distribution. The CFP graph shows three under-performing outliers – there were no such PS cases.
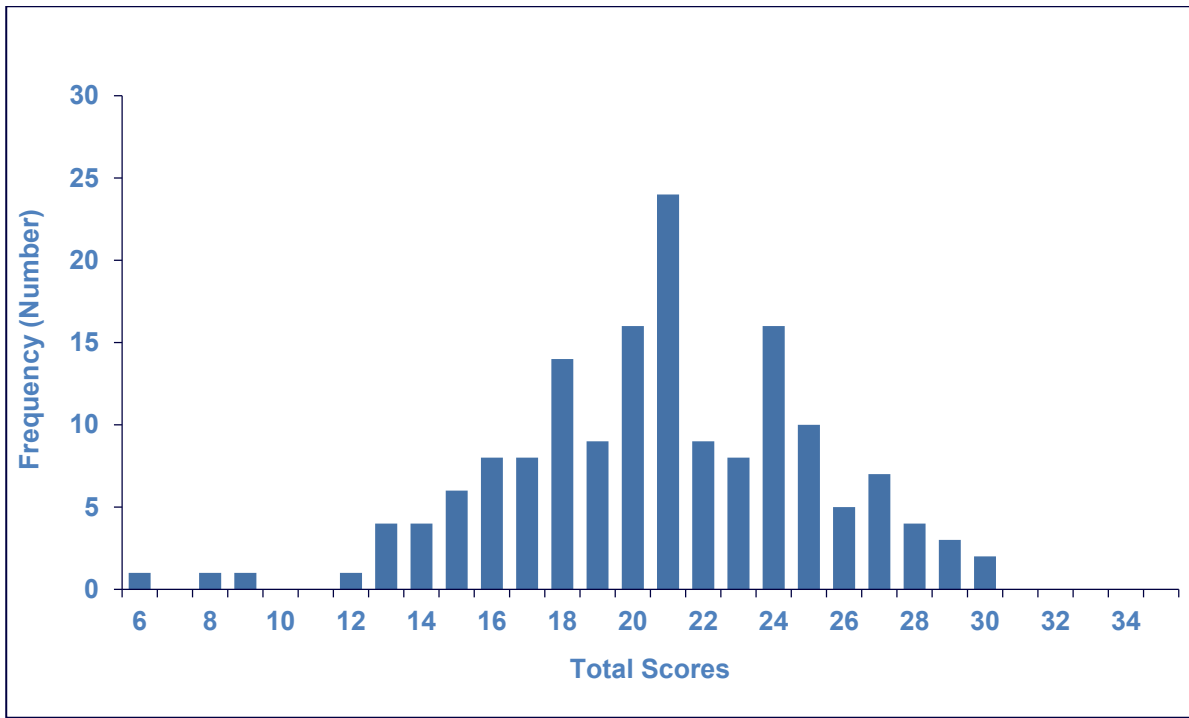
Figure C1.5.5: CFP: Distribution of simulated observation scores (aggregated from the five component parts)
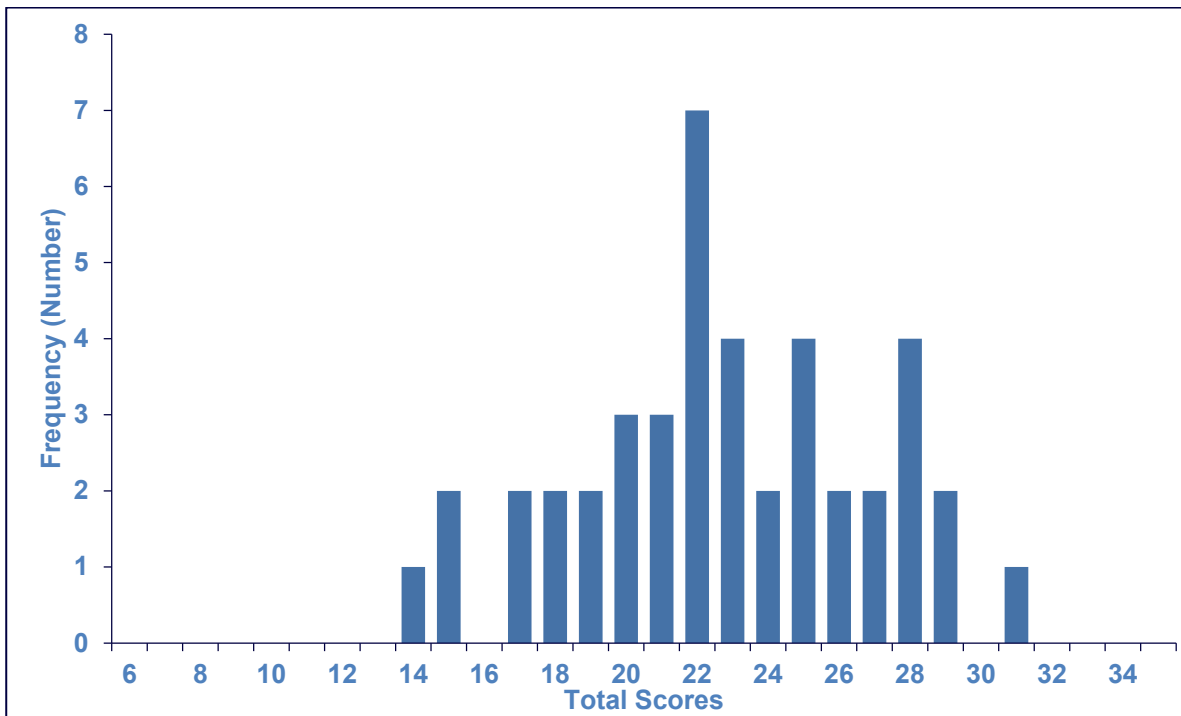
Figure C1.5.6: PS: Distribution of simulated observation scores (aggregated from the five component parts

C1.5.3   Personal characteristics and employer features

The full analysis of results by employer, personal characteristics and employer features can be found in Appendix E1.11.

Employer

Statistical tests show there was no significant difference between employers. No conclusions could be drawn because of the small numbers of social workers in each employer. Also, it should be noted that the larger authorities (where more observations were completed) gravitated towards the middle of the distribution.

Personal characteristics and employer features

For CFP, Table E1.11.1 shows the results for a variety of personal characteristics and employer features and their effect on the simulated observation scores in descending order of importance. Two characteristics were highly significant (at the 1% level):

- *Ethnicity* – The 'white' group, however defined, out-performed the BAME group, however defined.
- *Gender* – Females performed better, but the result was sensitive to outliers in the performance of male social workers. When the outliers are removed gender becomes not significant at the 5% level.

Age fell just short of being a statistically significant factor. Table E1.11.7 shows the declining trend in average score with age band and also that the variation within each band increased with age.

For PS, Table E1.11.2 shows the equivalent table with the characteristics and features again in descending order of importance.

There was only one significant factor - local authority type - however this would require a larger sample across a wider range of employers to confirm it was not a spurious result. This is a factor that should be investigated further during the rollout phase.

C1.6   Analysis – Employer Ratings

Volunteer employers in the PoC phase were asked to provide an employer rating for all those social workers who were randomly selected for simulated observation. The employer rating was based on a 7-point scale, from 1 (poor) to 7 (outstanding). Employers could use whatever evidence they wished in allocating a score to each social worker. These ratings were used to assess the extent to which the assessment as trialled provided an accurate reflection of the quality of practice of individual social workers.

As with the digital assessment and simulated observation the distribution of ratings was analysed and assessed to determine whether there were any patterns according to (1) the personal characteristics of social workers and (2) employer features.

177 employer rating forms were received from employers out of a possible 204, a return rate of 87%. The methods employers used for making these assessments were reported as:

Method of Assessment	Percentage Used
End of year performance evaluation	15.2%
Recent direct observation conducted as part of a continuous improvement process	15.6%
Overall evaluation of the social worker that is more holistic rather than based on any particular methodology/framework	67.3%
Other	1.9%

Table C1.6.1: Employer rating methods of assessment

The other assessment methods that employers used were:

- rating based on information available from mid-year appraisal review and own observation;
- 360-degree evaluation feedback;
- direct observation of practice with clients in several settings;
- observation of professional conduct in planning and review meetings;
- feedback from a wide variety of professionals;
- reflective discussion in clinical supervision and management supervision; and,
- observations in team and business meetings.

Table C1.6.2 shows the distribution of ratings received from employers. Employers judged that 5 out of 177 (or about 3%) social workers did not meet the required standard.

	Not Met			Met		Exceeded	
Rating	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
CFP no.	0	1	3	30	62	41	8
%	0	0.6	2	20.7	42.8	28.3	5.5
PS no.	0	0	1	5	11	14	1
%	0	0	3.1	15.6	34.4	43.8	3.1
Total	0	1	4	35	73	55	9
%	0	0.6	2.3	19.8	41.2	31.1	5.1

Table C1.6.2: Employer ratings provided

Table C1.6.3 shows for CFP and PS the effect of social worker characteristics and features of their employer on the employer ratings provided. These factors are in descending order of importance as measured by the p-value from an ANOVA or t-test, as appropriate. With the exception of ethnicity and gender CFP and PS results have been combined.

Unlike the analysis of scores obtained in the digital assessment and simulated observation components there were only two significant factors; English as a first

language and post qualification years of service. A third factor, CFP ethnicity, was close to being significant.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
English as a first language	Significant	Employers assessed their social workers with English as a first language as performing better	0.0263
Post qualification years in service	Significant	Employers gave social workers with more experience higher ratings	0.0350
Ethnicity	Not significant	Close to significant for CFP	0.0546 CFP 0.3333 PS
Age band	Not significant		0.0950
Gender	Not significant		0.1062 CFP 0.0846 PS
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.2667
Type of employment	Not significant		0.3649
Qualification	Not significant		0.6080
Service area	Not significant		0.6952
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.8053
Geographic location	Not significant		0.9109
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant		0.9516

Table C1.6.3: CFP and PS combined: Employer rating and relationship with characteristics/employer features

English as a first language was significant despite only 18 out of 170 social workers declaring that it was not their first language. The result for post-qualification years of service showed the opposite relationship to that for digital assessment and simulated observation scores, as well as for the digital assessment time to complete analysis. Those analyses showed that scores declined and the time taken to complete the digital assessment increased with years of experience. For employers' rating, the results improved with the years in service, as shown in Table C1.6.4.

Years in service	Less than 1	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	15	36	17	39	63
Average rating	4.60	4.97	5.24	5.31	5.32

Table C1.6.4: CFP and PS: Employer ratings by post qualification years in service

No other factor was associated with significant differences in social workers' employer ratings. There was absolutely no difference according to the Ofsted rating of the employer – it was the least significant factor of the 12 tested.

C1.7   Analysis – Direct Observations

To help test the validity of the simulated observation and analyse further the employer ratings direct observations of a proportion of social workers who had also been through the simulated observation were carried out. In the case of CFP these tended to be an independent observer (from MLA) accompanying a social worker on a family visit. For PS an independent observer sat in on a supervisory session.

58 observations were completed: 49 CFP and 9 PS. It was difficult to schedule and arrange these visits and sessions with social workers.

The independent observers assessed performance using the same 7-point scoring scale, from 1 (poor) to 7 (outstanding), used for simulated observation and the employer ratings. Table C1.7.1 shows the overall distribution of scores. The correlations between various components of the assessment are discussed in detail in section C1.2.

	Not Met			Met		Exceeded	
Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No. of participants (CFP and PS)	0	1	8	19	19	10	1
%	0	2	14	33	33	17	2

Table C1.7.1: CFP and PS: Social workers' performance in direct observation

Although based on a small sample, observers assessed one in six (16%) of social workers as not meeting the standard required by the relevant knowledge and skills statement.

C2   Qualitative analysis

C2.1   Social worker feedback (Digital Assessment and Simulated Observation)

The findings in this section are based on feedback received from social worker participants who took part in the digital assessment and simulated observation. This data was obtained from surveys which were completed by participants at the end of each assessment. Participants were asked about their experience in each part of the assessment. For each question, participants responded via a 5-point Likert scale. They then had the opportunity to expand on this feedback through a series of free text questions.

930 digital assessment surveys and 188 simulated observation surveys were completed. A summary of responses can be found in the following appendices:

- Appendix E1.12 – Participant feedback results – Participant Assessment CFP
- Appendix E1.13 – Participant feedback results – Participant Assessment PS
- Appendix E1.14 – Participant feedback results – Simulated Observation CFP
- Appendix E1.15 – Participant feedback results – Simulated Observation PS

In addition to these surveys, social workers were invited to participate in focus groups which were co-ordinated and facilitated by Research in Practice (RiP) and by the DfE.

The survey outcomes for the digital assessment and the simulated observation are considered separately in this section, followed by the supplementary feedback obtained from the RiP led focus groups.

C2.1.1   Digital assessment

This section contains an analysis of participant feedback on the digital assessment including:

- Questions answered on a Likert scale:
    - general questions on the digital assessment;
    - general knowledge questions;
    - applied knowledge questions;
    - scenario questions.

- Feedback from free text questions, analysed by the following themes:
    - length of the assessment;
    - relevance to the role of a social worker;
    - assessment format;
    - reflection and development;
    - venue, logistics and support staff.

General questions on the digital assessment

The majority of CFP (73%) and PS (67%) participants found the digital platform somewhat or very easy to use with just 2% of participants finding the system very difficult to use. Similarly, the majority of CFP (66%) and PS (64%) participants found the instructions received before attending the assessment somewhat or very easy to follow. The majority of CFP (74%) and PS (73%) participants found the instructions received in the assessment session somewhat or very easy to follow.

General knowledge questions

Approximately half of CFP (48%) and PS (49%) participants found the questions somewhat or very easy to understand. 35% of CFP and 28% of PS found the questions somewhat or very difficult to understand.

Over half of CFP (56%) and PS (52%) participants found the questions somewhat or very difficult. Fewer than 3% of the participants (22 in total) found the questions very easy.

The performance of those who stated they found the questions difficult to understand as opposed to those who found them easier were analysed. This analysis showed no significant relationship between perceived difficulty and actual results. Similarly, participants who noted that the assessment was somewhat or very easy did not perform significantly better than other participants.

A small majority of participants (51% of CFP and 59% of PS) felt the questions were appropriate for the KSS for their status, whilst 34% of CFP and 27% of PS participants felt the questions were completely or somewhat inappropriate. Feedback in the free text questions later in this section provides some clarification on the reasons for these responses.

In line with feedback on how difficult questions were to understand and complete, a higher proportion of PS (78%) than CFP (65%) participants felt that the amount of time allocated was more than enough or just about right.

Analysis showed that there was a very significant relationship between the amount of time pressure that participants felt and the time they took to complete the assessment. For each component of the digital assessment (general knowledge, applied knowledge and scenarios), as well as for both CFP and PS, participants that stated they thought there was insufficient time allocated to the assessment took significantly longer to complete that section.

Applied knowledge questions

Whilst 51% of CFP and 52% of PS participants found these questions somewhat or very easy to understand, 30% of CFP and 26% of PS participants found them somewhat or very difficult to understand. However, less than 3% of both CFP and PS participants felt these questions were 'very difficult to understand'. In terms of the level of difficulty of the questions, 40% of CFP and 31% of PS participants found the questions somewhat or

very difficult. Conversely, 36% of CFP and 39% of PS participants found the questions somewhat or very easy.

Analysis showed no significant relationship between perceived difficulty and actual results for PS participants only. For CFP participants, those that perceived the applied knowledge section to be difficult tended to have a significantly lower mean score than their counterparts that did not.

Fewer CFP (52%) than PS (67%) participants felt that the applied knowledge questions were somewhat or completely appropriate to their status (CFP/PS). Similarly, 63% of CFP and 70% of PS participants reported that the questions were completely or somewhat appropriate for the KSS for their status.

81% of CFP and 82% of PS participants felt the applied knowledge questions were somewhat or completely appropriate to the work of child and family social workers. A majority of CFP (60%) and PS (63%) participants felt the language used was somewhat or very clear with less than 4% of both CFP and PS participants finding the language very confusing.

Most CFP (63%) and PS (71%) participants felt the time allocated to applied knowledge questions was more than enough or just about right. However, 26% of CFP participants felt that time was not enough or very tight compared with just 16% of PS participants.

Analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between the amount of time pressure that participants felt and the length of time they took to complete the applied knowledge section. Those that felt there was insufficient time allocated took significantly longer to complete this section of the assessment.

Scenarios

Whilst the majority of CFP (62%) and PS (61%) participants found the clarity of questions somewhat or very easy to understand, 21% of CFP and 24% of PS participants found them somewhat or very difficult to understand. Of these, under 3% of total responses fell into the 'very difficult to understand' category.

Similar to the applied knowledge questions, there was a wide range of feedback regarding the difficulty of questions with 42% of CFP and 37% of PS participants finding the questions somewhat or very easy and 29% of CFP and 34% of PS participants finding them somewhat or very difficult.

Analysis showed no significant relationship between perceived difficulty and actual results for CFP participants only. For PS, participants who noted that the assessment was difficult obtained a significantly lower score than their counterparts who stated they found the test easy.

The majority of CFP (68%) and PS (69%) participants thought the level of questions were appropriate to their status. Similarly, 72% of both CFP and PS participants felt that the content was appropriately aligned to the KSS for their status.

A large majority of CFP (86%) and PS (84%) participants felt that the scenarios were appropriate to the work of child and family social workers, with 75% of CFP and 74% of PS participants stating that the representation of characters was somewhat or completely realistic.

The use of video based scenarios clearly enhanced experiences in the assessment. The majority of CFP (76%) and PS (72%) participants stated that this somewhat or completely enhanced their experience of the assessment with just 4% of total participants finding them completely unnecessary.

Supporting documentation was provided in some scenarios and a large majority of CFP (77%) and PS (86%) participants found this somewhat or completely useful.

Most CFP (59%) and PS (67%) participants felt that the time allocated for scenarios was more than enough or just about right. Conversely, 29% of CFP and 20% of PS felt there was not enough time or time was very tight. This may have been influenced by the fact that scenarios were completed last in the assessment process and some participants may have been under pressure to complete the assessment before the end of their session.

Analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between the amount of time pressure that participants felt and the length of time they took to complete the scenarios. Those that felt there was insufficient time allocated took significantly longer to complete this section of the assessment.

Feedback from free text questions

In the free text questions, participants were asked what worked well in the assessment, what could be improved and to provide any other comments about the assessment. Of the 930 digital assessment feedback forms completed, 421 made no further comments in the free text section regarding what worked well and 385 made no further comments regarding what could be improved.

Responses from both CFP and PS social worker participants have been combined. A number of recurring themes have been identified:

Theme	Number of comments
Length of the assessment	289
Relevance to the role of a social worker	413
Assessment format	669
Reflection and development	119

Theme	Number of comments
Venue, logistics and support staff	178
Total digital assessment feedback forms received	**930**

Each of these themes is considered below. In the free text comments received the majority noted many different issues within their feedback, including on different parts of the digital assessment. The following descriptors have been used to give an indication of the numbers that referred to a specific point within a theme.

A small number	Fewer than ten participants
Some	Up to 20% of participants who made a comment under that theme heading
Many	Between 20% and 50% of participants who made a comment under that theme heading
Majority/most	More than 50% who made a comment under that theme heading

Length of the assessment

A small number of participants commented that the time available for the assessment was appropriate.

- *Adequate time.*
- *Instructions were clear and allocated an appropriate amount of time to complete questions.*
- *Timescales were appropriate.*

However, the vast majority of the 289 comments were negative about the length of the digital assessment. The analysis of actual time taken to complete the digital assessment shows that for CFP participants there was an average time of 2 hours and 49 minutes with a median value of 2 hours and 48 minutes. For PS participants the average time to complete was 2 hours and 37 minutes with a same median value of 2 hours and 40 minutes. Participants commented that they found it impossible to concentrate fully for that length of time. Many expressed concern that their performance in the latter stages of the assessment was affected by fatigue.

- *The length of time it takes can make it difficult to maintain concentration levels.*
- *The length of the assessment was tiring and difficult to concentrate for that amount of time.*
- *I lost concentration and motivation by scenario 2.*
- *The assessment is overly long in duration…I feel this certainly impacted upon my concentration levels.*
- *After 3 hours there is a tendency to answer with anything as the process is too long.*
- *I lost the will to live come the last scenario, by this point I was too tired/unmotivated and too hot to concentrate properly in the afternoon. Therefore I don't think I was able to offer my best responses.*

A few participants noted that the intensity of the assessment did not support reflective thinking.

- *I did not feel I was allowed the time to reflect. In social work you need time to reflect and way up your options.*
- *I would never rush my decisions in a real practice context in the way I felt I had to do in order to try to finish the assessment on time.*

Some participants tried to identify specific reasons why the assessment was so long and what changes could be made to make the length more appropriate. In particular, they felt that there was too much information and reading involved. Some also found that the multiple question formats and types caused confusion which added to the time they needed as questions changed from 'select one answer' to 'indicate all that are accurate' to 'mark each statement as true or false' for example. This feature, however, is noted as a positive feature of the assessment format by a greater number of participants in the 'assessment format' theme later in this section.

- *The amount of information to comment on and analyse was lengthy.*
- *Most of the time was taken in receiving information rather than giving answers.*
- *It is difficult to switch between the three types of assessment and to access the supplementary information related to the scenarios, absorb it all within the timescale and try to make the correct decision.*
- *The use of different material was rather annoying in the view that once answered the questions having to view images and then use earphones is just too much.*

Some participants commented on the physical discomfort they experienced as a result of the length of the assessment. This included headaches, eye strain and back ache, especially as not all venues had appropriate office chairs.

- *Too much full on screen time – my neck hurt, my head and eyes hurt.*
- *After 2 hours spent concentrating on a screen my eyes began to lose focus. After 2 and a half hours, my brain followed suit.*
- *I genuinely have a headache and do not feel able to be productive with the rest of my day.*
- *There has been so much reading on the computer screen it has made me have a headache.*

Many participants recommended that the digital assessment be split into more than one session as they felt the length of the session affected their performance.

- *This test should be separated into two tests. The general knowledge as an hour and a half test, and then the other two sections as 2.5 hours.*
- *Consider splitting the assessment into two parts as one needs time to think and really consider the scenarios and this was not possible.*
- *I would rather do the assessment in two parts, even if it was the same day.*
- *It was much too long. No academic exams that I am aware of take 4 hours. It is also advised that supervision sessions should be nowhere near this long because you can only concentrate at this level for about 2 hours. It needs to be split into 2 sessions.*
- *Needs to be broken down into smaller segments in my view – perhaps three shorter sessions.*

Relevance to the role of a social worker

Most participants reported that the content of the digital assessment was a fair representation of the knowledge and skills required of a child and family social worker. This was reflected in responses to the Likert questions. Of all three question types that participants experienced, the general knowledge questions received the lowest ratings in relation to how appropriate they felt the content of the questions were, with 51% of CFP and 59% of PS participants stating that the content was appropriate for the KSS for their status. Around one third of CFP (34%) and around one quarter of PS (27%) found the content of the knowledge questions completely or somewhat inappropriate. Participant responses to the free text questions highlighted some of the potential reasons for these ratings.

A very small number of participants made specific comments about the relevance of these questions.

- *The range of questions on legislation, policy and everyday tasks worked well in that it allowed a holistic assessment into the skills required within social work.*
- *I felt that the questions that asked us to look at centile charts and interpret them was good.*

However, the majority of comments in this theme were that the knowledge questions in particular covered areas that were either not relevant to the participant's role or that required an unrealistic expectation of their knowledge. Some specifically noted that these questions did not reflect their ability to practice.

- *Many of the questions in the first section I didn't find relevant – for example the percentage of women who experience post-natal depression, the growth charts etc. I don't think these questions will provide a good indicator of whether someone is a good social worker or not.*
- *I felt the initial general knowledge was so broad that there were elements that in 25 years of working with young people I have not encountered.*
- *A good proportion of these I did not feel were appropriate to the role of social worker.*
- *I believe the type of questions on the first part of the assessment are not*

- *common knowledge for all social workers.*
- *I think that overall the expectations in terms of social workers' knowledge of legislation and child development in health were high.*
- *Social work is so broad that we do not know every law etc., what should be assessed is the capacity and proactiveness in looking up laws/policies/guidance etc. when a situation arises.*

Many participants felt that several general knowledge questions were more relevant for professionals other than social workers.

- *A number of the questions felt irrelevant and where I would look to other professionals for their interpretation of the information.*
- *I do not have medical knowledge – why would I know the meaning of a word such as 'metaphysical' – I would expect an examining medic to explain this to me as well as the implications in terms of possible abuse.*
- *I found a lot of the questions were not realistic for us to know – e.g. some of the law questions, terms served in prison, and all the medical terminology. Why would we bother consulting with health specialists or seek legal advice from the LA legal team if we were health or legal experts?*
- *I am a social worker not a medical or health professional so all the medical questions i.e. various types of fractures, I am unaware of and would rely on health professionals to explain this.*
- *I am not medically qualified and would not expect any social worker to have the medical knowledge you are asking for – I think we need to be really careful about our area of expertise and respect our professional boundaries.*

Specifically, many participants questioned why they were being asked to interpret centile charts as this was not something that they would do in their role as a social worker.

- *I recognise that social work overlaps with other areas, but I do not understand the relevance of this assessment using centile graphs.*
- *Too much emphasis on centile charts – usually we get this information from the health visitor.*
- *Some of the questions were totally irrelevant – e.g. the use of centile charts – my own knowledge of these was drawn from my own 2 children and at no point in my 6 year career have I had to plot information on a centile chart.*

Some participants noted that the content of many of the knowledge questions did not reflect the way in which social work is conducted in multi-agency teams and the way in which social workers interact on a day to day basis with other professionals.

- *It does not take into account multi-agency working and how we seek advice from specialists in their respective areas.*
- *As a social worker we are required to adopt effective multi-agency working and gather evidence from specialist sources which I do not feel was acknowledged.*

- *As a social worker I do not work in silo I work in collaboration with others both colleagues and other professionals and draw upon their knowledge and expertise.*
- *There appears to be a focus on medical terminology, jargon and information which I would not expect a social worker to know directly but may ask other professionals to feed in – i.e. percentile charts, breakages, bruising etc. Social workers are not medically trained in any capacity hence why multi-agency working is required for well-developed risk assessments.*

Some participants also questioned whether all social workers in all roles would be able to answer all questions equally well. They noted that social workers operate in specialist teams and may not have knowledge or experience in some of the areas of questioning.

- *The general knowledge questions do not reflect the roles of fostering social workers and would be extremely difficult to answer if there had been no placements in mental health, child protection or family support services.*
- *As an adoption social worker the general knowledge parts were not relevant fully.*
- *Whilst I feel this assessment is appropriate for front line staff, social workers within such settings as CAMHS this is not our everyday practice.*
- *I have worked in fostering and adoption for over 30 years….my experience of mental health legislation is now almost 40 years out of date.*
- *Very geared towards front line child protection and not my area of specialism.*

Some participants suggested that rather than testing the recollection of specific aspects of legislation or medical information, it would be better to assess whether social workers were able to research and obtain this information effectively from a range of sources.

- *It is part of a social worker practitioner's every day work to research issues and know how to do that rather than have that knowledge, particularly as many aspects change on a regular basis. Consideration should be given to be able to access reference books/internet as part of assessment as this would be a true reflection.*
- *Social work requires such broad and varied knowledge and I am always researching and speaking to other colleagues and professionals to gain information or answers that I don't know. The general knowledge section of this does not take this into account and makes you feel like you have to have the answers for everything which is impossible and unrealistic.*
- *I can't see how holding specific legislative knowledge in your head without being able to use reference information (e.g. about criminal responsibility, channel legislation etc.) that is more or less relevant to some roles, is a good way to assess competence in practice.*
- *Social work is so broad that we do not know every law etc., what should be assessed is the capacity and proactiveness in looking up laws/ policies/ guidance etc. when a situation arises – this would be better assessed by giving a range of documents for social workers to look up during the test.*

Assessment format

Many participants made comments about the format of the digital assessment itself. Common topics included:

- the use of scenarios and video;
- the presentation of background information (including the inability to navigate back in the assessment and the recommendation to have some hard copy resources);
- the types of questions used (including the positive response to multiple choice questions, the variety of question formats, as well as the potential to introduce free-text boxes);
- the clarity of language used; and,
- suggestions to improve the assessment and digital platform.

The greatest number of comments were in relation to the scenarios which a majority of participants thought were engaging and realistic. Many also commented on the additional value that video brought to the scenarios.

- *The scenario based questions were particularly good in the assessment...and enabled me to engage more fully with the assessment.*
- *I think the scenarios are more useful than the multiple choice questions and more representative of the day to day work that we carry out.*
- *Scenarios were very realistic and easy to understand, they encouraged me to think about my decision making and practice.*
- *The scenarios worked extremely well I felt I was able to relate them to my own experiences as a social worker.*
- *The assessment video scenarios were useful in obtaining a more realistic picture for decisions to be made.*
- *The video scenarios were helpful to judge body language and presentation.*
- *I personally struggled in written exams and therefore I really liked the scenarios as I felt it was hands on without actually being in the situation.*

A very small number of participants were critical of scenarios as an assessment tool. This included some who felt they gave response options that were too narrow or that they were too long and complex.

- *Some of the scenario based questions did not allow for enough judgement, professional analysis was narrowed by the options available.*
- *The scenarios were good but too long and complex.*

Scenarios had been specifically designed so that participants could not go back through previous screens to review the storyline or to change answers to questions. This was a deliberate strategy to mirror real life as closely as possible where access to case history is via case notes and associated documents (which continued to be available in the scenario via the 'resources' button) and where decisions cannot be changed with the benefit of hindsight. However, many participants were frustrated by this lack of a 'go back' facility as they felt that not all relevant information was in the resources section so

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they were making some decisions without full information to hand. This was particularly the case in the PS team leader scenario.

> - *It would be helpful…to be able to go back and view previous questions (if not answers) as there was some important contextual information included in them and without being able to review this it made it difficult to answer some questions often several pages and 20 minutes later.*
> - *On the second scenario about team I couldn't go back to the more detailed analysis of the team and so my answers were not based on the correct information.*
> - *It was difficult to answer the performance questions when you could not go back to the information about the performance of individual team members.*
> - *Changing answers on first part as I sometimes committed to the wrong answer then could not go back.*
> - *Ability to go back and review answers – not necessarily to change them but to reflect on the answers and how the choices made may have worked/not worked.*
> - *Not able to go back during the video scenario for example I chose a wrong answer because I could not go back to ascertain the age of a child.*

Some participants recommended that it would be useful to have some of the documents that were in the resources section available as hard copy so they did not have to keep opening documents at points during scenarios. This would mean that they could have the hard copy information available in front of them whilst reading the question on screen. This was particularly the case in relation to the PS team leader scenario.

> - *In the 'managing a team' section, I found it difficult to recall all the detail of what I had read and was unable to navigate back. I needed paper copies to refer back to in order to make effective decisions.*
> - *When opening notes, you cannot then look at the questions at the same time as they close off. It would have been useful if they could have remained on the screen at the same time.*
> - *Having all the information available at any point to read through.*
> - *Scenario 2 on team performance contained a lot of information which was difficult to comprehend and retain without easier reference to it, i.e. the notes on individual staff.*

A small number of participants suggested that it would be useful to be able to add free text comments to explain some of their choices. This would, however, affect both the time to complete the assessment and the feasibility of incorporating this into the full implementation as each assessment would then need to be individually marked by an assessor.

> - *The context of decision making in the case scenarios would benefit from the rationale of the social worker being able to comment on their action in addition to the answers provided.*
> - *In some questions some of the answers were ambiguous/or an appropriate*

> - *response was not available to select. A free text section could be useful.*
> - *Perhaps having free text to back up answers or explain reasoning.*
> - *Having free flow opportunity to respond rather than having to pick a specific answer. The options didn't necessarily reflect how I would have wanted to do things.*

In contrast many participants noted that they particularly liked the fact that all of the questions were some form of multiple choice.

> - *I like the format in respect of multiple choice and being able to choose the response that best suited the way you wanted to approach the situation.*
> - *Having multiple choice options rather than having to construct an answer.*
> - *Having multiple choice questions – this made me think more about my chosen answer.*
> - *The multiple choice answers were relevant and I felt that different workers could choose different answers without being right or wrong.*

Some participants noted that they liked the range of assessment formats that were used during the digital assessment as this added variety and helped to keep their interest.

> - *I thought that the mix of question type was good as it provided me with a variety of challenges.*
> - *Variation in material helped. It is a long and in depth assessment requiring a lot of time and attention to detail so for me the variation in material did help.*
> - *I liked the different approach to the learning.*
> - *Dividing the test up into different sections – this worked well. Interesting and quite informative.*
> - *The variety of information and different questions kept my interest in the longer questions.*

Many participants also commented that they found the digital assessment easy to follow and noted that they found the questions themselves clear.

> - *The questions were clear and the assessment was easy to work through.*
> - *Layout of the assessment was good and clear to follow.*
> - *On the whole the language was clear and the purpose of the test understandable.*
> - *The screens were easy to use and questions easy to understand.*

However, many participants also noted that there was lack of clarity in the wording of some questions and overly complex language. Some of the 'true/false' questions and in the 'select one or more' style questions were particularly highlighted.

> - *Some questions were long and wordy with several clauses.*
> - *The questions were sometimes wordy and contradictory. I think the wording could be simplified. This was particularly true of the true/false questions when*

> - *there were several statements within 1 question.*
> - *The wording of some questions was at times confusing.*
> - *At points it would ask for three answers then 'click one or more'*
> - *Some of the answers were a little confusing so I was forced to plump for the best fit.*
> - *Options for many of the answers were too complex, overlapped too much or too vague.*
> - *There were some double negatives in the knowledge questions which was confusing.*
> - *It was difficult to tell those questions where you could choose more than one answer and those where you had one choice.*

The specific question that gave rise to numerous comments was the one that asked participants to identify risk factors, complicating factors and grey areas which were included in one applied knowledge question and one of the scenarios. Comments included that this could mean different things to different people, that this terminology was not used in their authority or that it was too subjective.

Some participants made suggestions for alternative or additional content or focus that might be included to improve the assessment. These suggestions may be useful to consider when developing content for the full implementation of the assessment.

> - *Throughout the assessment questions and answer options there was very little mention of children/voice of the child when discussing cases/assessments.*
> - *In the scenario with John …. I would have wanted to know a lot more information before I could make a decision that it was safe for him to be there.*
> - *I felt that in some of the scenarios the engagement of the fathers could have been considered earlier on.*
> - *I did not agree with the lack of focus on direct work with children.*
> - *Would have liked some areas addressing or challenging cultural and religious belief systems.*
> - *I feel that greater emphasis should be placed on the scenario section, perhaps asking more questions within this around the use of legislation rather than asking all questions about legislation in the general knowledge section.*

Most participants generally found the digital platform itself easy to use and navigate.

> - *I thought the IT system was very good and flowed well.*
> - *Visually it looks good, it is easy to navigate.*
> - *Navigation in regards to different assessments was fairly easy.*
> - *I was very worried about this as I am not technology minded, however it was simple to use and a better experience than I anticipated.*
> - *I liked the website layout and it was really easy to use. The interactive features were good too and enhanced the experience.*
> - *Good use of easy to use icons.*

- *Layout was clean and minimalist, in that we were not bombarded with information.*

A few participants made suggestions about how navigation and layout on the screen could be improved.

- *The tick boxes could be exactly that, ticks. The little red dot on the right is not initially clear.*
- *Instead of highlighting the box in red, it should be a tick so that it is clear what option has been chosen.*
- *The prioritising of options could be numbered.*
- *A practice test might be beneficial.*
- *Unclear whether correct item was selected when changing from red/white.*
- *The drop down subtitles for the scenarios covers the faces in some instances. I lip read somewhat so need to see the face. I referred to the subtitles when the actor had his/her back to the camera but then could not see the reactions of the other actors.*
- *The exit button and the next button are situated too close together.*

Reflection and development

Many participants stated that the digital assessment was an opportunity to reflect on and identify areas for professional development. They noted that taking the assessment had enabled them to identify gaps in their knowledge.

- *It has encouraged me to refer back to certain aspects of law and polity to re-familiarise myself with that relevant to my current role and practice.*
- *It has enabled me to reflect on the gaps that there are in my knowledge.*
- *Answering some of these questions identified gaps in knowledge such as placement orders for children.*
- *The general knowledge questions were clear and appropriate and gave me food for thought in my practice and gaps in my knowledge.*

Some participants also noted that they found the assessment thought provoking and that it had encouraged them to reflect on their practice.

- *Very useful way to reflect about my social work practice and learning and use the information on a day to day practice.*
- *I found it really informative and helpful and it is prompting me to reflect on my practice.*
- *Interesting and makes you assess and reflect which is always good!*
- *Very thought provoking and reflective.*

Many participants also made general comments about the value they perceived in the assessment, even though they may not have expected to find it a positive experience at the outset.

- *It was enjoyable and made me think I will be going away to research some of my answers!*
- *I can see its benefits and this is a job where a good knowledge of theory can make a difference.*
- *It was actually quite enjoyable and gives some indication of your own learning needs.*
- *I think it is an excellent thing to do in order to remember what good practice is and what it looks like.*
- *This was not as scary as I thought it was going to be and the time went by really quickly.*
- *This has been a worthy exercise to measure knowledge and experience.*
- *I actually enjoyed this.*
- *It was pitched at the right level in my opinion and although it was difficult this was rightly so.*
- *I feel the assessment is appropriate and should be rolled out ASAP. I was sceptical of it at first, but now having undertaken this pilot one, I do feel it is most useful for the profession and anything that improves our practice should be welcomed.*

Venue, logistics and support staff

Some assessment venues suffered from a number of technical issues which affected the running of the digital assessment and meant that participants had a poorer experience than elsewhere. In particular, these participants had problems with the sound and the operation of the video elements of the assessment and some also experienced Wi-Fi problems and other technical issues which meant some of their answers were not saved. These experiences were reflected in participant comments.

- *During the video the sound quality was very poor and I struggled to hear the scenarios.*
- *The sound quality was so poor I could not hear it and had to rely on the script.*
- *There were a number of technical issues that resulted in difficulties logging on and having to repeat a full section again. This added time and frustration onto the assessment.*

Some participants commented on environmental factors in the assessment venues and how these may have affected their performance, including room temperature, chairs and screen size.

- *Environmental issues need addressing; chair was uncomfortable for sitting for 4 hours, lighting and staring at the computer has hurt my eyes and affected my concentration, using the mouse for the answers over a long period of time affected my wrist and hand – no support for using the mouse which I am used to.*
- *The conditions of the room in which taking the assessment need to be appropriate to learning – the room was excessively hot with no air, noise level at times was very distracting and made hearing the video very hard.*

A few participants commented on the assessment room being inappropriate either because of its location in the building or the way in which participants were seated within the room.

- *We sat closely together and the room is limited.*
- *The room was too full of people.*

Some participants commented positively about the assessment room they used, including the value they perceived in the session operating under exam conditions.

- *Facilities were fit for purpose. It enabled reflection in a controlled environment.*
- *The exam conditions helped to reiterate how serious the test is and helped me to concentrate.*

Some participants also commented on the helpfulness of the KPMG facilitators.

- *The facilitators were exceptionally helpful.*
- *Support was on hand if something didn't go to plan.*

C2.1.2   Simulated observation

The simulated observation assessment comprised five elements:

- three ten minute scenarios working with actors;
- one 30-minute written assessment; and,
- one ten-minute reflective conversation with the observer.

This section contains an analysis of participant feedback on simulated observation including:

- Questions answered on a Likert scale:
  - general questions on simulated observation;
  - scenario questions;
  - written assessment questions; and,
  - reflective conversation questions.

- Feedback from free text questions, analysed by the following themes:
  - relevance to the role of a social worker;
  - structure of assessment;
  - timing;
  - reflection and development;
  - venue, logistics and support staff; and,
  - communications.

General questions on simulated observation

A majority of CFP (91%) and PS (88%) participants felt that the assessment format was somewhat or very easy to follow with 74% of both CFP and PS participants finding the instructions received before attending the assessment session somewhat or very easy to follow. In addition, nearly all CFP (92%) and PS (91%) participants felt that the instructions provided on the assessment day were somewhat or very easy to follow.

Scenarios

CFP participants found the scenarios more challenging than their PS colleagues with 35% stating they were somewhat or very difficult compared to just 21% of PS participants. 28% of CFP participants also found the scenarios somewhat or very easy compared to 45% of PS participants.

Analysis showed no significant relationship between perceived difficulty and actual results for simulated observation scenarios. Similarly, participants who noted that the assessment was somewhat or very easy did not perform significantly better than other participants.

A majority of CFP (87%) and PS (81%) participants felt that the content of the assessment was somewhat or completely appropriate when considering the KSS for their status. A majority of CFP (94%) and PS (81%) participants felt that the situations described were somewhat or completely appropriate to the work of a child and family social worker.

Approximately half of CFP (51%) participants found the time allocated to be just about right or more than enough compared to only 42% of PS participants. Similarly, a greater proportion of PS (56%) compared to CFP (45%) participants found the time allocated to be not enough or very tight.

A large majority of CFP (85%) and PS (88%) participants felt that the detail provided before each scenario was just about right or more than enough. Nearly all CFP (96%) and PS (100%) participants felt that the representation of the characters was somewhat or completely realistic.

Written assessment

A majority of CFP (69%) and PS (79%) participants found the objective of the written assessment easy to understand. Less than 1% of CFP participants stated this was very difficult to understand, while no PS participants felt this way.

CFP participants found the written assessment more challenging than their PS colleagues with 53% stating the assessment was somewhat or very easy compared to 63% for PS participants. A far greater proportion of CFP (18%) than PS (2%) participants found the written assessment somewhat or very difficult.

CFP participants who found the written assessment somewhat or relatively difficult obtained significantly lower scores than their counterparts who did not. Due to the very low number of PS participants that rated the written assessment difficult it is not possible to comment on any relationship between their score and their feedback.

A large majority of CFP (90%) and PS (98%) participants felt the level of difficulty of questions were somewhat or completely appropriate. Similarly, a majority of CFP (91%) and PS (95%) participants felt the content of the written assessment was appropriate with regards to the KSS for their status.

The majority of CFP (76%) and PS (86%) participants found the amount of time allocated to the written assessment to be just about right or more than enough.

A greater proportion of CFP participants found the time allocated to be restrictive with 21% stating time was not enough or very tight compared to just 9% for PS participants.

Reflective conversation

Around two thirds of CFP and PS participants (65% of each) felt that the reflective session provided sufficient or ample opportunity to explain the rationale for their actions. However, approximately one third of CFP (28%) and PS (33%) participants stated that the time provided was only somewhat sufficient or was insufficient.

Feedback from free text questions

In the free text questions participants were asked what worked well in the assessment, what could be improved and to provide any other comments about the assessment.

Responses from both CFP and PS social worker participants have been combined and a number of recurring themes identified.

Theme	Number of comments
Relevance to the role of a social worker	245
Structure of assessment	170
Timing	142

Theme	Number of comments
Reflection and development	112
Venue, logistics and support staff	79
Communications	32

Of the 188 simulated observation feedback forms received, only four contained no comments regarding what worked well and 14 contained no comments regarding what could be improved.

Relevance to the role of a social worker

The vast majority of participants (94%) felt the scenarios to be somewhat or completely appropriate to the work of a child and family social worker. 189 separate comments referenced the realism of the scenarios and/or relevance to their role.

95 separate comments made reference to the quality of the actors used within the scenarios. As a result of their realistic performances, participants were able to forget they were in an artificial setting and instead reacted in a way they would naturally in their day to day role.

- *The scenarios were well acted and seemed natural, so it was easy to respond to the person as though the situation was real.*
- *The acting skills of the participants should be commended as they were able to portray a realism which drew me in as if the scenarios were genuine.*
- *The actors were very good and realistic and that helped me forget that I was in a test situation I think it showed the real worker it would be hard to fake a response.*
- *The actors were absolutely superb – I felt it was very true to life and was able to forget in each scenario that they were actors.*
- *The role play was very realistic and it did not take long before I forgot it was role play and, apart from the setting, viewed this is a live case.*

90 comments specifically stated that the scenarios were either realistic or relevant to the role of a social worker. Many participants stated that they recognised the scenarios as situations they would likely come across; with others remarking that a good range of issues was covered in the three separate scenarios.

- *These are scenarios that are really happening in social care every day.*
- *Scenario represented genuine cases and situations offered experienced by front line child protection teams Scenario's combined plenty of issues which are dealt with in front line practice in once case – succinct*
- *The situations were very realistic and there was a variety in terms of dealing with a child/young person, a family at a point of conflict and heightened emotions and then a more productive home visit where we were able to take a lead on the situation.*

Although the majority of participants felt the scenarios were, on the whole, appropriate to the work of child and family social workers, 56 comments were made by participants stating that the assessment was not relevant to their specific role. The majority of these participants worked in Fostering and Adoption, with others from children in need/long term/locality, looked after children/leaving care and learning disability teams.

> - *The scenarios were not necessarily specific to my role and because I didn't have the direct knowledge of process this made me more anxious.*
> - *Need to remember that fostering social workers may not have had these experiences due to lack of frontline work therefore scenarios around placement breakdown and wider circle would be better.*
> - *Not everybody in social work would work with such high level of concerns, cases are given according to the worker's strengths and weaknesses and almost being 'matched' to undertake the case. Also, I work in a long term team, I would not deal with the initial referral of sexual abuse - the initial assessment team would…*

Structure of assessment

170 comments were made on the structure of the assessment, including: the simulated observation assessment method, the scenario content, the level of difficulty and the use of iterative scenarios (CFP only).

Participants made 70 comments on the assessment method itself. 40 of these agreed with using a scenario based assessment method to assess social workers and stated they had a positive experience. Some of these participants also felt that a scenario based assessment tests a social worker's skills more appropriately than a question based assessment.

> - *I enjoyed this assessment. Personally, I think role play is a good assessment medium… It also forces you to think on your feet and pull from the residual battery of knowledge and apply it to the situation at hand.*
> - *I found this part of the assessment much more meaningful than the multiple choice part.*
> - *I think this part of the assessment works really well and is very true to life therefore I would not suggest any improvements.*
> - *I feel that this would be a very beneficial for all socials workers to undertake at some point in their practice.*

Conversely, there were 30 participants who did not feel that this was an appropriate assessment method as it was difficult to showcase their skills and did not take into account the multi-agency structure approach to social work. Some social workers also felt that having a scenario based assessment caused anxiety. While the majority of these people found that they relaxed once they began, some were still conscious that they were being observed and did not feel that the environment allowed them to perform well.

- *I think that one situation could have been longer and looked at the practitioner's ability to draw out strengths and risks and focus in more depth on the impact on the child from the information gathered. I think some exploration of the practitioner's ability to analyses information shared and start to develop clear plans that can be offered to a specific family would also have offered a more complete 'testing' of the social worker / social worker manager role.*
- *I felt under pressure and therefore read information without fully absorbing it, not how I usually practice. I like to prepare well for all cases I am allocated and not enter into an assessment with a conclusion on who has done what and why. Again, this does not reflect true Social Work approaches and practice.*
- *I spent a lot of time worrying about what the observer thought of me and my ability as a Social Worker. I also worried about what the actors thought of me and this does not ever enter my thoughts in my day to day work.*
- *I was very aware of there being an observer in the room which made me act unnaturally.*

Several comments about the scenario content and amount of detail included in the scenario briefs were received. The majority of participants felt that the scenarios presented were appropriate to their role and liked having a brief to read and time to plan prior to each scenario as this mirrored their role as social workers. It was felt that the amount of information provided was appropriate and that the way it was presented was concise and easy to understand.

- *Clear written scenarios helped to plan my work with the family. The role plays were excellent and thought provoking.*
- *The information was like that we might receive on a real referral.*

Conversely, some participants would have liked to receive more information, particularly from different sources (e.g. notes from a consultation with the school or a nurse) as this would set the scene more thoroughly.

- *The information provided prior to each scenario gave limited information on the ongoing situation in relation to the work completed, the discussions had with other professionals such as the police.*

Social workers had mixed feelings about the level of difficulty of the scenarios - some felt that they were pitched at an appropriate level whilst others felt that they were too involved for a social worker with less experience.

- *I think the 3 scenarios were challenging but fair.*
- *To take into consideration the experience of the participant.*

Several CFP participants appreciated that the scenarios were iterative as this was representative of their day to day roles.

- *I think that the having scenarios that were divided up, but that involved the same family was very useful. It allowed me to feel that I was working with the characters and to begin to develop hypotheses and the family situation. Whereas, had each scenario been a 'new' character then I think my focus would have been different.*

Timing

In total 142 comments were made about the timing of the assessment. The majority of these recommended that the length of the assessment needed to be altered.

Many participants felt there was not enough time allocated to the individual scenarios i.e. the time spent being observed. Several participants mentioned that just five more minutes per scenario would allow them to demonstrate a much broader range of skills. This was reiterated in the earlier analysis of feedback, whereby 45% of CFP and 56% of PS participants found the amount of time allocated to scenarios either 'not enough' or 'very tight'.

- *The time allowed for each scenario did not give sufficient time to build a rapport and discuss issues.*
- *The time allotted both for the scenarios themselves and the reflective conversation was not quite sufficient to really be able to demonstrate the full range of skills and be able to evidence my information-gathering skills further.*
- *The key feature for me is the timing. If I had 15 minutes I would have been able to demonstrate my skills. In my view, the first 6-8 minutes are about setting the context and managing emotions, setting out boundaries and what I was expecting to achieve.*

27 participants stated that the assessment was either too long overall or involved too much preparation or waiting time. A proportion of these comments referred to the difficulty in taking the time out of their diary at relatively short notice.

- *There was a bit of waiting around. 15 minutes to read a scenario is quite a lot of time, this could be condensed.*
- *Whilst I get that three scenarios gives you time to feel less nervous and shows a range of different social working, three hours is a long time out of my diary.*

Of the total number of comments made regarding the timing of the assessment 13% found it to be appropriate. Participants felt the break time allowed them to reflect and plan for their next session, whilst ten minutes within the scenarios was short enough to prevent them feeling overly anxious.

- *Regular breaks helped reflection, planning and some 'time out' opportunities.*
- *…overall the time between scenarios and time given to assess each scenario was sufficient and well managed by the presentation team*
- *The change in format and exercises made the process interesting and the time appeared to pass well with natural breaks*

A number of comments were made relating to the timing of the reflective conversation. These are covered below under the heading 'reflection and development'.

Reflection and development

112 comments made reference to the opportunity provided by the simulated observation assessment for reflection and/or development.

Of the total, over half of the comments received made specific reference to the reflective conversation with the observer. 40 comments gave positive feedback around this particular element, with many stating this was their preferred or favourite part of the assessment.

> - *The reflective conversation was very useful both for myself and also to talk further about my hypotheses and reasoning behind these, as well as actions I might take following these…*
> - *I particularly liked the reflective conversation as it enabled me to speak through my rationale for how I responded and reacted during the three scenarios. It also provided me with the opportunity to reflect on my practice…*

A further 27 participants remarked they would like either longer or multiple reflective conversations throughout the assessment, i.e. after each scenario.

> - *I would also have liked a longer reflective conversation as I think this would be beneficial both for me personally and professionally, as well as to explore in more detail the rationale behind my hypotheses and scenario responses.*
> - *I would suggest perhaps less role play and analytical skills to be explored. The reflective session was useful and enabled social workers' skills to be explored more. Therefore, more of this and emphasis on why decisions were made, rather than actual engagement with service users. This could be a smaller part of the assessment.*

29 comments noted that the simulated observation assessment encouraged their own reflection and supported their personal development both during the assessment and afterwards.

> - *I found it useful to think outside the normal parameters of my day to day practice. It highlighted how my knowledge base is limited due to the long standing career I have worked in one specific field (child protection).*
> - *Whilst an artificial and time restrictive setting, I feel this has enabled me to gain an even more better understanding about how I interact with service users/clients and has further reinforced to myself how much I do know and where development is required.*

Some participants felt they would benefit from receiving immediate feedback either after each scenario or at the end of the assessment, with many of these referring to the anxiety they felt not knowing how they performed.

- *There also wasn't quite enough time for me to receive feedback from them – so I've left this assessment a bit anxious about what they thought of me, which isn't a good feeling.*
- *It would be helpful to get feedback on the day of the assessment to see while the assessment is still fresh in the mind.*

Venue, logistics and support staff

A number of participants commented on logistics on the day, including the set-up of the day and the information provided, as well as the facilitators, venue and observers.

Some participants noted that the day was well structured/planned and that the instructions provided were clear and simple to follow.

- *I liked how it was arranged and I just did what I had to do.*
- *Information and guidance was clear and the assessment ran smoothly.*

Some participants commented on the support provided by the KPMG facilitators as participants felt that their questions were satisfactorily answered and they were made to feel at ease.

- *The facilitators were friendly, welcoming and helpful.*
- *The facilitators were informative when asked queries which supported my understanding.*

Some participants had mixed feelings about the venues used.

- *The environment of the assessment was bright, well maintained, and promoted engagement.*
- *Being in a sterile environment also did not help. The rooms were large and uncomfortable and I would always take this into consideration when meeting with families.*

Some participants felt that having a main room to read and write in worked well, however they found it distracting when new participants arrived to that room and spoke to the facilitators. Ideally, in the implementation phase, the venues used would allow for these activities to take place in separate rooms.

- *The main room was very busy and noisy and I got distracted while reading there. Should have a designated reading room – so that we do not lose focus.*
- *It was a bit noisy at times in the main room with people coming and going while I was trying to read the scenarios. Maybe another room could be used in addition to allow more privacy for reading scenarios.*

Communications

Comments were also received about communications, mainly those occurring prior to the assessment. These participants felt that the instructions received were not detailed enough. Several arrived to the assessment unclear as to what the day would consist of and what was expected of them. This may have been due to the way participants were briefed within their organisations and how the employer coordinators decided to disseminate messages sent to them.

C2.1.3   Participant focus groups

Research in Practice and the University of Sussex were commissioned to conduct focus groups with participants during April 2016. Three focus groups (one in each of London, Birmingham and Leeds) and one telephone focus group were held. A total of 33 participants attended these focus groups – 20 CFP and 13 PS. Of these, 21 had completed the digital assessment and 12 had completed both the digital assessment and the simulated observation. Whilst this is a very small sub set of those who underwent the assessments and gave their immediate feedback (as reported earlier), it is useful to consider as this feedback follows a period of reflection on their experiences.

Focus group participants also commented on their experiences before and after the assessments – these were not covered in the survey following the assessments so this is of particular interest. They also made some suggestions for changes prior to full implementation which are outlined at the end of this section.

Digital assessment

Focus group participants raised many points that had been highlighted in the post-assessment survey. They found the general knowledge questions challenging and commented that they demanded a very wide range of knowledge. They felt that what mattered was not whether they knew the answers to specific questions but that that they knew *who* and *how* to ask, for example, paediatricians, health visitors and lawyers, for specific medical or legal knowledge. They experienced this as a lack of opportunity to demonstrate multi-agency working skills and their knowledge of how to access specialist knowledge from appropriate colleagues. They noted that this risked the digital assessment appearing to advocate the notion of social workers practising in isolation. They felt that some of the questions were overly complicated and potentially misleading, for example using double negatives.

Some participants felt they were limited in how they were able to demonstrate their critical thinking and professional decision-making processes and suggested that free text boxes could help this. Most participants viewed the scenarios more favourably. The main problem they highlighted with these was the inability to navigate back a screen.

Participants felt that the digital assessment was overly focused on child protection practice and disproportionate attention was paid to parents. They also felt that some areas of practice, for example looked after children, were under-represented.

As in the post assessment survey, focus group participants felt the digital assessment session was far too long and that their concentration lapsed towards the end. They noted this as being particularly problematic for those with special requirements such as dyslexia. They also commented on the IT issues they experienced and how this had affected their engagement with the assessment.

Focus group participants made some comments that had either not been raised in the post assessment survey or were contradictory to those. They suggested multiple choice questions were not considered appropriate for assessing social workers. In the survey of 930 participants many had said they liked this format. They noted an absence of an assessment of professional values. They felt that scenarios failed to capture accurately the nature of everyday social work practice with its dual focus on both risk and prevention and that there was an over-emphasis on short term risk assessment with less attention given to demonstrating sustained intervention strategies.

Simulated observation

As with comments on the digital assessment, focus group participants raised many points that had been highlighted in the post-assessment survey. They felt that the content of simulated observation scenarios was a fair representation of everyday practice. They were regarded as 'good' and by some as 'really good'; however, they were considered too short to accurately capture practice. Some participants in managerial roles felt the scenarios did not necessarily reflect their day job, for example, a Child Protection Advisor having to participate in the team manager scenario. Participants generally valued the reflective conversation and felt this could add developmental value to the process.

As with the feedback on the digital assessment, focus group participants made some comments about the simulated observation that had not been raised in the post observation survey. Whilst regarding the scenarios as good, they felt that the process of responding to them was not an accurate reflection of practice and felt prescriptive. However, they acknowledged the constraints of trying to replicate realistic scenarios. They also felt it would have been better to have more explicit instructions on what their objectives should be in each scenario.

Whilst participants valued the reflective discussion, they noted more variance in how they were conducted; one participant had a conversation based on the observer having the same role in everyday practice; another was asked questions about their intent and value base and was given qualitative feedback on their performance. They felt the purpose and structure of the reflective conversation could be made clearer to all parties to maximise the potential of this element and offer consistency of experience.

Experiences pre and post assessment

Participants reported a range of experiences regarding the information received in advance, as well as the organisation of the assessment activities. One of the focus groups noted that the preparatory information and guidance on the day of the assessment task was clear and had given no cause for concern or confusion. For others the recruitment

process and lack of adequate advanced information caused undue anxiety and not everyone understood the registration process clearly.

Most of the participants had been adequately informed of the expectations and requirements by the identified lead for the assessment process within their employing authority. However, an important aspect of participants feeling confident about how the assessment process operated was the extent to which their manager understood what they were being asked to participate in and their interest on its completion.

Focus group participants expressed uncertainty, and acknowledged experiencing anxiety, about whether or not to prepare and do 'homework' in advance of the assessment processes. Overall they experienced more anxiety about the digital assessment than the simulated observation, as for most observation was a familiar assessment exercise. They also expressed a wish for greater transparency regarding what was being assessed in both the digital assessment and simulated observation and asked for information about the qualifications of observers in the simulated observations.

Participants expressed confusion, ambivalence and, in some cases, anxiety about how and whether results were passed on to their employer. A number of participants had overlooked the option to not disclose results to employers. Others had agreed to disclosure but were unsure and/or concerned about what level of detail would be passed on. They raised concerns about the consequences of a poor outcome. They expressed fears that the assessment and accreditation processes might be linked to appraisal processes and form part of national league tables of local authority workforce capability.

It was clear that how managers engaged with participants after the assessment was crucial to the value placed on it. Some participants commented positively about the interest their manager took in the assessment experience and implications of the results for the participant's continuing professional development. Others felt their manager did not know what was involved in the assessment process and showed no interest in finding out about the experience to help an individual with their continuing professional development.

C2.2   Employer feedback

This section outlines the feedback from the volunteer employers who participated in the PoC. This feedback was led by the DfE which held a meeting with representatives from 11 participating local authorities on 3 March 2016. The local authorities in attendance were; Lambeth, Tri-Borough, Achieving for Children (Kingston and Richmond), Nottinghamshire, Luton, Durham, Leeds and Kent. The primary focus of this meeting was to discuss policy questions associated with implementation. However, it was also used as an opportunity to reflect and gather feedback from the employers on their experience of the PoC.

Employers valued the amount and level of support provided by the KPMG coordinators throughout the PoC phase. They felt this was an important aspect of managing the complexities of testing, such as booking participants into the digital assessment and simulated observations.

Some employers believed that the localised approach to testing would be their preferred option for implementation. This was because it enabled them to maintain a level of control. However, others could see the benefits of an approach which did not require employers to provide facilities. This was particularly true of those employers where the required facilities were not available and had to be sourced externally.

Employers commented on the challenges around the time commitment required for social workers to participate in the assessment. They also acknowledged the difficulties of getting participants to attend. As a result of the nature of their work commitments it would mean that "no-shows" were likely to be inevitable on an ongoing basis. However, it is necessary to point out that "no-shows" were more likely with the PoC being voluntary.

Several employers commented on anxiety from participants which would require time investment. It is important the communications and messaging are carefully considered so that social workers understand the process and what is expected of them to achieve accreditation and to address any anxieties.

The employers discussed the feedback on the content of the digital assessment which they had received from their participants. There was a feeling that some questions were too specialised and it was too safeguarding focused. Feedback from all participants on both the digital assessment and simulated observations is discussed in section C2.1.

On the simulated observation sessions all the employers commented about how efficiently these were run by KPMG and this was reflected in the participant feedback which was generally positive. They also mentioned that the actors were excellent but that the length of time was not sufficient.

C2.3   Service user panel feedback

Service users from the Family Rights Group (FRG) and BECOME were recruited to be part of the service user panels. These panels were designed to capture service users' experiences and expertise and allow them to comment on the outcomes of a sample of simulated observations; however, this did not affect the scores that had been given to the social worker. Their role was to provide challenge to the process that may influence changes that should be considered prior to full implementation. From FRG, service users included parents and kinship carers and from BECOME service users were care leavers.

Eight panel days in total were held, four with FRG and four with BECOME. There were up to nine service users per panel split into either parents, kinship carers or care leavers.

A lead observer was also present at each panel for a facilitated discussion about the scoring for each of the observations.

On each panel day six videos were shown of the recorded simulated observation scenarios. FRG service users (parents and kinship carers) were shown all three CFP scenarios and the one PS scenario that involved a service user. BECOME service users (care leavers) were only shown CFP scenario one which involved a young person. This was to ensure that videos were relevant to the service users' expertise and experience.

Service users were asked to score observations in terms of whether the social worker had 'exceeded', 'met' or 'not met' the observable behaviours in the KSS. They scored first immediately after watching the video and then again after they heard the observer's scores and narratives. During the facilitated discussion service users gave feedback on the behaviours observed as well as feedback on the assessment process.

C2.3.1   Findings

A total of 66 scenarios were shown to 50 service users as outlined below.

Scenario	Times shown	Percentage
CFP 1	28	43%
CFP 2	18	27%
CFP 3	12	18%
PS 2	8	12%
Total	**66**	**100%**

Table C2.3.1: Frequency of videos shown

Following the panels, the levels of consensus between service users' scores and observers' scores were reviewed. There was a general level of agreement of the scores awarded between observers and service users. It is important to recognise that service users did not have the same structured and depth of training as observers. These findings are therefore indicative only.

Table C2.3.2 illustrates both the degree of consensus during the first scores given by service users based purely on their experiences and expertise, as well as the consensus for the second scoring round after service users listened to the observer's scores and narratives as well as having had the chance to discuss their own thoughts and reactions to what they saw. Aside from the parents' panels scoring of CFP scenario three, the amount of consensus either stayed the same or increased after the facilitated discussions.

	Service users (number attended)					
	Care leavers (25)		Parents (13)		Kinship carers (12)	
Scenario	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After

	Service users (number attended)					
	Care leavers (25)		Parents (13)		Kinship carers (12)	
Scenario	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
CFP 1	60%	66%	9%	45%	54%	62%
CFP 2	-	-	50%	54%	53%	53%
CFP 3	-	-	50%	44%	73%	77%
PS 1	-	-	-	-	-	-
PS 2	-	-	44%	61%	40%	40%
PS 3	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table C2.3.2: Percentage consensus between observer and service user scores before and after discussion

Service users that did not agree with the observers' scores generally gave lower scores than observers. They gave lower scores to participants who did not introduce themselves and who they believed did not display empathy and genuine concern. For care leavers in particular, social workers that did not mention confidentiality were consistently given a lower score. In two of the CFP scenario one observations service users scored the social worker higher than the observers. In both of these cases the overall simulated observation score for these participants was also higher than their individual score for that scenario.

C2.3.2   Principal themes

Service users highlighted a number of common themes across all panels in terms of what they looked for in a "good" social worker. They also made recommendations on what could be done to improve the assessment process. They identified eight principal themes.

Verbal communication

Service users wanted social workers to show active listening skills, to be able to pick up on cues given by service users and be able to ask the right follow up questions. They needed to show a balanced and skilled questioning technique, using pauses and open questions together with a personable tone of voice. Participants that had an interrogative style with a negative tone of voice were not likely to be scored highly. A negative tone of voice was judged to be one that was either patronising or judgemental.

Non-verbal communication

The way social workers entered the room and introduced themselves set the tone for the rest of the scenario. Service users found that the initial introduction was an important aspect of how they assessed the social worker's performance overall.

They also discussed the importance of having good open and positive body language with good eye contact to signal genuine interest and caring. Service users felt that social

workers who showed engaged body language coupled with good verbal communication were more positive and had potential to be able to form a good relationship with the service user, especially in the young person scenario. One social worker in particular was extremely skilled and by the end of the scenario managed to get the young person to mirror his body language which the service users recognised and gave a high score. Additionally, social workers that noticed the seating arrangements and tried to address the arrangement were judged more highly. In CFP scenario one this was particularly important as service users felt this was a good attempt at addressing any potential power imbalances, which would therefore help establish trust.

Building relationships

Good examples of relationship building included social workers that were able to be calm and not get drawn into confrontations in a difficult scenario and be able to take control without dismissing the emotions in the room. Service users also felt it was important that social workers demonstrated that they were honest, did not give false hope, managed service users' expectations and established a level of trust. Service users felt that the scenario was too short to be able to gauge whether a relationship or trust had been built but they were able to get a good sense of the potential for building a relationship by looking at other factors such as communication and information the social worker supplied. For CFP scenario one with the young person service users debated whether the first ten minutes of a meeting should actually be spent on building a relationship instead of finding out what had happened. The care leavers' panellists felt that as a vulnerable person, a young person would not be likely to be forthcoming with information so therefore trying to build a relationship was extremely important. Parents and kinship carers also held the same view but all were conscious of the fact that this was an assessment and relationship building was not the only priority. Some service users felt that observers leaned more toward a process perspective rather than relationship building which they felt was important.

Empathy and caring

Service users felt it was important that social workers showed genuine concern and interest. They felt that if social workers showed they were caring and concerned for the service user they were more likely to be able to build a relationship. Simple measures such as asking the service user "how are you feeling" and getting to know them showed that the social worker cared, acknowledged the emotions in the room and didn't make assumptions on feelings based on the notes they had read before the scenario. Service users repeatedly emphasised the need for social workers to show empathy and sympathy at the right points to all service users, but particularly for the vulnerable young girl. Parents and kinship carers wanted the social workers to also be professional in their approach and be able to reassure service users.

Child/family focused

Panels felt that social workers should allow the service users to lead the session by attending to their thoughts and feelings. The use of authority to get information and move

onto next steps needed to be balanced to put safety of the child first. In one scenario one participant recognised the need to rebuild the mother and daughter relationship. Service users felt this insight demonstrated an example of good social work practice. Care leavers people commented that social workers would usually be in a position of authority and in ten minutes there was little opportunity to demonstrate their use of power and influence.

Information and knowledge

Service users felt that social workers needed to have accurate information and explain any jargon terms or procedures. They noted when social workers gave out inaccurate information and they felt this was potentially dangerous practice. They felt that social workers needed to be honest about what they do know and not be afraid to go and find out when they do not know. Social workers that did not give any indication of timescales were scored lower as parents and kinship carers felt this would have been useful. They also felt it would have been useful for the social workers to signpost to external agencies such as FRG.

Plan, structure and direction

Service users expected social workers to be able to make the session purposeful and guide the conversation so that there was a point to it. From the beginning of the scenario, service users wanted social workers to introduce themselves, introduce social work and set the purpose; only a small number of social workers managed to achieve this. They wanted social workers to ask the right type of questions to explore what service users were saying and work in partnership with them to have some conclusion to the scenario. Care leavers often felt that nothing had been achieved by the end of the scenario. Parents also noted that in some instances they felt that the social worker left the young person as vulnerable at the end of the meeting as the start, which was an indicator of bad social work practice. These comments do, however, need to be framed within the context of what it is possible and reasonable to expect to be achieved in ten minutes.

Procedures

Care leavers noted that confidentiality was important for them and in the videos they saw only a small proportion of social workers mentioned confidentiality and how it would work. They felt this should have been explained by social workers at the beginning of the session. Both care leavers and kinship carers felt that social workers needed to be able to recognise serious situations, be able to explain Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and put the safety of the young person first. Some service users thought that social workers should be aware of gender and perhaps offer the young girl a chance to talk to another female if the social worker were male.

C2.3.3   Principal Social Worker network

A selection of videos from simulated observations was also shown to a group of three Principal Social Workers. Using the same method as the service user panels the three

Principal Social Workers were shown videos of all three CFP scenarios and PS scenarios one and three assessments. Principal Social Workers were shown a total of five videos.

Scenario	Principal Social Workers	
	Before	After
CFP 1	100%	100%
CFP 2	100%	100%
CFP 3	100%	100%
PS 1	67%	67%
PS 2	-	-
PS 3	67%	100%

Table C2.3.3: Percentage consensus between observer and Principal Social Worker scores before and after discussions

Where there was no consensus, Principal Social Workers scored social workers lower than observers. However, these differences were minimal and were framed in terms of what could be achieved in ten minutes.

Important themes

Principal Social Workers were more positive in their approach to scoring in comparison with service users. They stated that they tended to keep in mind whether the social worker would have potential to improve within their organisations when scoring. However, it is important to note that as with service users, Principal Social Workers did not have the same training as observers so their scores were based on their individual approach rather than an agreed, standardised approach for all observers.

Principal Social Workers felt that ten minutes was too short to assess the social worker's skills as they felt that social workers were less likely to have a full opportunity to demonstrate a range of skills, particularly relationship building, within such a short time. This was particularly the case for the CFP scenario one.

Principal Social Workers noted the importance of introductions and were surprised by the number of social workers that did not introduce themselves or their role to the service user. They also noted the importance of procedural factual accuracies.

C2.4   Assessment accessibility

The assessment accessibility has been considered from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. Participants' results have been analysed against their personal characteristics, including any special requirement if they declared one when registering for the digital assessment. This section also describes the various provisions made for special requirements and reviews these participants' feedback at the end of their assessment.

When registering for the digital assessment, participants were asked to provide details of any special requirements for the day of the assessment. Of the 954 digital assessment participants 55 (or 5.8%) specified a condition which they considered could affect their performance. Of those, dyslexia was the highest with 30 (54.6%); followed by mobility impairment with 11 (or 20.0%). Visual and hearing impairment and other conditions were also identified.

Of the 204 simulated observation participants 9 (or 4.41%) specified a condition which they considered could affect their performance. Of those, dyslexia had the highest prevalence with 6 cases (66.7%), with mobility and visual impairment and others also identified.

The following actions were taken to address these needs:

- *Dyslexia* – most participants requested extra time (25% more) or yellow paper, both of which were granted. One participant required the use of Dragon software and therefore used their own computer which had access to the software.
- *Mobility impairment* – several requests were made for a supportive chair or a footrest. These were provided where requested ahead of time. Venues were accessible (e.g. with a lift) where requested.
- *Visual impairment* – larger monitors were provided when requested ahead of time.
- *Hearing impairment* – video transcripts were provided where required.
- *Other* – additional adjustments included more time or to be allowed to take breaks where necessary – these requests were granted.

C2.4.1   Analysis of scores

For those participants that self-identified that they had a special requirement analysis was carried out to see whether this affected their scores. The highlights are summarised below.

Digital assessment

Out of the 55 participants that notified us of a special requirement 54 completed the general knowledge and applied knowledge components of the digital assessment and 41 completed the full assessment. The non-completion rate was 25% compared with the sample average of 16%.

Participants with special requirements perceived the test to be more difficult than their peers without special requirements. There is no significant relationship between special requirements and the digital assessment score.

Participants with special requirements perceived the test to be more time pressured than their peers without special requirements. There was a significant relationship between special requirements and time taken to complete the digital assessment for CFP only. CFP participants with special requirements took on average 206 minutes to complete the

digital assessment compared with an average of 182 minutes for their peers with no special requirements.

Simulated observation

There was no significant relationship between special requirements and the simulated observation rating for CFP. With so few PS participants with special requirements taking the simulated observation, it was not possible to comment on the equivalent relationship.

CFP and PS participants did not find the assessment to be more difficult or more time pressured than their peers.

C2.4.2 Participant feedback

Some participants made reference to their special requirements in the feedback forms they completed at the end of the assessment.

Digital assessment

Dyslexic participants noted that there was an excessive amount of reading involved and they particularly struggled with the long, drawn out paragraphs of text. This difficulty was magnified by the fact that all of the text to be read was on screen rather than on paper. One participant recommended that it would be useful to have the option to listen to an audio recording of the text. Participants with hearing impairment noted that sub-titles would be preferable to transcripts of videos.

Some participants also raised issues regarding the need for adjustable office chairs. A number of participants commented on the difficulty of working from a small laptop screen for a prolonged period of time and the strain this put on their eyes.

These comments may have come from participants who did not have specific accessibility requirements.

Simulated observation

One participant with dyslexia commented that they would have appreciated more time for the written assessment as they found the noise caused by the arrival of new participants distracting.

D. Conclusions

The PoC provided detailed insight into the design and operation of the proposed assessment system. At the same time there were many lessons for the implementation of the new assessment and accreditation system across the profession. Some adjustments to the content and elements of the assessment will be necessary to ensure it is balanced (against the KSS) and that it is a valid test on which all stakeholders can rely. The experience of the PoC also provides some useful insights about how delivery at significant scale can be achieved.

D1　Scalability across the social work population

During the PoC child and family social workers in volunteer employers were randomly selected, including those not carrying out statutory functions. It also included newly qualified social workers and those undertaking the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) and agency workers who were working in volunteer employers at the time.

A wide range of performance was measured in social workers' scores and ratings. Only a small proportion of this variation can be was associated with such factors as declared ethnicity, age, service area and the Ofsted rating of their employer.

Pace and scale

All digital assessments were completed over a ten-week period. There was capacity for 1,795 social workers during this period, although actual attendance was lower. If this throughput was maintained for 40 weeks per year over a four-year period, for example it would be possible to accommodate 28,740 social workers. For the simulated observation, the testing period ran for eight weeks and could have accommodated 396 social workers at full capacity. Again, if that 'run rate' was sustained for 40 weeks per year, it would equate to 8,000 social workers over four years. If the same number of simulated observations were to be completed as digital assessments in the same four-year period capacity would therefore need to be at least three and half times greater.

Accreditation management system

The PoC was reliant on several manual processes, particularly in relation to simulated observation, where (in contrast to the digital assessment) all bookings were organised by employer co-ordinators and all communication was through e-mail. Although this system worked reasonably well for the limited numbers in the PoC phase an enhanced system would be required for implementation to efficiently and effectively process social workers from initial registration to accreditation award. Its functionality should include:

- enrolment for the digital assessment and bookings for simulated observation;
- an observer interface to enable them to input ratings and narrative feedback (assuming the latter is retained);

- the generation of standard communication and results profiles for social workers;
- a comprehensive results reporting module for the organisation which has responsibility for overseeing the accreditation system.

D2 Format of the assessment

There are recommendations for small changes to the assessment approach for both the digital assessment and the simulated observation, based on lessons learned from the PoC.

D2.1 Digital assessment

The overall structure and format of the digital assessment was generally well received. However, over 200 social workers commented that the digital assessment as trialled was too long to undertake in one sitting. One option may be to enhance applied knowledge questions which could either replace some of the general knowledge questions and/or incorporate some of the realistic features of scenarios. For example, they could require participants to search, analyse and interpret information from source documents rather than just rely on memory recall. Whilst the majority of participants found the scenarios engaging and realistic and valued the added realism that they brought to the assessment they took a long time to complete; these features might also be incorporated into applied knowledge questions.

A reconfiguration of the digital assessment, even involving dropping one element, would be possible provided it retains full and balanced coverage of the KSS.

General knowledge and applied knowledge questions

Whilst most participants reported that the content of the digital assessment was a fair representation of the knowledge and skills required of a child and family social worker, there were over 400 comments regarding the relevance of some of the questions to their job role or service area. 34% of CFP participants and 27% of PS participants felt the content was completely or somewhat inappropriate for their role. The focus of their criticism was on the general knowledge questions which covered specific knowledge that they did not feel they should know from memory but which they should know how to find the information or who to ask about it. They also felt that some of the question formats and language used were overly complicated, including legal or medical language with which they would not be expected to be familiar. These issues can be addressed in the content development for the bank of questions and scenarios, with specific focus on ensuring that the questions are reflective of what child and family social workers should know, regardless of what particular team they work for, e.g. by continuing to involve principal social workers in designing the content.

Participants made very few comments on the applied knowledge questions, possibly because these were a small question set and contributed less than 10% of the overall

digital assessment score. The same comment applies going forward to ensure that the questions remain relevant for child and family social workers as a whole.

Content development

For full implementation social workers could receive randomly generated questions from a question 'bank'. The development of this question bank will form a critical path activity leading up to the implementation and so will need to commence early in the implementation timeline. There is no evidence to suggest the integrity of the digital assessment was compromised in any way during the PoC. Therefore, where the questions used proved to be both reliable and discriminating they could be retained and incorporated into the question banks for implementation.

Navigation and functionality in the digital platform

Most participants found the digital platform user friendly and easy to navigate. Some participants identified potential improvements to the digital assessment which would improve navigation and functionality. These included:

- standardisation of the process of confirming and submitting answers throughout the assessment;
- clarity on how to exit documents and screens without exiting the whole assessment;
- tick boxes rather than shaded boxes to indicate selections made
- in scenarios the ability to go back a screen to review content, but not to change answers to questions;
- auto-save for all question types so that answers are never lost should there be any IT issues; and
- review of question types to ensure clarity of requirements for participants.

These changes should also be aligned with a review of functionality for those with special requirements to ensure that the assessment supports reasonable adjustments to be made for those who have such requirements.

Location and standard of digital assessment centres

In the PoC phase there was variation in the quality and type of IT equipment available and also aspects such as the chairs and screen sizes. The digital assessment required a minimum broadband connection. Despite seeking assurances and load testing with employers in advance some social workers experienced technical difficulties as part of the PoC. A minimum standard for such facilities, potentially using regional or sub-regional digital testing venues could guarantee technical reliability for full implementation.

D2.2   Simulated observation

Acceptability of the current format

The overall structure and format of the simulated observation was overwhelmingly well received by social workers, with a majority of participants saying that they found the format easy to follow and relevant to their role.

All elements of the simulated observation as trialled in the PoC should be retained, specifically:

- scenarios;
- written assessment;
- reflective discussion.

More scenarios would need to be developed to enable a random approach to selecting scenarios for each testing session.

Consistency of ratings

Ensuring consistency in scoring will be considerably more challenging for implementation. There will need to be strengthened preparation, quality assurance and moderation across observers, which may include a sampling of video recording of some simulated observations. However, the video recording of all simulated observations in full would have major implications for both facilities and the resource requirements to edit, log and store videos securely.

Scores in simulated observations also have the potential to be affected by the unconscious bias of the observer. To address this risk for the implementation programme, as part of the preparation, training and moderation of observers, they should participate in training on unconscious bias to raise awareness of this issue and mitigate the likelihood of it occurring.

Location and standard of assessment centres

There should be a clear specification for the accommodation used for simulated observation sessions. A minimum of four contiguously located rooms are required given the amount of logistic and administrative effort to ensure everyone is in the right place at the right time. A separate reading room may also be advisable to prevent participants from being distracted by other activity. Sub-regional assessment centres may provide

optimal facilities for simulated observation but account must be taken of social workers' time to travel and the opportunity cost for employers.

E. Appendices

E1.1 List of abbreviations and acronyms

Abbreviation	Full Term
AK	Applied Knowledge (in relation to the Digital Assessment)
ASYE	Assessed and Supported Year in Employment
CFP	Child and Family Practitioner
CiP	Confidence in Practice
DA	Digital Assessment
DfE	Department for Education
DO	Direct Observation
ER	Employer Rating
G	General Question (when used in Figure names, e.g. G1 is General Question 1)
GK	General Knowledge (in relation to the Digital Assessment)
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
KSS	Knowledge and skills statements
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Child
LEO	Leo Learning
MBA	Michael Browne Associates
MLA	Morning Lane Associates
PoC	Proof of concept
PS	Practice supervisor
SC	Scenarios (in relation to the Digital Assessment)
SO	Simulated Observation
T2C	Time to Complete

E1.2   Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
ANOVA	ANOVA is short for Analysis of Variance, a statistical method in which the total variation in a set of observations is divided into distinct components. For a One-Way ANOVA there are 2 components, a *Systematic Factor* and a *Random Factor*. For a 2-Way ANOVA there are 3 components, 2 Systematic Factors plus a Random Factor.
Pearson coefficient	In statistics, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient is a measure of the Linear Correlation between two variables X and Y, giving a value between +1 and −1 inclusive, where 1 is Total Positive Correlation, 0 is No Correlation and −1 is Total Negative Correlation. Mathematically, it is the Covariance of X and Y divided by the product of the Standard Deviations of X and Y.
Regression analysis	Regression Analysis is a method which provides a measure of the relationship between the mean value of one variable (called the *Outcome Variable, Dependent Variable or Response Variable*) and linear combinations of other predictor variables (e.g. *Time* and *Cost*), which influence the Outcome Variable. If there is more than one predictor variable the process is called *Multiple Linear Regression*, otherwise it is *Simple Linear Regression*. Tools for finding the optimal relationship between the *Predictor Variables* (or Explanatory / Independent Variables) and the Outcome Variable are *Forward Selection*, *Backward Elimination* as well as The *Stepwise Procedure*.
Multiple linear regression	Multiple Linear Regression, using Forward Selection, Backward Elimination as well as The Stepwise Procedure, was used to determine optimal relationships between Overall Scores and various personal, geographical, employer and Ofsted related variables. With Forward Selection, one commences with no variables and adds one at a time based on a given significance level that is specified. Once a variable is included within the model via the Forward Selection method and suddenly becomes insignificant due to co-linearity, it cannot be removed. With the Backward Elimination Method, one commences with all of the variables chosen and one removes one at a time based off of a given significance level. However, with the Backward Elimination Method, one cannot bring in new variables based on a given significance level. With The Stepwise Procedure, one can perform both the Forward Selection Method as well as the Backward Elimination Method simultaneously. Due to the problem mentioned above, the Forward Selection Model can possibly contain non-significant terms even though a given significance level is specified.
R-squared value (R^2)	The R^2 Value is one of the statistics used to assess Regression Model Performance. It represents the proportion of the variation in the Outcome Variable that is explained by the Predictor Variables. For a Linear Regression Model containing an Intercept Term: $R^2 = 1 – Model\ Error = 1 – SS_{RES}/SS_{TOT} = SS_{REG}/SS_{TOT}$ where-: SS_{RES} = Sum of Squares Residual (or Sum of Squares Error), SS_{REG} = Sum of Squares Regression and SS_{TOT} = Total Sum of Squares

Term	Definition
Adjusted R-squared value (R^2)	The R^2 Value has the drawback that it increases with the number of predictor variables added. This is because the value does not take into account the Degrees of Freedom. To overcome this, one uses the Adjusted R^2 Value: $R^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2)(\text{Total Degrees of Freedom})/(\text{Error Degrees of Freedom})$ $= 1 - (1 - R^2)(n - 1)/(n - k - 1)$ Where n is the number of observations and k is the number of explanatory variables in the model.
Spearman's coefficient	In statistics Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient is a nonparametric measure of statistical dependence between two variables, not restricted to linear correlation. The Spearman Rank Correlation between 2 variables presented as columns, is just the Pearson Correlation Coefficient of the ranks of these columns.
T-test	A t-test usually involves a statistical examination of the means of 2 approximately Normally Distributed Populations, using a Student-t Distribution. A 2-sample T-Test examines whether 2 samples are different and it may be Paired or Unpaired and 1-sided or 2-sided. This work involved 1-sided Unpaired T-Tests. Unpaired implies that the 2 samples are different. A Paired T-Test is used when one has the same group in each sample under 2 different conditions (e.g. a sample of patients split into 2 groups given a different treatment). In these circumstances, it can be shown that the statistic required to compare the 2 samples follows a Student-t Distribution. They can also be used for testing differences in proportions as well as differences in means. It is necessary to test that the 2 populations are approximately Normally Distributed, which can be checked/verified by either producing a *Histogram* or *Normal Plot* [*Q-Q Plot* or *P-P Plot*).

E1.3   Social worker statistics

The box below explains the abbreviations used to describe each part of the assessment.

> **Glossary**
>
> **GK:** General Knowledge (comprising 60 questions)
>
> **AK:** Applied Knowledge (comprising ten questions for CFP and nine questions for PS)
>
> **SC1, SC2, SC3:** Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 (comprising a set of questions based on video and/or text based content). CFP had 3 scenarios and PS had 2 scenarios
>
> **DA (full):** The number of participants that completed all parts of the digital assessment
>
> **SO:** Simulated Observation (comprising 3 scenarios, a written exercise and a reflective conversation)
>
> **DO:** Direct Observation (comprising an independent observer accompanying a social worker on a family visit or observing a supervisory session)
>
> **ER:** Employer Rating (comprising an assessment by the employer of their social worker using their own choice of evidence)

The tables below show the numbers undertaking each element of the assessment and profiles of personal characteristics. Note that:

- in the digital assessment the number of participants completing each part gradually reduced. Some participants did not complete the digital assessment as they ran out of time and in exceptional cases they had technical issues e.g. losing a scenario, or they chose voluntarily to withdraw early;
- the numbers for simulated observation, employer ratings and direct observation are based on a smaller sample than the digital assessment. For simulated observation and employer rating the target was to involve 25% of the social workers going through digital assessment. For direct observation the aim was to carry out a sample of additional practice observations for those social workers going through simulated observation;
- two employers (Cafcass and Sunderland) volunteered to take part only in the digital assessment; and,
- for PS there is an 'n/a' in each SC3 column because they had only two scenarios in their digital assessment.

In several places there are very small differences between the numbers stated in these tables and the numbers stated in various pieces of analysis described in section C1. In all cases these minor differences are explainable and have no material effect on the finding or conclusions.

Gender	CFP /PS	GK	AK	SC1	SC2	SC3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Female	CFP	619	615	595	545	545	507	127	112	37
	PS	151	151	147	140	n/a	139	28	20	3
Male	CFP	131	131	125	118	112	106	32	31	11
	PS	40	40	40	38	n/a	38	15	12	6
Prefer not to say	CFP	11	11	11	9	10	9	2	2	1
	PS	1	1	1	1	n/a	1	0	0	0

Table E1.3.1: Number of CFP and PS participants by gender

Age	CFP /PS	GK	AK	SC1	SC2	SC3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
20 to 29 years old	CFP	152	152	150	145	145	139	35	32	7
	PS	5	5	5	5	n/a	5	1	1	0
30 to 39 years old	CFP	221	221	217	209	204	196	35	32	12
	PS	29	29	29	28	n/a	28	9	6	3
40 to 49 years old	CFP	161	160	154	136	134	122	37	32	11
	PS	74	74	72	67	n/a	67	17	14	4
50 to 59 years old	CFP	150	148	136	116	117	101	38	34	15
	PS	59	59	58	55	n/a	54	10	7	0
60 years old and over	CFP	32	32	30	26	28	26	7	6	3
	PS	11	11	11	11	n/a	11	3	2	1
Prefer not to say	CFP	25	25	25	22	21	20	3	3	0
	PS	6	6	5	5	n/a	5	1	1	0

Table E1.3.2: Number of CFP and PS participants by age band

Ethnicity	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Asian – Bangladeshi	CFP	6	6	6	5	4	4	0	0	0
	PS	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0
Asian - Indian	CFP	25	25	25	21	19	18	4	4	1
	PS	8	8	7	7	n/a	7	4	4	2
Asian – Pakistani	CFP	7	7	7	6	6	6	2	2	1
	PS	2	2	2	2	n/a	2	1	1	1
Black – African	CFP	73	73	68	55	58	50	14	14	5
	PS	6	6	5	5	n/a	4	2	1	5

Ethnicity	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Black - Caribbean	CFP	40	40	37	32	28	25	15	15	7
	PS	13	13	12	8	n/a	8	2	2	8
Chinese	CFP	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
	PS	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	CFP	3	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
	PS	1	1	1	1	n/a	1	0	0	0
Mixed - White and Black African	CFP	6	6	6	6	6	6	2	2	1
	PS	2	2	2	2	n/a	2	1	1	1
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	CFP	11	11	11	10	9	9	4	4	1
	PS	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	0	0	1
Other Asian Background	CFP	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0
	PS	1	1	1	1	n/a	1	0	0	0
Other Black Background	CFP	9	9	9	3	7	3	2	2	1
	PS	1	1	1	1	n/a	1	0	0	1
Other Ethnic Background	CFP	7	7	7	6	6	6	0	0	0
	PS	1	1	1	1	n/a	1	0	0	0
Other Mixed Background	CFP	10	10	10	9	10	9	1	1	0
	PS	4	4	4	3	n/a	3	1	1	0
Other White Background	CFP	29	29	28	27	25	25	8	8	1
	PS	6	6	6	6	n/a	6	2	2	1
Prefer not to say	CFP	21	21	20	17	15	13	2	2	0
	PS	7	7	7	7	n/a	7	1	1	0
White – British	CFP	469	466	451	431	433	407	97	82	28
	PS	125	125	124	120	n/a	120	27	18	34
White - Irish	CFP	22	22	22	21	19	19	4	3	2
	PS	4	4	4	4	n/a	4	0	0	2

Table E1.3.3: Number of CFP and PS participants by declared ethnicity

Throughout this report groups of participants are compared based on their declared ethnicity. Participants are compared based on groups of 'white' and BAME, where BAME includes all non-white participants. The three 'white' groups are:

- White British only;
- White British and White Irish;
- White All – White British plus White Irish plus Other White background;

Ethnicity	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
White British	CFP	469	466	451	431	433	407	97	82	28
	PS	125	125	124	120	n/a	120	27	18	34
Other	CFP	272	272	261	223	216	197	58	57	20
	PS	59	59	56	51	n/a	50	14	13	22

Table E1.3.4: Number of CFP and PS participants – White British against all other groups

Ethnicity	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
White British/Irish	CFP	491	488	473	452	452	426	101	85	30
	PS	129	129	128	124	n/a	124	27	18	36
Other	CFP	250	250	239	202	197	178	54	54	18
	PS	55	55	52	47	n/a	46	14	13	20

Table E1.3.5: Number of CFP and PS participants – White British/Irish against all other groups

Ethnicity	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
White (All)	CFP	520	517	501	479	477	451	109	93	31
	PS	135	135	134	130	n/a	130	29	20	37
BAME	CFP	221	221	211	175	172	153	46	46	17
	PS	49	49	46	41	n/a	40	12	11	19

Table E1.3.6: Number of CFP and PS participants – White (All) against BAME

First Language English?	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Yes	CFP	654	651	629	582	580	539	136	122	43
	PS	173	173	169	161	n/a	160	40	30	51
No	CFP	87	87	83	72	69	65	19	17	5
	PS	11	11	11	10	n/a	10	1	1	5

Table E1.3.7: Number of CFP and PS participants according to whether English is their first language

Years in service post qualification	CFP /PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Less than 1	CFP	73	73	71	68	65	62	17	15	1
	PS	2	2	2	2	n/a	2	0	0	0
1-3 years	CFP	177	177	176	165	160	154	39	36	11

Years in service post qualification	CFP/PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
	PS	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	0	0	0
3-5 years	CFP	100	100	98	94	89	87	17	17	8
	PS	6	6	6	6	n/a	6	0	0	0
5-10 years	CFP	172	172	165	151	159	144	30	27	9
	PS	39	39	39	37	n/a	37	14	12	2
10+ years	CFP	219	216	202	176	176	157	52	44	19
	PS	134	134	130	123	n/a	122	27	19	6

Table E1.3.8: Number of CFP and PS participants by years in service after qualifying

Employing organisation type	CFP/PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Local Authority	CFP	651	646	627	575	571	535	138	124	38
	PS	169	169	167	159	n/a	158	39	31	9
Agency	CFP	95	95	93	84	82	77	22	20	10
	PS	20	20	18	17	n/a	17	4	1	0
Voluntary	CFP	6	7	5	7	7	5	0	0	0
	PS	0	0	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0
Other	CFP	9	9	6	6	7	5	1	1	1
	PS	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	0	0	0

Table E1.3.9: Number of CFP and PS participants by employer type[3]

Length of service with current employer	CFP/PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Less than 1	CFP	143	143	139	133	127	120	39	36	10
	PS	20	20	20	17	n/a	17	5	4	10
1-3 years	CFP	228	228	223	202	201	191	49	47	18
	PS	37	37	34	34	n/a	34	9	6	20

[3] Some Cafcass participants elected to describe themselves as 'Other' and some as 'Voluntary'. The occasional participant in Achieving for Children and Doncaster Children's Services also described themselves as 'Other' or 'Voluntary'. These few exceptions have not distorted the principal analysis which is a comparison between permanent staff and agency workers...

Length of service with current employer	CFP/PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
3-5 years	CFP	88	88	85	81	77	72	14	14	3
	PS	17	17	17	16	n/a	16	5	5	4
5-10 years	CFP	124	123	118	108	112	103	16	13	3
	PS	35	35	35	34	n/a	34	8	4	4
10+ years	CFP	158	156	147	130	132	118	37	29	14
	PS	75	75	74	70	n/a	69	14	12	18

Table E1.3.10: Number of CFP and PS participants by length of service with current employer

Service area	CFP / PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA full	SO	ER	DO
Access	CFP	59	59	57	53	50	45	13	12	0
	PS	12	12	11	9	n/a	9	3	2	0
Children with disability	CFP	43	43	41	35	38	35	9	7	3
	PS	6	6	6	6	n/a	6	2	2	1
CIN/Long Term/ Locality	CFP	407	407	395	369	368	343	82	74	22
	PS	118	118	118	114	n/a	114	29	22	7
Fostering and Adoption	CFP	100	98	94	87	87	80	26	26	10
	PS	13	13	12	11	n/a	11	1	1	0
LAC	CFP	110	109	103	90	90	85	17	13	9
	PS	24	24	22	20	n/a	19	4	2	0
Leaving care	CFP	20	20	20	18	14	14	7	7	4
	PS	10	10	10	10	n/a	10	2	2	0

Table E1.3.11: Number of CFP and PS participants by service area

A small proportion of participants felt that their service area was not reflected in these six categories. This was noted in the special requirements box when they registered as this question included a free-text box. In these cases, social workers selected either the nearest category or the team they worked in previously.

Qualification	CFP/PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA full	SO	ER	DO
BA	CFP	275	275	264	245	240	227	42	36	12
	PS	46	46	45	43	n/a	43	13	9	0
BSc	CFP	111	111	108	92	95	87	19	18	4
	PS	21	21	21	19	n/a	19	2	2	0

Qualification	CFP/ PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA full	SO	ER	DO
MA	CFP	166	165	163	155	156	151	39	36	12
	PS	41	41	40	37	n/a	37	11	9	3
MSc	CFP	54	54	52	48	47	42	19	17	7
	PS	11	11	11	11	n/a	11	4	3	2
PG Dip	CFP	69	69	64	60	57	49	15	13	2
	PS	26	26	24	23	n/a	22	2	1	0
Other	CFP	66	64	61	54	54	48	21	19	11
	PS	38	38	38	37	n/a	37	9	7	3

Table E1.3.12: Number of CFP and PS participants by qualification

In the table below qualifying institutions are grouped in these categories:

- Russell group: 24 research-intensive, world-class UK universities;
- New universities: post 1992 universities often created from former polytechnics;
- Old universities: 13 universities outside of the Russell and New universities group;
- College: a college of further and higher education which does not have degree awarding status in its own right.

Qualifying institution	CFP /PS	GK	AK	SC 1	SC 2	SC 3	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Russell	CFP	149	149	146	130	128	120	38	33	11
	PS	32	32	32	32	n/a	32	6	5	1
New	CFP	399	397	381	354	355	329	87	74	27
	PS	99	99	97	92	n/a	91	20	15	3
Old	CFP	115	113	109	102	98	93	17	15	9
	PS	32	32	30	27	n/a	27	10	7	2
College	CFP	83	83	80	72	72	66	16	12	2
	PS	23	23	23	22	n/a	22	5	3	2

Table E1.3.13: Number of CFP and PS participants by qualifying institution

Ofsted rating	CFP/PS	DA (full)	SO	ER	DO
Good or Outstanding	CFP	220	62	49	14
	PS	69	15	13	2
Requires improvement	CFP	224	58	51	15
	PS	63	15	10	6
Inadequate	CFP	170	41	37	20
	PS	45	13	8	1
N/A	CFP	8	n/a	n/a	n/a
	PS	1	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table E1.3.14: Number of CFP and PS participants by Ofsted rating of the local authority (as at March 2015)[4]

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[4] For the purpose of the analysis the one 'outstanding' employer was combined with 'good' employers. The N/A category represents one employer not subject to Ofsted inspections.

E1.4 Local authority Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

CFP GK+AK Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

Figure E1.4.1: CFP: GK+AK Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

PS GK+AK Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

Figure E1.4.2: PS: GK+AK Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

CFP SC Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

Figure E1.4.3: CFP: SC Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

PS SC Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

Figure E1.4.4: PS: SC Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

CFP SO Score versus Rate of CIN in LA
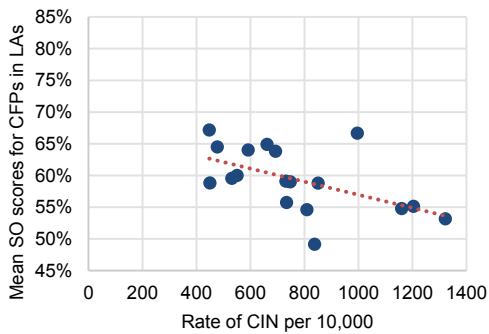
Figure E1.4.5: CFP: SO Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

PS SO Score versus Rate of CIN in LA
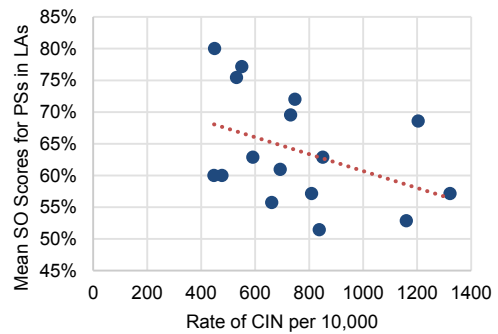
Figure E1.4.6: PS: SO Score versus Rate of CIN in LA

CFP GK+AK Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
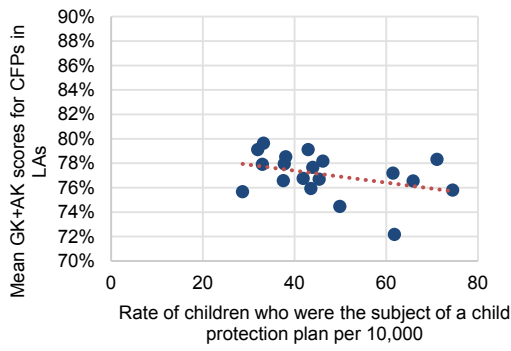
Figure E1.4.7: CFP: GK+AK Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

PS GK+AK Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
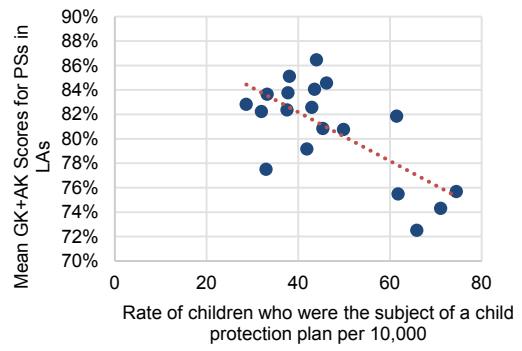
Figure E1.4.8: PS: GK+AK Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

CFP SC Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
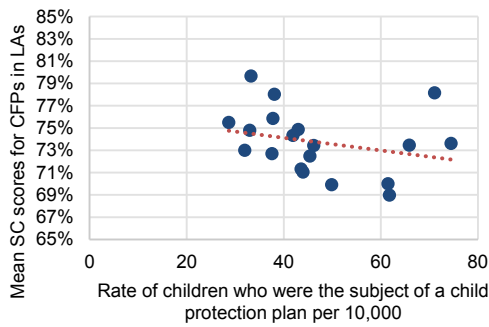
Figure E1.4.9: CFP: SC Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

PS SC Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
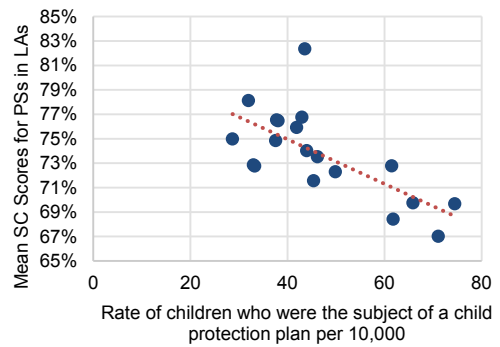
Figure E1.4.10: PS: SC Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

CFP SO Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
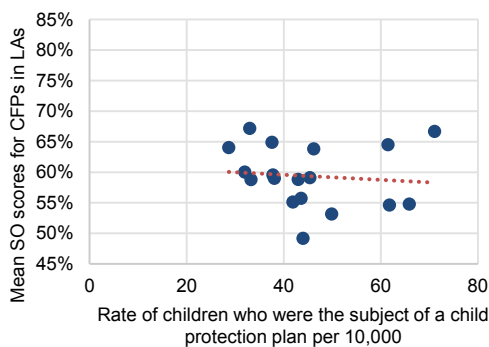
Figure E1.4.11: CFP: SO Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

PS SO Score versus Rate of CPP in LA
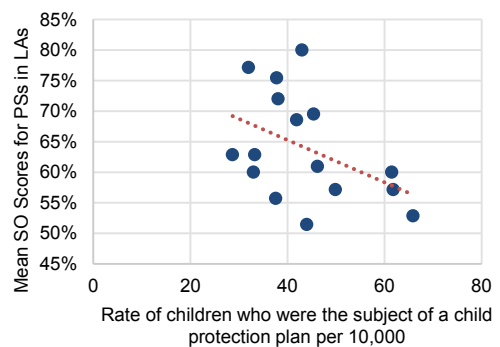
Figure E1.4.12: PS: SO Score versus Rate of CPP in LA

CFP GK+AK Score versus Rate of LAC in LA
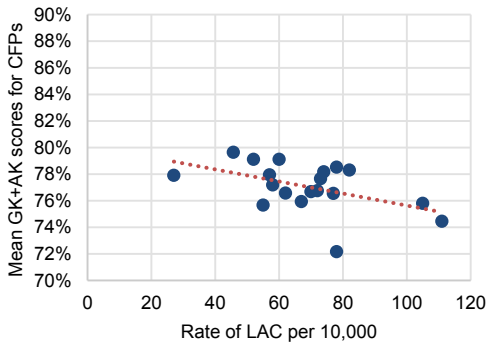
Figure E1.4.13: CFP: GK+AK Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

PS GK+GK Score versus Rate of LAC in LA
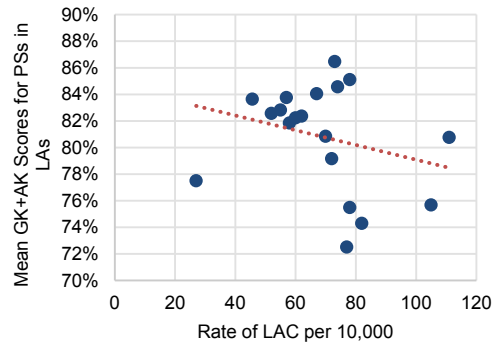
Figure E1.4.14: PS: GK+GK Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

CFP SC Score versus Rate of LAC in LA
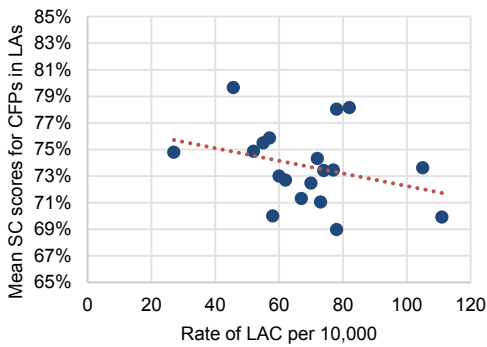
Figure E1.4.15: CFP: SC Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

PS SC Score versus Rate of LAC in LA
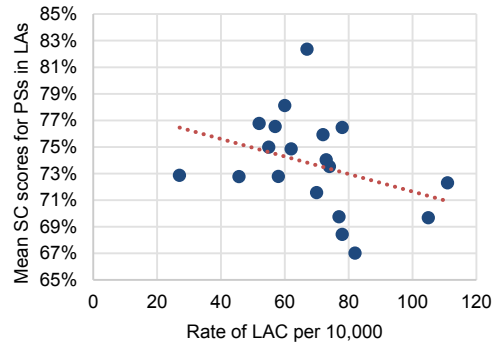
Figure E1.4.16: PS: SC Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

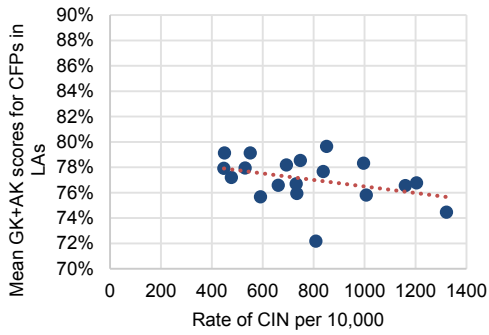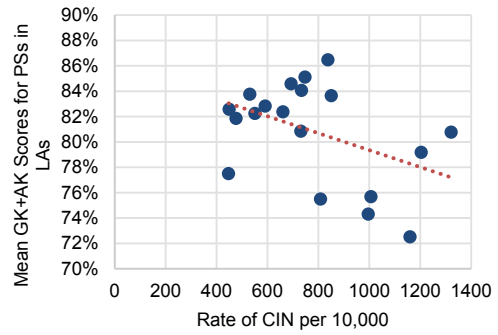## CFP SO Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

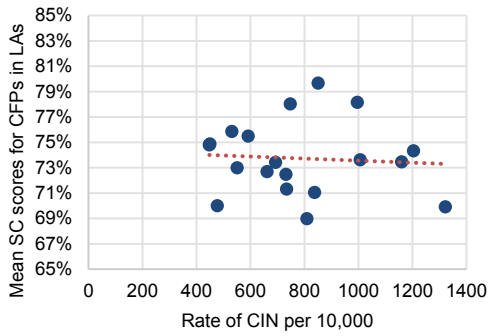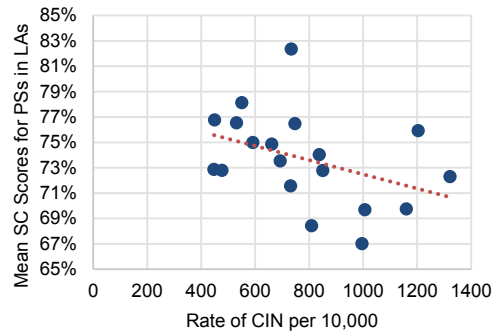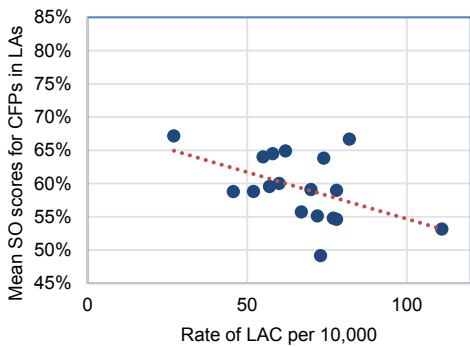**Figure E1.4.17: CFP: SO Score versus Rate of LAC in LA**

PS SO Score versus Rate of LAC in LA
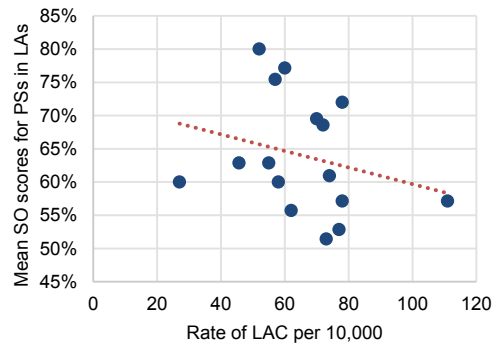
Figure E1.4.18: PS: SO Score versus Rate of LAC in LA

E1.5 Time to complete: Analysis of personal characteristics and employer features

This appendix includes detailed analysis of time to complete the digital assessment against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features.

E1.5.1 Analysis of personal characteristics and employer features

Knowledge section (general knowledge and applied knowledge)

The results of statistical tests for a variety of personal characteristics and employer features and their effect on the time to complete the knowledge section in the digital assessment for CFP are shown in Table E.1.5.1. They are in descending order of importance (as measured by the p-value following a t-test or analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, as appropriate).

Ten of the 12 factors are highly significant and in some cases the difference between groups of social workers was substantial, especially for ethnicity and age. These factors were themselves correlated with other factors, for example ethnicity with English as a first language and also age with post-qualification years of service and length of service with a current employer. It is possible that the significance of employer type and geographic location was explained by other factors being significant rather than them being significant in their own right.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The BAME group took nearly 27% longer on average than the 'White All' group	< 0.0001
Age band	Highly significant	Time taken increased with age with the 60+ group taking 29% longer than the 20-29 group	< 0.0001
English as a first language	Highly significant	Those social workers who stated that English was not their first language took 21% longer than others	< 0.0001
Employer type (of council)	Highly significant	Social workers in county councils took less time than those in London boroughs	< 0.0001
Geographic location	Highly significant	Social workers in some areas took longer – a result that may be explained by other factors not tested in PoC	< 0.0001
Ofsted rating of employer	Highly significant	Social workers in employers rated 'inadequate' took 12% longer than the remainder	< 0.0001

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Post qualification years in service	Highly significant	Social workers with more than ten years of experience took significantly longer	< 0.0001
Size of LA	Highly significant	Social workers from 'small' sized LAs were faster than those from 'large and 'medium' sized LAs	< 0.0001
Length of service with current employer	Highly significant	Social workers with more than ten years of service took significantly longer	< 0.0001
Qualification	Highly significant	MA qualified social workers were fastest with the 'Other' group slowest	< 0.0001
Service area	Highly significant	Social workers in some specialist teams e.g. Looked After Children (LAC), fostering and adoption, leaving care, took significantly longer	< 0.0001
Gender	Not significant		0.32
Type of employment	Not significant		0.33

Table E.1.5.1: CFP: Digital assessment knowledge (general knowledge and applied knowledge) time to complete and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Table E.1.5.2. shows for PS the equivalent results. There were fewer highly significant factors but once again ethnicity was the most important.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The BAME group took 18% longer on average than the 'White All' group	.0028
Geographic location	Highly significant	Social workers in London boroughs took significantly longer	.0056
Employer type (of council)	Highly significant	Social workers in London boroughs took significantly longer	.0145
Service area	Highly significant	Specialist teams were 14% slower than the main Children in Need (CIN)/long term/locality group	.0261
English as a first language	Just significant	Those social workers who stated that English was not their first language took	.0474

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
		15% longer than others	
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		.0784
Age band	Not significant		.0983
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant		.1101
Size of LA	Not significant		.1549
Gender	Not significant		.1994
Type of employment	Not significant		.2192
Qualification	Not significant		.6496
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		.9041

Table E.1.5.2: PS: Digital assessment knowledge (general knowledge and applied knowledge) time to complete and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Personal characteristics and employer features – knowledge section

Ethnicity: This was the most significant factor in relation to T2C. The analysis of social worker feedback and the social worker focus groups did not suggest any bias, but this is something that should to be investigated further in rollout phase.

Age band: As the age of social workers increased so did the time it took them to complete the digital assessment knowledge sections. The analysis suggests that it took the 60+ age group of CFP social workers 26% longer to complete this component compared with the 20-29 age group. As the age band increased so did the variability in the time to complete. See Table E1.5.4.

English as a first language: CFP and PS social workers who declared that English was not their first language took 21% and 15% respectively longer. This result was most likely related to the findings on ethnicity. See Table E1.5.5.

Employer type: Although there was a difference between employer type, with social workers in county councils taking relatively less time and those in London boroughs taking relatively longer, this result may be explained better by reference to other factors. For example, London boroughs employ a higher proportion of ethnic minority social workers. It is also worth noting that 38% of the sessions that were affected by technical issues, including Wi-Fi, were London based sessions. See Table E1.5.6 and Table E1.5.7.

Geographic location: The conclusion for employer type applies equally to geographic location and its significance was also dependent on other factors rather than where the employer happens to be sited within England. See Table E1.5.8 and Table E1.5.9.

Ofsted rating: Social workers in employers rated as 'inadequate' took on average 13% longer than CFP participants in other employers to complete the knowledge component. This finding on the 'inadequate' employer cohort was very similar to other findings in the PoC phase. See Table E1.5.10.

Post-qualification years of service: Social workers who had been qualified the longest took longer to complete the knowledge component, although there was no perceptible difference between the four groups with less than 10 years' post-qualification. See Table E1.5.11.

Size of employing organisation: CFP social workers from smaller local authorities took almost 12% less time to complete the knowledge section when compared to 'medium' and 'large' local authorities. See Table E1.5.12.

Length of service with current employer: Social workers who had been with their current employer over ten years took longer to complete the knowledge component. This is related to the findings on age band and post-qualification years of service. See Table E1.5.13.

Qualification: Social workers who opted for the 'Other' category because they did not have one of the five other specific qualifications took significantly longer on average. This group included a significant number who would have been educated overseas. See Table E1.5.14.

Service area: There was a considerable difference between the main group of social workers and the various specialist teams in terms of time taken on the digital assessment knowledge component. For example, CFP social workers in leaving care teams took 10% longer and in the fostering and adoption teams 9% longer than participants from children in need teams. See Table E1.5.15.

Scenarios

The results of statistical tests for a variety of personal characteristics and employer features and their effect on the time to complete the scenarios in the digital assessment for CFP are shown in Table 1.5.3. They are in descending order of importance (as measured by the p-value following a t-test or ANOVA test, as appropriate). Of the 12 characteristics and features tested 11 proved to be significant in influencing the T2C. Employment status of the social worker (permanent or agency) is the only one that was not significant.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Age band	Highly significant	Time taken increased with the age of the social worker. The oldest group (60+) took over 30% longer than the youngest group (20-29)	< 0.0001

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	The BAME group took 6.5% longer than the White All group	< 0.0001
Post qualification years in service	Highly significant	The most experienced social workers took longer	< 0.0001
English as a first language	Significant	Those social workers for whom English was not a first language took nearly 7% longer	< 0.0001
Employer type (of council)	Highly significant	Social workers in county councils were fastest and those in metropolitan districts were slowest	< 0.0001
Size of employer	Highly significant	Social workers from 'medium' sized LAs took 15% longer than those from 'small' sized LAs	< 0.0001
Qualification	Highly significant	Social workers with an MA were fastest and the Other group slowest	< 0.0001
Ofsted rating of employer	Highly significant	Social workers in 'inadequate' employers took over 10% longer	< 0.0001
Length of service with current employer	Highly significant	Those social workers with over ten years of service took longer	.0002
Service area	Highly significant	The largest group (CIN/long term/locality) were fastest	.0009
Geographic location	Highly significant	Social workers in the London and the Midlands took longer	.0049
Gender	Highly significant	Female social workers had a significantly higher mean time compared with male social workers	.0190
Type of employment	Not significant		.1791

Table E.1.5.3: CFP: Digital assessment scenarios time to complete and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Table E.1.5.4 shows the equivalent analysis for PS. Age and ethnicity were again the most significant factors. Three other factors were significant but the result was either potentially affected by one employer (employer type), showed variability with no pattern

(post qualification years in service), or may have been attributable to other factors (geographic location).

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Age band	Highly significant	Under 30 year olds took less time	0.0024
Ethnicity	Highly significant	'White All' took less time to complete all 3 scenarios compared to the BAME group	0.0103
Employer type (of council)	Highly significant	May have been affected by the 'independent' social workers	0.0129
Post qualification years in service	Significant	Very variable between different groups	0.0155
Geographic location	Significant	Social workers in northern employers were quickest	0.0359
Size of employer	Not significant		0.0830
Qualification	Not significant		0.1070
Service area	Not significant		0.1587
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant		0.1694
English as a first language	Not significant		0.1773
Gender	Not significant		0.3733
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.3971
Type of employment	Not significant		0.8123

Table E.1.5.4: PS: Digital assessment scenarios time to complete and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Personal characteristics and employer features – scenarios

Age band: It took older social workers longer to complete the digital assessment scenarios. For CFP the 60+ age group took over 37% longer than the 20-29 age group. In the case of PS those social workers aged 40 to 60 took over 20% longer than those aged 20 to 40. This does not invalidate the use of a digital platform as a way of assessing social workers. It could be that older social workers would have taken equally as long had the assessment been in a different format e.g. paper based. There was a contrast between CFP and PS in terms of the variability of times taken across age bands. In the case of CFP as age increased there was a wider spread of times. In the case of PS the reverse was true. There was no obvious explanation for these trends working in the opposite direction. See Table E1.5.16 and Table E1.5.17.

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Ethnicity: This was a significant factor in determining the length of time a social worker would take to complete the digital assessment. The analysis of social worker feedback and the social worker focus groups did not identify any bias, either actual or alleged. See Table E1.5.18, Table E1.5.19 and Table E1.5.20.

Post qualification years in service: For CFP the cohort with more than ten years of experience took nearly 20% longer than those with 3 or fewer years of experience. As with age band, the variation within each group increased with years in service. PS with over ten years of experience took around 10% longer than the remainder. See Table E1.5.21 and Table E1.5.22.

English as a first language: CFP social workers who declared that English was not their first language took around 20% longer to complete the digital assessment scenarios. See Table E1.5.23.

Employer type: Whilst employer type was apparently a significant factor in modelling the time taken for both CFP and PS this could have been affected by the characteristics of the social workers within the employers as well as other features such as the Ofsted rating of the employers themselves. For example, in the case of PS when the ANOVA tests were run without the 'non-local authority' group, there was no significant relationship with time to complete scenarios in the digital assessment. This assertion could be tested only with a larger sample of employers. See Table E1.5.24 and Table E1.5.25.

Size of employing organisation: CFP social workers from smaller sized local authorities took almost 18% less time to complete the scenarios when compared to 'medium' and 'large' local authorities. See Table E1.5.26.

Qualification: Those CFP social workers who stated that their qualification was in the 'other' category took longer to complete the scenarios than those with specified qualifications. See Table E1.5.27.

Ofsted rating: Those CFP social workers in employers rated 'inadequate' took on average over 9% longer than those in higher performing employers. See Table E1.5.28.

Length of service with current employer: Those who had been with their employer for more than ten years took over 12% longer compared with the remainder. See Table E1.5.29.

Service area: The largest cohort of participants (CIN/long term/locality social workers) were the fastest group taking, on average, around 9% less time than social workers in more specialist teams. See Table E1.5.30.

Geographic location: There was no obvious reason why geography should make a difference per se hence it may have been that this result was the product of other significant factors. See Table E1.5.31 and Table E1.5.32.

Gender: The difference in mean times to complete scenarios was only small between 'male' and 'female' CFP social workers. See Table E1.5.33.

Employer: There were wide variations in the T2C by employer. For example, for CFP the mean time to complete across all employers was just under 54 minutes, but in some employers it was significantly less and in others significantly longer. A number of external factors may have influenced the time to complete, particularly technology issues and the speed at which the Wi-Fi operated.

Non-completers

In total 154 (or 16%) of social workers sitting the digital assessment did not complete it fully. The non-completion rates for CFP and PS were 18.4% and 7.3% respectively. Of the 154 who did not complete the reasons were split between 61% who were 'timed out' and 39% who experienced technical issues. These equated to non-completion rates of 9.9% and 6.3% respectively. For detailed results, Appendix E1.6.

E1.5.2   Analysis of time to complete - knowledge

The tables below show time to complete data for the knowledge section of the digital assessment.

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – Ethnicity

Ethnicity was the most significant factor in determining an aspect of performance in the digital assessment. Table E1.5.1, Table E1.5.2 and Table E1.5.3 show the difference between the 'white' and BAME groups for the three different definitions of these groups.

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White British	468	77.2	76.1	125	72.0	69.3
Other	251	95.9	93.9	52	84.02	79.7

Table E1.5.1: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge – 'White British' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White British/Irish	490	77.3	76.4	129	72.1	69.7
Other	229	97.5	95.1	48	84.8	78.7

Table E1.5.2: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge – 'White British/Irish' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White All	519	78.0	76.6	135	72.4	69.7
BAME	200	98.9	96.6	42	85.6	79.7

Table E1.5.3: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge – 'White All' against BAME

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – Age band

Age band	No.	Mean time (minutes)	Standard deviation
20-29	152	74.8	19.1
30-39	220	78.8	21.2
40-49	162	87.8	24.4
50-59	149	93.4	24.7
60 and older	32	96.7	28.0

Table E1.5.4: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by age band

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – English as a first language

First language (declared)	CFP		PS	
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)
English	653	82.0	173	74.7
Not English	87	99.3	11	86.2

Table E1.5.5: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by English as a first language

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – Employer type (of council)

Employer type	County councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Unitary councils	Non-local authority
No. of SWs	211	248	126	124	38
Mean time (mins.)	79.3	88.8	90.4	80.7	70.2

Table E1.5.6: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by local authority type

Employer type	County councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Unitary councils	Non-local authority
No. of SWs	59	58	34	32	8
Mean time (mins.)	73.9	76.1	84.8	71.7	57.6

Table E1.5.7: PS: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by local authority type

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – Geographic location

Location	North	London	South	Midlands
Number	261	126	130	230
Mean time (mins.)	78.6	90.4	80.1	89.1

Table E1.5.8: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by geographic location

Location	North	London	South	Midlands
Number	60	34	33	64
Mean time (mins.)	68.7	84.8	73.5	77.8

Table E1.5.9: PS: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by geographic location

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – Ofsted rating

Ofsted rating	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good & Outstanding
No. of SWs	228	254	265
Mean time (mins.)	91.3	81.0	80.8

Table E1.5.10: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by Ofsted rating of employer

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – post qualification years of service

Years in service	Less than 1	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	73	176	100	172	219
Mean time (mins.)	81.3	79.3	80.7	83.1	91.0

Table E1.5.11: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by post qualification years in service

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – size of employing organisation

Size of employing organisation	Small	Medium	Large
No. of SWs	205	110	432
Mean time (mins.)	79.0	91.8	84.6

Table E1.5.12: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by size of employing organisation

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – length of service with current employer

Length of service (years)	Up to 1	1-3	3-5	5-10	Over 10
Number	142	227	89	124	158
Mean time (minutes)	80.8	82.3	82.9	82.0	91.9

Table E1.5.13: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by length of service with current employer

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – qualification

Qualification	BA	BSc	MA	MSc	PG Dip	Other
No. of SWs	275	111	165	54	69	66
Mean time (mins.)	82.9	85.2	79.9	85.8	83.8	95.9

Table E1.5.14: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by type of qualification

Time to Complete (Knowledge) – service area

Service area type	CFP		PS	
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)
Looked After Children	111	87.8	24	81.5
CIN/Long term/Locality	406	81.0	118	71.2
Fostering and adoption	99	89.0	13	85.9
Children with disability	43	83.7	6	80.2
Leaving care	20	90.4	10	79.0
Access	59	88.5	12	87.1

Table E1.5.15: Time to complete digital assessment knowledge by service area

E1.5.3   Analysis of time to Complete – scenarios

The tables below show time to complete data for the scenarios in the digital assessment.

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Age band

The data relates to both completers as well as an estimated time for non-completers.

Age band	No.	Mean time (minutes)	Standard deviation
20-29	152	85.5	17.9
30-39	220	92.9	20.9
40-49	161	96.3	22.2
50-59	149	99.9	21.2
60 and older	32	117.3	49.3

Table E1.5.16: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by age band

Age band	No.	Mean time (minutes)	Standard deviation
20-29	5	66.2	18.3
30-39	29	80.5	17.3
40-49	74	88.0	17.0
50-59	59	90.8	14.3
60 and older	11	85.2	10.5

Table E1.5.17: PS: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by age band

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Ethnicity

	CFP			PS		
Category	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White British	468	92.7	89.0	125	85.5	85.0
Other	251	110.3	103.0	52	98.7	91.50

Table E1.5.18: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios – 'White British' against all other groups

	CFP			PS		
Category	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White British/ Irish	490	92.9	89.2	129	85.7	85.0
Other	229	111.7	105.0	48	99.2	90.5

Table E1.5.19: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios – 'White British/Irish' against all other groups

	CFP			PS		
Category	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)	Median time (mins.)
White All	519	93.5	90.6	135	85.9	85.0
BAME	200	112.9	105.4	42	100.4	90.5

Table E1.5.20: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios – 'White All' against BAME

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Post qualification years in service

Table E1.5.21 and Table E1.5.22 show that, like the analysis of age band, the time taken increases as years of service increases.

Years in service	Less than 1	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	73	176	100	172	219
Mean time (mins.)	92.5	91.0	95.9	98.0	110.0

Table E1.5.21: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by post qualification years in service

Years in service	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	11	39	134
Mean time (mins.)	80.1	81.2	88.9

Table E1.5.22: PS: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by post qualification years in service

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – English as a first language

First language (declared)	CFP		PS	
	No.	Mean time (mins.)	No.	Mean time (mins.)
English	653	96.7	173	88.7
Not English	87	116.7	11	94.6

Table E1.5.23: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by English as a first language

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Employer type

Employer type	County councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Unitary councils	Non-local authority
No. of SWs	211	248	126	124	38
Mean time (mins.)	92.7	104.7	104.8	95.2	85.3

Table E1.5.24: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by local authority type

Employer type	County councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Unitary councils	Non-local authority
No. of SWs	59	58	34	32	8
Mean time (mins.)	88.5	84.1	89.8	89.7	69.0

Table E1.5.25: PS: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by local authority type

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – size of employing organisation

Size of employing organisation	Small	Medium	Large
No. of SWs	205	110	432
Mean time (mins.)	91.8	108.6	99.5

Table E1.5.26: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by size of employing organisation

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Qualification

Table E1.5.27 shows that CFPs' qualification had an influence on the time taken on scenarios. The 'Other' group took 23.5% longer than the fastest group (those with an MA).

Qualification	BA	BSc	MA	MSc	PG Dip	Other
No. of SWs	275	111	165	54	69	66
Mean time (mins.)	98.0	99.6	92.6	96.5	105.3	114.4

Table E1.5.27: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by type of qualification

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – Ofsted rating

Ofsted rating	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good & Outstanding
No. of SWs	228	254	265
Mean time (mins.)	106.0	94.1	97.0

Table E1.5.28: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by Ofsted rating of employer

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – length of service with current employer

Length of service (yrs.)	Up to 1	1-3	3-5	5-10	Over 10
Number	142	227	89	124	158
Mean time (mins.)	94.5	95.4	96.6	100.2	108.9

Table E1.5.29: CFP:Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by length of service with current employer

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – service area

Service area	No.	Mean time (mins.)
Looked After Children	110	106.8
CIN/Long term/Locality	406	94.4
Fostering and adoption	99	103.8
Children with disability	43	104.9
Leaving care	20	106.0
Access	59	102.4

Table E1.5.30: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by service area

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – geographic location

Location	North	London	South	Midlands
Number	261	126	130	230
Mean time (mins.)	96.3	104.8	92.7	102.6

Table E1.5.31: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by geographic location

Location	North	London	South	Midlands
Number	60	34	33	64
Mean time (mins.)	81.4	89.8	89.4	88.8

Table E1.5.32: PS: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios by geographic location

Time to Complete (Scenarios) – gender

Category	No.	Mean time (mins.)
Male	130	94.5
Female	619	98.6

Table E1.5.33: CFP: Time to complete digital assessment scenarios: 'Male' v 'Female'

E1.6   Time to complete: Analysis of non-completers

This appendix includes detailed analysis of the non-completers of the digital assessment against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features. See section C1.3 for further analysis.

Status	Non-completers	Number of participants	% of non-comp./ total
CFP	140	762	18.4%
PS	14	192	7.3%
Grand Total	154	954	16.1%

Table E1.6.1: Digital assessment – non-completion rates

The reasons for non-completion are shown in Table E1.6.2.

Digital assessment – reason for non-completion	No. of social workers	Percentage of non-completers
1 - Session ran smoothly but 'timed out'	94	61.0
2 - Session ran smoothly but some computers sound quality was not perfect	4	2.6
3 - Some participants had to redo the scenarios because they did not save	17	11.0
4 - Session was interrupted by Wi-Fi issues	39	25.3
Total	154	100

Table E1.6.2: Digital assessment – analysis of reasons for non-completion

The characteristics and employer features associated with these social workers are analysed in the following tables.

Gender	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
Female	125	771	16.2
Male	27	171	15.8
Prefer not to say	2	12	16.7

Table E1.6.3: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by gender

Age band	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
20 to 29 years old	13	157	8.3
30 to 39 years old	26	250	10.4
40 to 49 years old	47	236	19.9
50 to 59 years	54	209	25.8

Age band	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
old			
60 and over	6	43	14.0
Prefer not to say	6	31	19.4

Table E1.6.4: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by age band

English first language?	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
No	23	98	23.5
Yes	129	828	15.6

Table E1.6.5: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by English as a first language

Qualification	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
BA	51	321	15.9
BSc	26	132	19.7
MA	19	207	9.2
MSc	12	65	18.5
Other	19	104	18.3
PG Dip	25	96	26.0

Table E1.6.6: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by qualification

Service area	Non completers	Number of participants	% of non-comp./ total
Access	14	71	20%
Children with disability	8	49	16%
CIN/Long term/ Locality	64	525	12%
Fostering and Adoption	20	113	18%
LAC	26	135	19%
Leaving Care	6	30	20%

Table E1.6.7: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by service area

Ethnicity	Non-completers	No. of participants	% of total
White All	75	656	11.4
BAME	77	270	28.5

Table E1.6.8: Digital assessment – non-completer cohort by ethnicity (White All and BAME)

E1.7 Digital assessment analysis – distribution of marks across the knowledge and skills statements (KSS)

These tables show the distribution of marks across each element of the digital assessment for both CFP and PS against the KSS for their status.

The KSS can be found here:

- for CFP:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/512790/Knowledge_and_skills_statement_for_approved_child_and_family_practitioners.pdf
- for PL and PS:
  https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478111/Knowledge_and_skills_statements_for_practice_leaders_and_practice_supervisors.pdf

There were some KSS which were deemed inappropriate or unrealistic for assessment in the general knowledge and applied knowledge sections, for example 'Communication' for CFP and 'Emotionally intelligent practice supervision' for PS. This was due to an inability to set clear right and wrong answers for these subject matters. In those areas social worker skills were assessed through Scenarios on the digital platform and through the simulated observation assessment.

	Max score (%)	CFP KSS										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
GK	120	2%	0%	17%	10%	10%	3%	0%	47%	3%	8%	100%
AK	20	0%	0%	40%	5%	10%	10%	5%	0%	30%	0%	100%
SC	96	12%	9%	9%	10%	6%	13%	26%	8%	5%	2%	100%

Table E1.7.1: CFP: Distribution of mark allocated to each KSS for each section of the digital assessment

	CFP KSS										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
DA (All)	6%	4%	15%	10%	8%	8%	12%	26%	6%	5%	100%

Table E1.7.2: CFP: Distribution of marks allocated to each KSS for the whole digital assessment

	Max score	PS KSS								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
GK	120	32%	12%	8%	9%	2%	0%	0%	38%	100%
AK	18	6%	11%	6%	0%	28%	50%	0%	0%	100%
SC	86	22%	15%	1%	1%	16%	21%	13%	12%	100%

Table E1.7.3: PS: Distribution of marks allocated to each KSS for each section of the digital assessment

	PS KSS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
DA (All)	26%	13%	5%	5%	9%	12%	5%	25%	100%

Table E1.7.4: PS: Distribution of marks allocated to each KSS for the whole digital assessment

E1.8   Digital assessment analysis – General knowledge

This appendix includes detailed analysis of performance in the general knowledge section of the digital assessment against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features. See section C1.4 for further analysis.

E1.8.1   Age band

Table E1.8.1 and Table E1.8.2 show for CFP and PS respectively (1) the mean percentage score and (2) the standard deviation for each age band. Older social workers tend to perform less well on general knowledge. This finding was statistically significant.

For the worst performing CFP age group (50-59) 44% of this group are in the lowest quartile nationally and two-thirds scored below the national average. By contrast 62.5% of the 20-29 age group performed better than the national average.

In the CFP table the '60 and older' group reverses the declining trend in scores as age increases. Also, the standard deviation in scores gradually increases with age band, indicating that there was greater variation within older age bands. In other words, performance was more mixed as age increases.

In the case of PS there was also a declining trend in average score as age increases, albeit the five youngest PS had relatively low scores and scored slightly worse than their equivalent CFP age group. Here, the 50-59 age group showed the greatest variation in performance.

Age band	No.	Mean % score	Standard deviation
20-29	152	68.4	6.43
30-39	221	68.3	7.18
40-49	161	65.8	7.63
50-59	150	63.2	8.44
60 and older	32	65.1	8.73

Table E1.8.1: CFP: General knowledge scores by age band

Age band	No.	Mean % score	Standard deviation
20-29	5	68.0	3.83
30-39	29	72.5	6.90
40-49	74	70.2	6.04
50-59	59	68.0	8.24
60 and older	11	67.5	5.48

Table E1.8.2: PS: General knowledge scores by age band

Note: Six PS who preferred not to say which age band they were in scored significantly below the remainder with an average of 63.8%

E1.8.2   Ethnicity

For the purpose of this analysis three groups are used:

- 'White British' against 'Other';
- 'White British/Irish' against 'Other'; and,
- 'White All' versus BAME (where 'white' includes all other white background')

The analysis necessarily excluded all social workers who chose the option 'Prefer not to say'. The three tables below show for each group and for CFP and PS separately, the mean and median general knowledge scores for the 'white' and 'Other' categories. In every case the 'white' group had a statistically significant higher mean score than the 'Other' group. Please note that as the 'white' group was successively expanded from Table E1.8.3 to Table E1.8.5 whilst their mean remained the same (to one decimal place) the mean of the BAME group reduces.

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean %	Median %	No.	Mean %	Median %
White British	469	67.6	68.4	124	70.4	71.3
Other	251	64.7	65.2	52	68.1	67.9

Table E1.8.3: Comparison of digital assessment general knowledge scores – 'White British' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean %	Median %	No.	Mean %	Median %
White British/ Irish	491	67.6	68.4	128	70.4	71.4
Other	229	64.4	65.0	48	67.8	67.0

Table E1.8.4: Comparison of digital assessment general knowledge scores – 'White British/Irish' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean %	Median %	No.	Mean %	Median %
White All	520	67.6	68.4	134	70.4	71.5
BAME	200	63.9	64.8	42	67.6	66.9

Table E1.8.5: Comparison of digital assessment general knowledge scores – 'White All' against BAME

Whilst there may not appear to be much difference between the two sets of results in terms of percentage points, Table E1.8.6 shows for one comparison (CFP, 'White British' against BAME) the difference in another format. Here, we show what percentage of both

groups fall into which quartile of the overall distribution of CFP general knowledge scores. The contrast was starker and helps to demonstrate why there was a statistically significant result.

Category	Number	Percentage of each group falling into			
		Worst quartile	2nd quartile	3rd quartile	Top quartile
White British	469	21.1	20.4	28.4	30.1
Other	251	32.7	30.7	19.9	16.7

Table E1.8.6: Comparison of the distribution of CFP digital assessment general knowledge scores – 'White British' and all other groups

Table E1.8.7 shows the equivalent table for the largest 'white' group, when 'White British' was combined with 'White Irish' and 'Other White Background'.

Category	Number	Percentage of each group falling into			
		Worst quartile	2nd quartile	3rd quartile	Top quartile
White All	520	20.8	21.2	28.1	30.0
BAME	200	36.5	31.5	18.5	13.5

Table E1.8.7: Comparison of the distribution of CFP digital assessment general knowledge scores – 'White All' and BAME

Ethnicity was a consistent and highly significant factor in modelling the variation in social worker performance.

E1.8.3   Type of qualification

Social workers were asked about the level to which they were qualified. As shown in Table E1.8.8 for CFP, those with a Master's degree, particularly an MA, outperformed the remainder. The 'other' group had an average which was only just above the national lower quartile and over 42% of this group (28 out of 66) scored within the lowest quartile. Moreover, six of this group fell within the lowest 12 scores nationally (out of a total of 755), each scoring less than 50%. These results were statistically highly significant.

Qualification	BA	BSc	MA	MSc	PG Dip	Other
No. of SWs	275	111	166	54	69	66
% GK score	65.8	66.3	69.3	67.2	66.1	63.2

Table E1.8.8: CFP: Average general knowledge scores according to type of qualification

By contrast, Table E1.8.9 shows the equivalent effect of qualification on PS general knowledge average scores. Although the average scores appeared as dissimilar to those for CFP this result fell just short of being statistically significant. However, when MA and MSc degrees were combined and compared with BA and BSc combined the result became just significant.

Qualification	BA	BSc	MA	MSc	PG Dip	Other
No. of SWs	46	21	41	11	26	38
% GK score	69.6	68.4	71.0	73.5	69.2	67.9

Table E1.8.9: PS: Average general knowledge scores according to type of qualification

E1.8.4   Service area

Social workers were offered six service area types to select from. Table E1.8.10 shows for CFP and PS the numbers in each service area type and their average percentage score.

Service area type	CFP		PS	
	No.	% GK score	No.	% GK score
Looked After Children	110	65.8	24	69.1
CIN/Long term/ Locality	407	67.6	118	70.9
Fostering and adoption	100	64.6	13	64.9
Children with disability	43	66.5	6	69.5
Leaving care	20	63.5	10	64.7
Access	59	65.3	12	66.9

Table E1.8.10: CFP and PS: Average general knowledge scores according to service area

These results were statistically significant. For both CFP and PS the lowest average general knowledge scores were obtained by those working in 'fostering and adoption' and 'leaving care'. In both cases the best results were obtained by those in the 'CIN/Long Term/Locality' and 'children with disability' teams. Indeed, the rank order by service area was exactly the same for CFP and PS.

These findings raise the issue of the appropriateness of the question 'mix' for social workers in different roles and more generally about what social workers need to know to perform their role successfully. For the PoC phase the set of questions were intended to reflect what all social workers needed to know, regardless of their service area, thus assuming a minimum standard.

E1.8.5   English as a first language

There were contrasting results between CFP (significant result) and PS (not significant). Table E1.8.11 shows the results. In the case of PS only a small group of social workers (11) declared English was not their first language.

First language (declared)	No.	% GK score
English	654	66.8
NOT English	87	64.4

Table E1.8.11: CFP: Average general knowledge scores against English as a first language

E1.8.6 Post qualification years in service

For CFP this characteristic produced a significant but an unusual result. Table E1.8.12 shows that general knowledge scores increased up to the 3-5 years' service band and then fell away again. However, and similar to Table E1.8.1 for age band, the table below shows that as years in service increased the variation (as measured by the standard deviation) between social workers within each band became greater.

Years in service	Less than 1	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	73	177	100	172	219
% GK score	66.5	67.1	68.3	66.8	65.1
Standard dev.	7.2	7.4	8.2	8.7	9.4

Table E1.8.12: CFP: Average general knowledge scores according to post qualification years in service

E1.8.7 Length of service with current employer

This factor was just significant in the case of CFP but not significant in the case of PS. Post qualification years in service was a more discriminating factor. Table E1.8.13 shows that the average general knowledge scores gradually increased with length of service but reduced for social workers with more than 10 years' service. This finding would seem to be consistent with the lower scores achieved by social workers aged 40 and over (see Table E1.8.1) and the relatively low scores achieved by social workers with over 10 years post qualification experience (see Table E1.8.12).

Length of service (yrs.)	Up to 1	1-3 years	3-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10
Number	143	228	88	124	158
% GK score	66.0	66.7	67.2	68.0	65.3

Table E1.8.13: CFP: General knowledge scores by length of service with current employer

E1.8.8   Ofsted rating of employer

This factor proved statistically significant for CFP but not for PS. The results are shown in Table E1.8.14.

Ofsted rating	No.	% GK score
Inadequate	228	65.6
Requires improvement	254	66.3
Good & Outstanding	267	67.3

Table E1.8.14: CFP and PS: General knowledge scores by latest Ofsted inspection rating

In both cases social workers in 'inadequate' local authorities scored the worst, the difference being more pronounced in the case of PS. There was one local authority in the sample rated outstanding as at 1 March 2015.

E1.8.9   Permanent and agency social workers

There was no significant difference between type of employment of social workers in terms of their general knowledge scores, the CFP the 95 agency workers had an average score of 65% compared with the 650 permanent social workers who had an average score of 66.7%. In the case of PS the scores were identical.

E1.9 Digital assessment analysis – Applied knowledge

This appendix includes detailed analysis of performance in the applied knowledge section of the digital assessment against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features. See section C1.4 for further analysis.

E1.9.1 Ethnicity

For the purpose of this analysis the following three groups were used:

- 'White British' against all other groups;
- 'White British/Irish' against all other groups; and,
- 'White All' versus BAME (where 'white' includes all other white background').

The following three tables show average scores for these three groups for both CFP and PS. For CFP the ''white'' group, however defined, significantly outperformed the BAME group, but (in contrast to general knowledge) there was no significant difference for PS. The difference between the CFP ''white'' and BAME groups varied between 7 and 8.5 percentage points. The same relationship was not present for PS.

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White British	467	66.2	67.8	125	82.8	85.7
Other	251	59.0	60.1	52	82.3	82.2

Table E1.9.1: Comparison of digital assessment applied knowledge scores – 'White British' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White British/Irish	489	66.1	66.5	129	82.9	85.7
Other	229	58.5	59.7	48	81.9	82.2

Table E1.9.2: Comparison of digital assessment applied knowledge scores – 'White British/Irish' against all other groups

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White All	518	66.0	66.6	135	82.8	85.6
BAME	200	57.5	57.4	42	81.8	82.0

Table E1.9.3: Comparison of digital assessment applied knowledge scores – 'White All' against BAME

E1.9.2   English as a first language

For CFP the average score of social workers who stated that English was their first language was 64.3%, compared with 58.3% for whom English was not their first language. This result was highly significant. Again, there was no similar relationship for PS.

E1.9.3   Ofsted rating of current employer

Although there was no difference between three of the four rating bands Table E1.9.4 shows that the average score for CFP in local authorities rated as 'inadequate' was around 3 percentage points lower.

Ofsted rating	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good or outstanding
No. of SWs	227	253	264
% AK score	61.5	64.3	64.9

Table E1.9.4: CFP: Average applied knowledge scores by Ofsted rating of employer

E1.9.4   Permanent and agency social workers

For CFP the 647 permanent employees had an average score 4 percentage points higher than the 95 agency workers.

E1.9.5   Age band

Table E1.9.5 shows how the applied knowledge average score gradually reduced with age band and then increased for the 60 and older age band. This result was both significant and entirely consistent with the findings for general knowledge (see Table E1.8.1).

Age group	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 & older
No. of SWs	152	221	160	149	32
% AK score	65.8	64.1	63.1	61.2	65.0

Table E1.9.5: CFP: Average applied knowledge scores by age band

E1.9.6 Length of service with current employer

For CFP Table E1.9.6 shows that the average applied knowledge score tended to improve with length of service with social workers' current employer, a result which was statistically significant. The final row shows that the variability of social workers' scores was greatest for more recent recruits and gradually reduced over the first 5 years of employment.

Length of service (years)	Up to 1	1-3	3-5	5-10	Over 10
No. of SWs	148	232	88	124	156
% AK score	60.3	62.0	63.6	65.1	64.1
Standard dev.	7.3	6.4	5.5	5.1	5.2

Table E1.9.6: CFP: Average applied knowledge scores by length of service with current employer

E1.10   Digital assessment analysis – Scenarios

This appendix includes detailed analysis of performance in the scenarios section of the digital assessment against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features. See section C1.4 for further analysis.

E1.10.1   Ethnicity

For the scenarios social workers' declared ethnicity was a significant factor in determining performance, regardless of which of the three groups were used – ''white' British', ''white' British/Irish', or ''white' All'. As shown in Table E1.10.1, Table E1.10.2, Table E1.10.3, for CFP there was a 4 percentage point gap in the mean scores for ''white' British' and BAME which extends to a 5 point gap for ''white' All' and BAME. In the case of PS, the same gaps were 2 and 3 percentage points respectively. Of the 140 CFP in the BAME group, nearly 70% of them scored below the mean and 43% of them were in the lowest quartile. This finding was very similar to the one on the general knowledge questions.

Note: The social worker count in these and the following tables is based on those social workers who completed all three scenarios. Therefore, the numbers are different to equivalent tables for general knowledge and applied knowledge.

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White British	409	75.4	75.9	120	74.9	75.1
BAME	184	71.4	72.4	43	72.9	73.8

Table E1.10.1: Comparison of scenario scores – 'White British' against BAME

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White British/Irish	428	75.5	75.9	124	74.8	75.1
BAME	165	70.7	71.4	39	72.9	73.6

Table E1.10.2: Comparison of scenario scores – 'White British/Irish' against BAME

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score	No.	Mean % AK score	Median % AK score
White All	453	75.3	75.9	130	75.0	75.5
BAME	140	70.3	71.0	33	71.9	72.5

Table E1.10.3: Comparison of scenario scores – 'White All' against BAME

E1.10.2   Age band

Table E1.10.4 shows that performance declined as age increases.

Age group	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 & older
No. of SWs	139	196	123	102	26
% score	76.3	75.2	73.1	71.6	70.4

Table E1.10.4: CFP: Average scenario scores by age band

E1.10.3   English as a first language

The 541 CFP declaring English as their first language had a mean scenario score of 74.6% compared with 70% for the 65 social workers who declared English was not their first language. This difference was highly significant. There was no similar relationship for PS although only ten social workers fell into the 'Other' group.

E1.10.4   Ofsted rating of employer

Excluding one employer where the Ofsted rating was given in 2011 the percentage score increased with the Ofsted rating.

Ofsted rating	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good or outstanding
No. of SWs	171	224	221
% score	71.8	74.1	75.6

Table E1.10.5: CFP: Average scenario scores by Ofsted rating of employer

For PS the social workers from 'inadequate' local authorities also scored the lowest, as shown in Table E1.10.6. Nearly 75% of this group scored below the average and 40% (or 18 of them) were in the lowest quartile.

Ofsted rating	Inadequate	Requires improvement	Good or outstanding
No. of SWs	45	63	69
% score	71.5	76.0	74.5

Table E1.10.6: PS: Average scenario scores by Ofsted rating of employer

E1.10.5   Service area

Service area was a statistically significant factor for both CFP and PS and the variations are shown in Table 1.10.7. A common feature is that social workers associated with leaving care scored relatively low, whilst the largest group (CIN/long term/locality) scored the highest or equal highest (in the case of PS). For CFP, social workers in the Looked After Children teams performed worst. This evidence could be interpreted as suggesting that the subject matter of the scenarios was less well suited to specialist teams, as opposed to those in mainstream safeguarding.

Service area	CFP		PS	
	No. of SWs	% score	No. of SWs	% score
Looked After Children	86	71.6	19	74.0
CIN/Long term/ Locality	343	75.4	114	75.0
Fostering and adoption	81	72.7	11	75.0
Children with disability	35	73.6	6	74.7
Leaving care	14	72.1	10	68.3
Access	45	72.6	9	74.3

Table 1.10.7: Average scenario score by service area

E1.10.6   Post-qualification years in service

Table E1.10.8 shows that the average score for CFP participants reduced after five years of service.

Years	Less than 1	1-3	3-5	5-10	More than 10
No. of SWs	62	154	87	144	159
% score	75.3	75.5	75.3	73.5	72.3

Table E1.10.8: CFP: Average scenario scores by Ofsted rating of employer

E1.10.7   Qualification

CFP participants with an MA degree performed better than the remainder, notably the 'Other' group as shown in Table E1.10.9.

Qualification	BA	BSc	MA	MSc	PG Dip	Other
No. of SWs	227	87	151	42	50	49
% score	73.8	73.2	76.2	73.9	73.8	71.3

Table E1.10.9: CFP: Average scenario scores against qualification

E1.10.8   Geographic location

Whilst geographic location appeared to be a significant factor in modelling the variation of scores between CFP, this may be better explained by the Ofsted rating (another highly significant factor in modelling scenario scores).

E1.10.9   Length of service with current employer

Length of service was just significant for CFP. As Table E1.10.10 shows, whilst the average scenario score for the first four length of service bands was fairly similar, average performance dropped for social workers with more than ten years' service.

Length of service (years)	Up to 1	1-3	3-5	5-10	Over 10
No. of SWs	120	191	73	103	119
% score	74.2	74.9	74.2	74.6	72.4

Table E1.10.10: CFP: Average scenario scores against length of service with current employer

E1.10.10 Gender

Gender proved to be just significant for CFP with 509 females outscoring 106 males by 74.2% to 72.9%.

E1.10.11 Employer type

For PS this factor proved to be significant, as shown in Table 1.10.11, with social workers in county councils performing best and those in London boroughs performing worst.

Employer type	Met district	London borough	Unitary council	County council
No. of SWs	56	26	32	57
% score	73.4	71.8	74.2	76.4

Table E11.10.11: PS: Average scenario scores by employer type

E1.11   Simulated Observation Analysis

This section includes detailed analysis of performance in the simulated observation against a range of social worker characteristics and employer features.

Personal characteristics and employer features – the headlines

Table E1.11.1 shows for CFP the results of statistical tests for a variety of personal characteristics and employer features and their effect on the simulated observation scores (as measured by the sum of the observer ratings of the five component parts). They are in descending order of importance (as measured by p-values following a t-test or analysis of variance test, as appropriate).

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Ethnicity	Highly significant	Applied equally to all three groups of ''white'' and BAME	0.0010
Gender	Highly significant	Females performed better, but the result was sensitive to 3 underperforming males	0.0039
English as a first language	Just not significant	Marginal. Those with English as a first language had a higher average score	0.0523
Age band	Just not significant	Performance declined steadily across the five age bands	0.0761
Type of employment	Not significant	Agency workers performed slightly better	0.0916
Service area	Not significant		0.4466
Qualification	Not significant		0.4738
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant	In this case the 'inadequate' cohort was at the same level as 'requires improvement' and 'good or outstanding'	0.6988
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.7280
Employer type (of council)	Not significant		0.8086
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.9539
Geographic location	Not significant		0.9550

Table E1.11.1: CFP: Simulated observation scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Table E1.11.2 shows the equivalent table for PS.

Characteristic/feature	Significance?	Comment	P value
Employer type (of council)	Highly significant	The county council and metropolitan district cohorts scored significantly higher than London boroughs and unitary councils	0.0087
Type of employment	Not significant	Only 4 agency workers in the cohort, but performed worse	0.1336
Geographic location	Not significant		0.1488
Service area	Not significant		0.1992
Ethnicity	Not significant		0.2214
Gender	Not significant		0.2339
Ofsted rating of employer	Not significant	The 'inadequate' employer cohort scored slightly lower	0.4853
Length of service with current employer	Not significant		0.7230
Type of qualification	Not significant		0.7956
Age band	Not significant		0.8028
Post qualification years in service	Not significant		0.9348
English as a first language	Not applicable	Only 1 PS in the simulated observation group declared that English was not their first language	n/a

Table E1.11.2: PS: Simulated observation scores and relationship with characteristics/employer features

Simulated Observation – Ethnicity

Table E1.11.3, Table E1.11.4 and Table E1.11.5 show the average simulated observation scores for CFP and PS (out of 35) for three groups.

Category	CFP			PS		
	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)
White British	97	21.5	21.0	27	23.0	22.0
BAME	56	19.7	20.0	13	22.9	23.0

Table E1.11.3: Comparison of simulated observation scores – 'White British' against BAME

	CFP			PS		
Category	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)
White British/Irish	101	21.6	21.0	27	23.0	22.0
BAME	52	19.4	20.0	13	22.9	23.0

Table E1.11.4: Comparison of simulated observation scores – 'White British/Irish' against BAME

	CFP			PS		
Category	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)	No.	Mean score (35)	Median score (35)
White All	109	21.5	21.0	29	23.3	23.0
BAME	44	19.1	19.5	11	22.2	23.0

Table E1.11.5: Comparison of simulated observation scores – 'White All' against BAME

Simulated Observation - Gender

Table E1.11.6 shows the simulated observation results by gender. For CFP females statistically outperformed males but there was no such relationship at PS level.

Gender	No.	Mean score (35)
Male	32	18.9
Female	127	21.2

Table E1.11.6: CFP: Average simulated observation scores by gender

Simulated Observation - English as a first language

For CFP the result falls just short of being significant. For the 136 social workers with English as a first language their average score was 21.0 compared with 19.3 for whom it was not. Only one PS (out of 41) declared that English was not their first language and therefore it was not possible to statistically test for any difference between the two groups.

Simulated Observation - Age band

For CFP age falls just short of being a statistically significant factor. However, Table E1.11.7 shows the declining trend in average score with age band and also that the variation within each band group increases with age. There was no relationship for PS.

Age band	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and above
No. of SWs	35	35	37	38	7
Mean score (out of 35)	21.6	21.5	21.4	19.4	18.4
Standard dev.	3.8	3.5	4.2	5.1	6.1

Table E1.11.7: CFP: Average simulated observation scores by age band

Simulated Observation - Employer type

Table E1.11.8 shows the relationship between authority type and average simulated observation score. This was significant for the PS cohort only.

Employer type	County councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Unitary councils	Non-local authority
No. of SWs	11	13	9	7	3
Mean score (35)	25.3	23.9	20.9	19.3	21.3

Table E1.11.8: Simulated observation – Comparison of average PS scores by local authority type

Analysis of simulated observation "not met"

For CFP and PS combined Table E1.11.9 shows the percentage of social workers in various cohorts that did not meet the standard i.e. attracted an overall rating of three or less.

Characteristic	% not meeting the standard				
Ethnicity	**White All**			**BAME**	
	12.8			42.9	
Gender	**Female**			**Male**	
	17.5			29.8	
Age band	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60+**
	17.1	6.8	20.4	33.3	20.0
English as first language	**Yes**			**No**	
	18.3			35.0	
Post-qualification years of experience	**<1**	**1-3**	**3-5**	**5-10**	**10+**
	25.0	20.5	35.3	13.6	19.0
Service area	**Fostering and adoption**	**Access**	**CIN**	**LAC**	**Leaving care**
	7.4	18.7	20.9	28.6	44.4
Qualifying institution	**Russell Group**	**'Old' university**		**'New' university**	**College**
	14.3	14.8		21.5	28.6
Ofsted rating	**Inadequate**		**Requires improvement**		**Good/Outstanding**
	16.7		17.8		24.7

Table E1.11.9: Analysis of % of social workers not meeting the simulated observation standard

E1.12   Participant feedback results – Digital assessment CFP

How easy did you find the IT system to use?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

2%
14%
11%
35%
39%
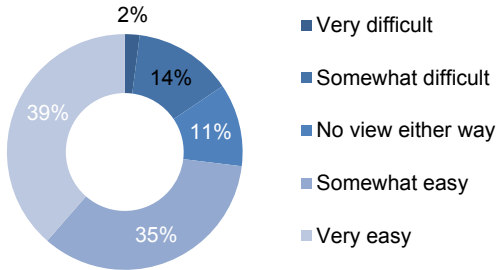
Figure E1.12.1: Participant Feedback DA CFP G1

How did you find the assessment instructions you received before attending this assessment session?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

2%
9%
24%
38%
27%
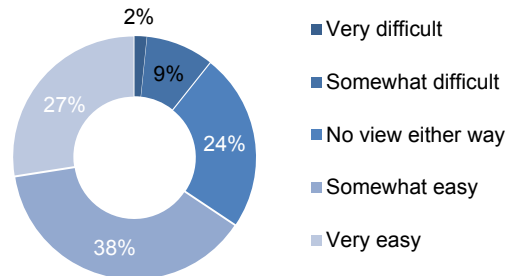
Figure E1.12.2: Participant Feedback DA CFP G2

How did you find the assessment instructions in the assessment session today?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

1%
9%
16%
45%
29%
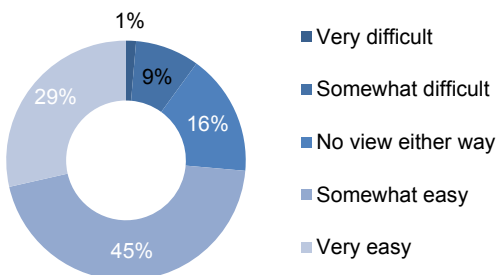
Figure E1.12.3: Participant Feedback DA CFP G3

How difficult did you find it to understand the questions?

Very difficult to understand
Somewhat difficult to understand
No view either way
Somewhat easy to understand
Very easy to understand

3%
9%
33%
17%
39%
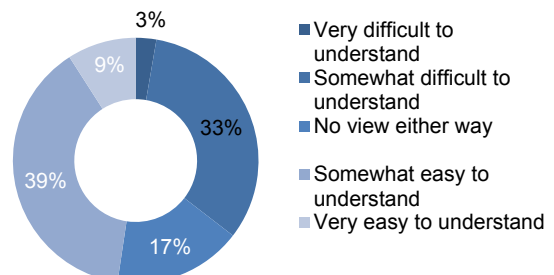
Figure E1.12.4: Participant Feedback DA CFP GK1

What would you say was the level of difficulty of the questions?

Very difficult to understand
Somewhat difficult to understand
No view either way
Somewhat easy to understand
Very easy to understand

2%
5%
51%
21%
20%
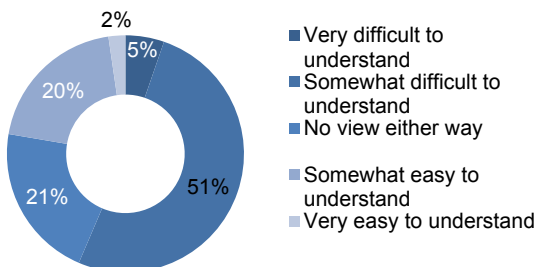
Figure E1.12.5: Participant Feedback DA CFP GK2

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?

Completely inappropriate
Somewhat inappropriate
No view either way
Somewhat appropriate
Completely appropriate
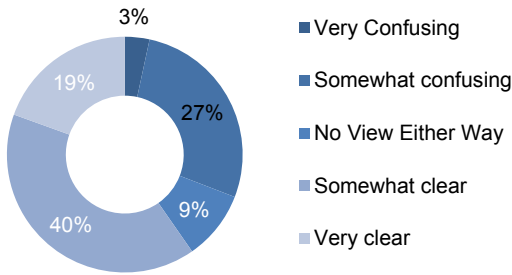
4%
9%
30%
14%
43%
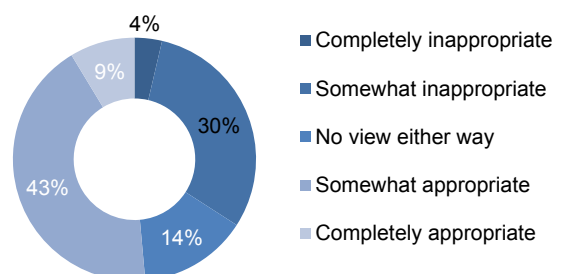
Figure E1.12.6: Participant Feedback DA CFP GK3

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the general knowledge section of the digital assessment?
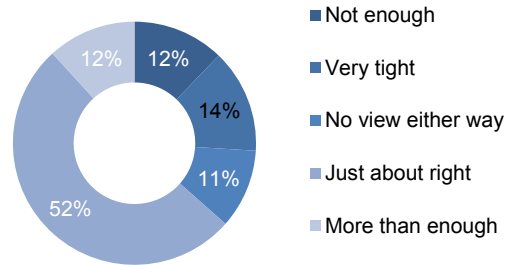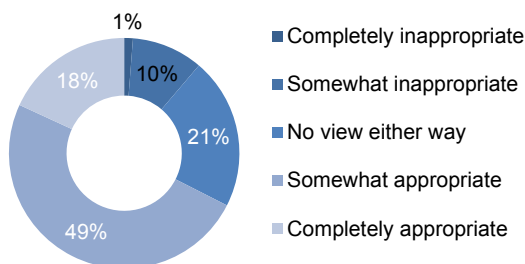

- Not enough — 11%
- Very tight — 13%
- No view either way — 11%
- Just about right — 51%
- More than enough — 14%
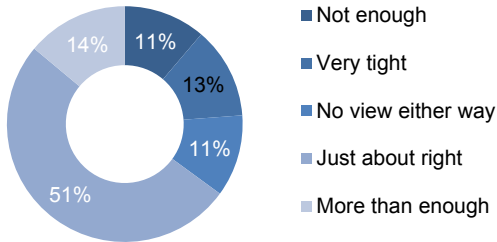
Figure E1.12.7: Participant Feedback DA CFP GK4

How difficult did you find it to understand the questions?

- Very difficult to understand — 27%
- Somewhat difficult to understand — 19%
- No view either way — 42%
- Somewhat easy to understand — 9%
- Very easy to understand — 3%
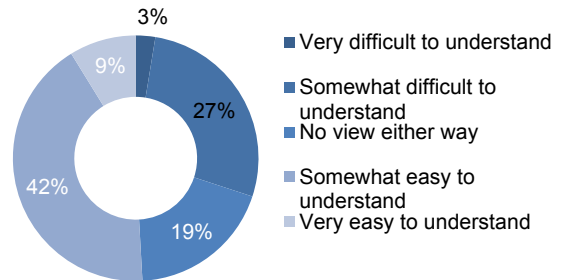
Figure E1.12.8: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK1

What would you say was the level of difficulty of the questions?

- Very difficult to understand — 36%
- Somewhat difficult to understand — 24%
- No view either way — 32%
- Somewhat easy to understand — 4%
- Very easy to understand — 3%
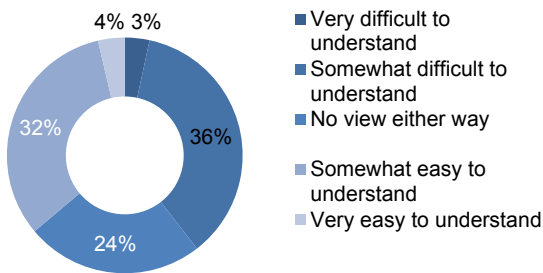
Figure E1.12.9: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK2

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

- Completely inappropriate — 21%
- Somewhat inappropriate — 24%
- No view either way — 42%
- Somewhat appropriate — 10%
- Completely appropriate — 3%
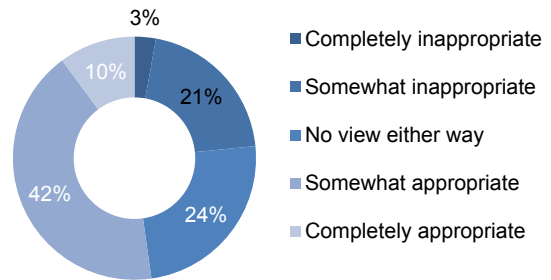
Figure E1.12.10: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK3

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
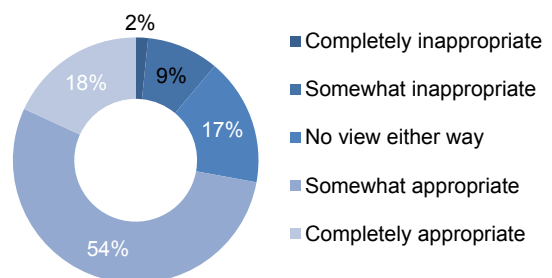

- Completely inappropriate — 20%
- Somewhat inappropriate — 16%
- No view either way — 50%
- Somewhat appropriate — 12%
- Completely appropriate — 1%
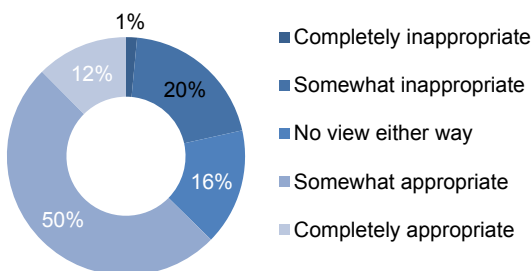
Figure E1.12.11: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK4

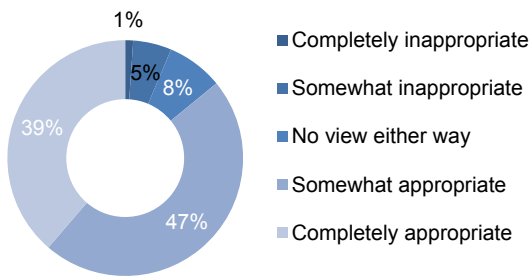## Were the situations described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?

- Completely inappropriate — 11%
- Somewhat inappropriate — 7%
- No view either way — 48%
- Somewhat appropriate — 33%
- Completely appropriate — 2%
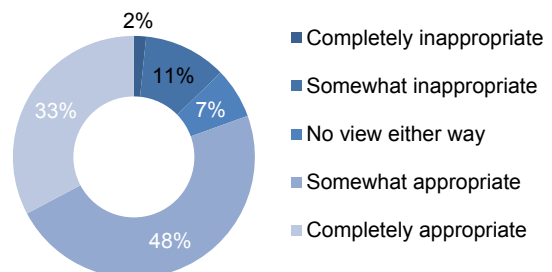
Figure E1.12.12: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK5

Did you feel the language used in the choice of answers was clear?

- Very Confusing
- Somewhat confusing
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat clear
- Very clear

3%
19%
27%
40%
9%

Figure E1.12.13: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK6

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the applied knowledge section of the digital assessment?

- Not enough
- Very tight
- No view either way
- Just about right
- More than enough

12%
12%
14%
52%
11%

Figure E1.12.14: Participant Feedback DA CFP AK7

How would you rate the clarity of the questions?

- Very difficult to understand
- Somewhat difficult to understand
- No view either way
- Somewhat easy to understand
- Very easy to understand

3%
15%
18%
46%
17%
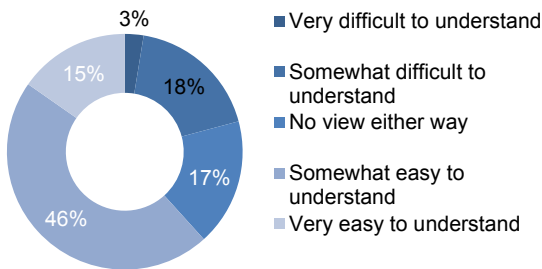
Figure E1.12.15: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC1

How would you rate the degree of difficulty of the questions?

- Very difficult to answer
- Somewhat difficult to answer
- No view either way
- Somewhat easy to answer
- Very easy to answer

3%
5%
26%
38%
29%
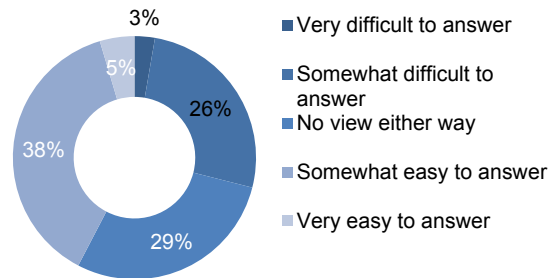
Figure E1.12.16: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC2

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
18%
10%
21%
49%

Figure E1.12.17: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC3

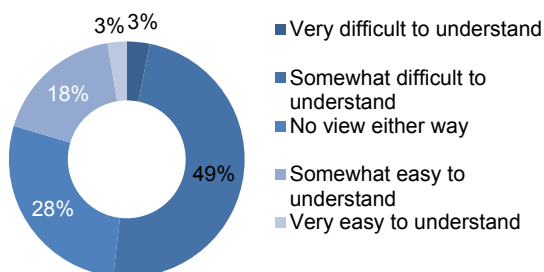## When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
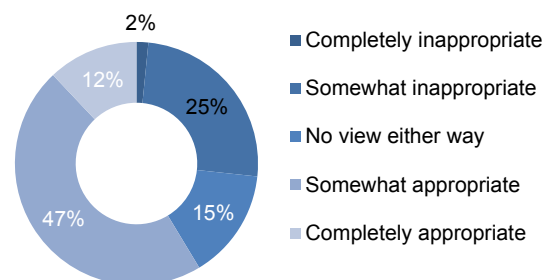

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

2%
18%
9%
17%
54%

Figure E1.12.18: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC4

Were the scenarios described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
5%
8%
39%
47%

Figure E1.12.19: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC5

When considering the day to day work of child and family social workers, what did you think of the representation of the characters (actors, photo images etc.)?

- Completely unrealistic
- Somewhat unrealistic
- No view either way
- Somewhat realistic
- Completely realistic

1%
10%
14%
21%
54%
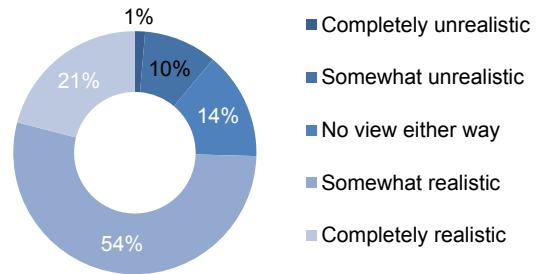
Figure E1.12.20: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC6

How much do you think the use of video sequences enhanced the experience of the assessment?

- Completely unnecessary
- Somewhat unnecessary
- No view either way
- Somewhat enhanced my experience
- Completely enhanced my experience

4%
8%
12%
23%
53%
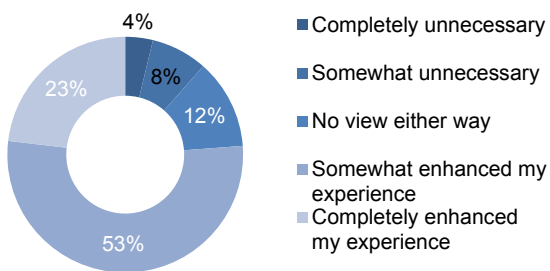
Figure E1.12.21: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC7

How useful do you feel the supporting documentation was in helping you complete the assessment?

- Completely unnecessary
- Somewhat unnecessary
- No view either way
- Somewhat useful
- Completely useful

2%
5%
16%
19%
58%
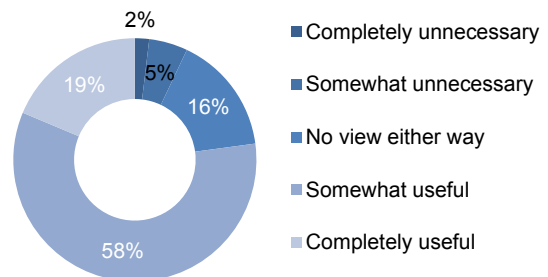
Figure E1.12.22: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC8

**How did you find the amount of time allocated for the scenarios section of the digital assessment?**

- Not enough
- Very tight
- No view either way
- Just about right
- More than enough

12%
13%
15%
12%
47%
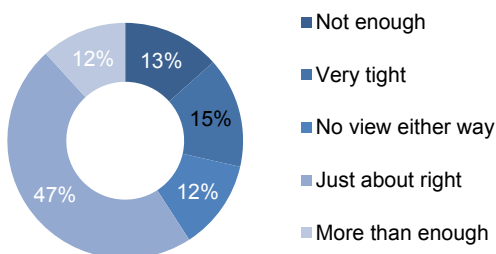
Figure E1.12.23: Participant Feedback DA CFP SC9

E1.13   Participant feedback results – Digital assessment PS

How easy did you find the IT system to use?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

2%
20%
11%
33%
34%
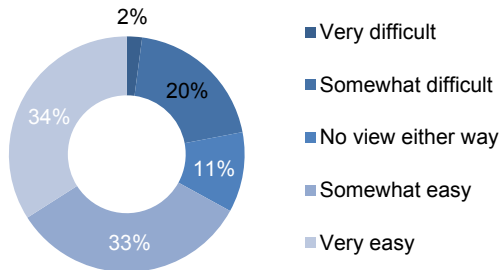
Figure E1.13.1: Participant Feedback DA PS G1

How did you find the assessment instructions you received before attending the assessment session?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

1%
9%
25%
36%
29%
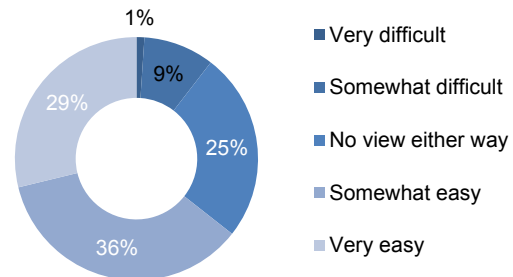
Figure E1.13.2: Participant Feedback DA PS G2

How did you find the assessment instructions in the assessment session?

Very difficult
Somewhat difficult
No view either way
Somewhat easy
Very easy

1%
7%
19%
42%
30%
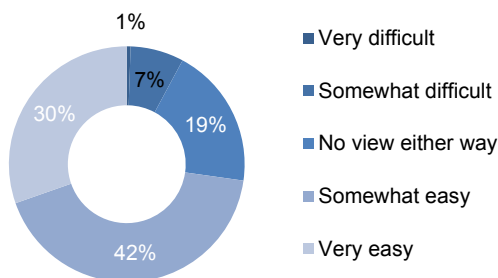
Figure E1.13.3: Participant Feedback DA PS G3

How difficult did you find it to understand the questions?

Very difficult to understand
Somewhat difficult to understand
No view either way
Somewhat easy to understand
Very easy to understand

1%
6%
27%
23%
43%
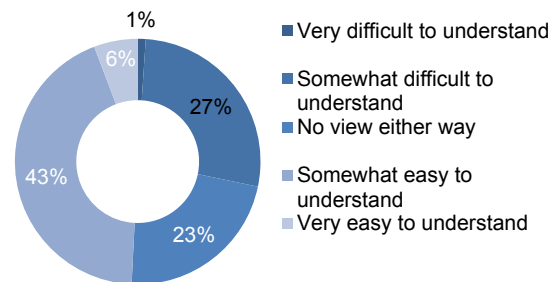
Figure E1.13.4: Participant Feedback DA PS GK1

What would you say was the level of difficulty of the questions?

Very difficult to understand
Somewhat difficult to understand
No view either way
Somewhat easy to understand
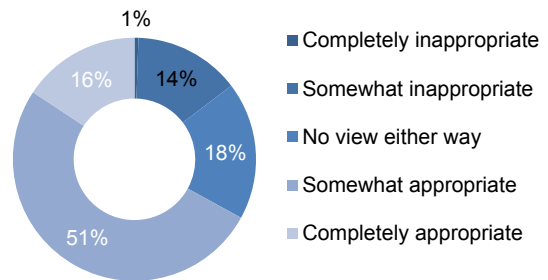Very easy to understand

3% 3%
18%
49%
28%

Figure E1.13.5: Participant Feedback DA PS GK2

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
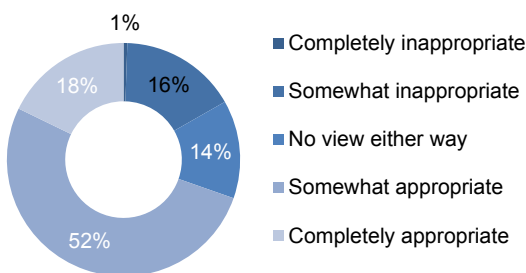

Completely inappropriate
Somewhat inappropriate
No view either way
Somewhat appropriate
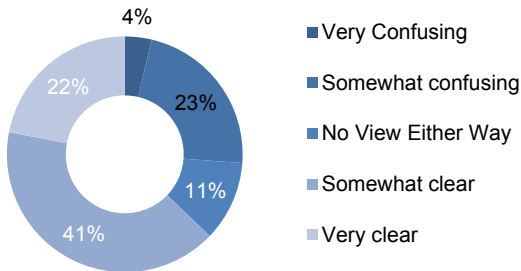Completely appropriate

2%
12%
25%
15%
47%

Figure E1.13.6: Participant Feedback DA PS GK3

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the general knowledge section of the digital assessment?
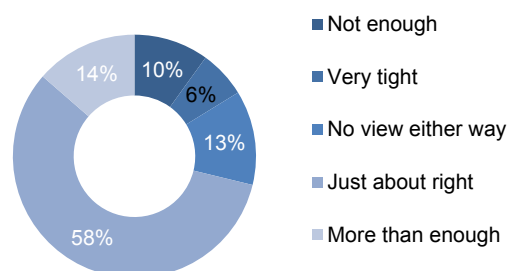
- Not enough
- Very tight
- No view either way
- Just about right
- More than enough

9%
5%
8%
59%
19%
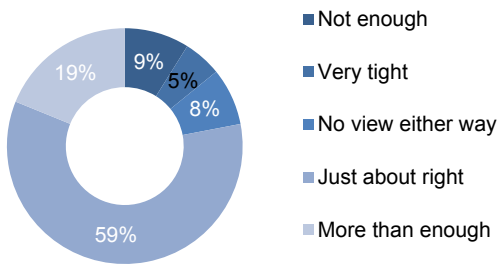
Figure E1.13.7: Participant Feedback DA PS GK4

How difficult did you find it to understand the questions?

- Very difficult to understand
- Somewhat difficult to understand
- No view either way
- Somewhat easy to understand
- Very easy to understand

1%
12%
25%
22%
40%
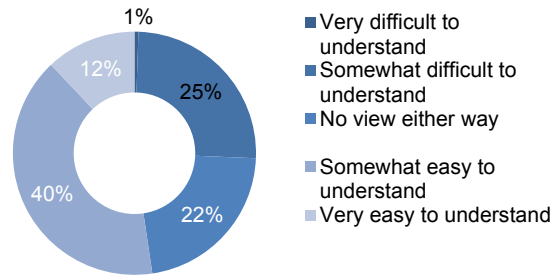
Figure E1.13.8: Participant Feedback DA PS AK1

What would you say was the level of difficulty of the questions?

- Very difficult to understand
- Somewhat difficult to understand
- No view either way
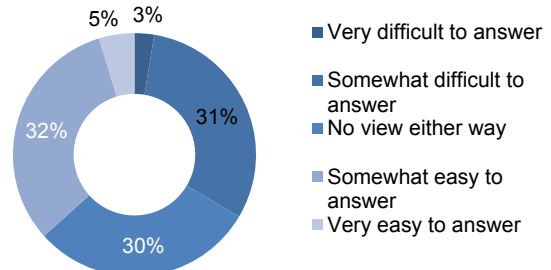- Somewhat easy to understand
- Very easy to understand

1%
6%
31%
34%
29%
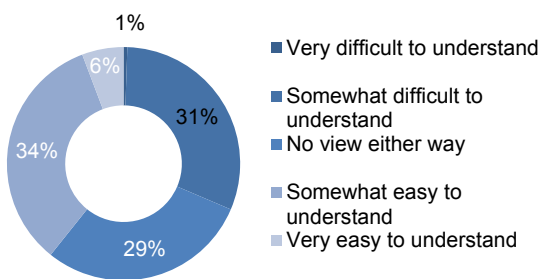
Figure E1.13.9: Participant Feedback DA PS AK2

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
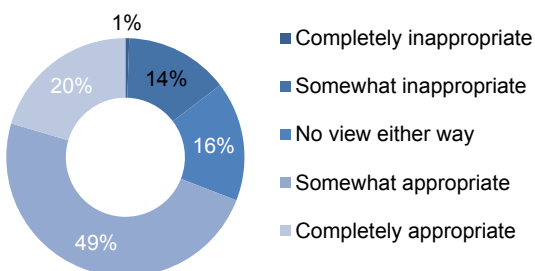- Completely appropriate

1%
16%
14%
18%
51%

Figure E1.13.10: Participant Feedback DA PS AK3

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
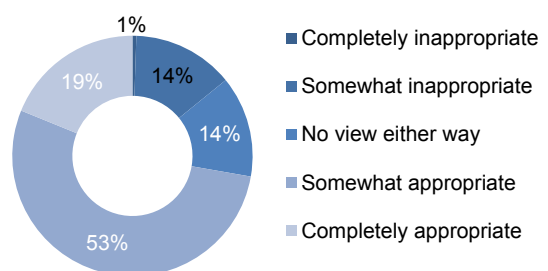
- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
18%
16%
14%
52%

Figure E1.13.11: Participant Feedback DA PS AK4

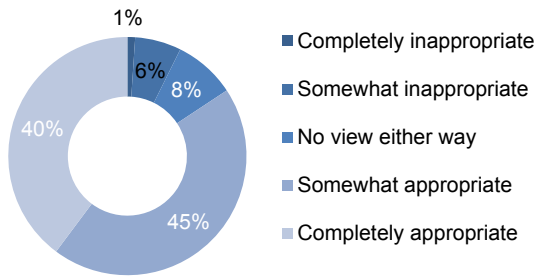**Were the situations described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?**

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
9%
8%
35%
47%
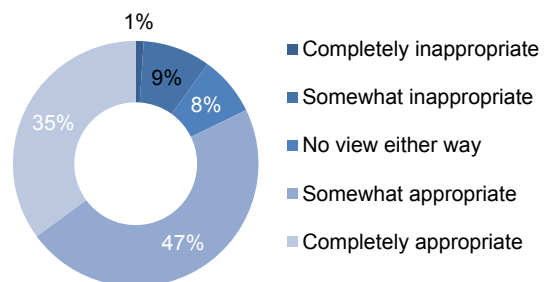
Figure E1.13.12: Participant Feedback DA PS AK5

Did you feel the language used in the choice of answers was clear?

- Very Confusing
- Somewhat confusing
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat clear
- Very clear

4%
23%
11%
41%
22%

Figure E1.13.13: Participant Feedback DA PS AK6

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the applied knowledge section of the digital assessment?

- Not enough
- Very tight
- No view either way
- Just about right
- More than enough

10%
6%
13%
58%
14%

Figure E1.13.14: Participant Feedback DA PS AK7

How would you rate the clarity of the questions?

- Very difficult to understand
- Somewhat difficult to understand
- No view either way
- Somewhat easy to understand
- Very easy to understand

1%
24%
15%
46%
15%
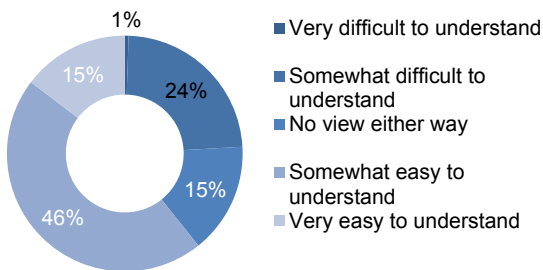
Figure E1.13.15: Participant Feedback DA PS SC1

How would you rate the degree of difficulty of the questions?

- Very difficult to answer
- Somewhat difficult to answer
- No view either way
- Somewhat easy to answer
- Very easy to answer

5%
3%
31%
30%
32%

Figure E1.13.16: Participant Feedback DA PS SC2

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
14%
16%
49%
20%

Figure E1.13.17: Participant Feedback DA PS SC3

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
14%
14%
53%
19%

Figure E1.13.18: Participant Feedback DA PS SC4

Were the scenarios described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?

- Completely inappropriate
- Somewhat inappropriate
- No view either way
- Somewhat appropriate
- Completely appropriate

1%
6%
8%
45%
40%

Figure E1.13.19: Participant Feedback DA PS SC5

When considering the day to day work of child and family social workers, what did you think of the representation of the characters (actors, photo images etc.)?
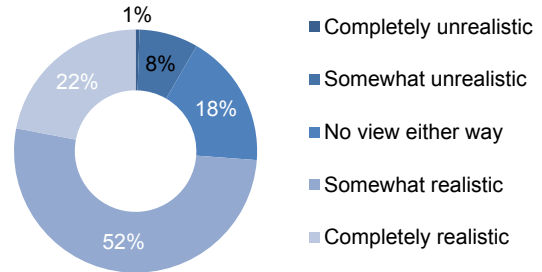

- Completely unrealistic
- Somewhat unrealistic
- No view either way
- Somewhat realistic
- Completely realistic

1%
8%
18%
52%
22%

Figure E1.13.20: Participant Feedback DA PS SC6

How much do you think the use of video sequences enhanced the experience of the assessment?

- Completely unnecessary
- Somewhat unnecessary
- No view either way
- Somewhat enhanced my experience
- Completely enhanced my experience

4%
7%
17%
51%
20%
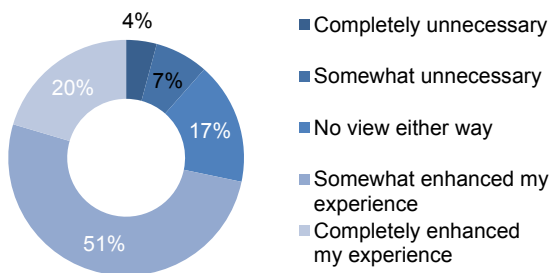
Figure E1.13.21: Participant Feedback DA PS SC7

How useful do you feel the supporting documentation was in helping you complete the assessment?

- Completely unnecessary
- Somewhat unnecessary
- No view either way
- Somewhat useful
- Completely useful

3%
10%
55%
31%
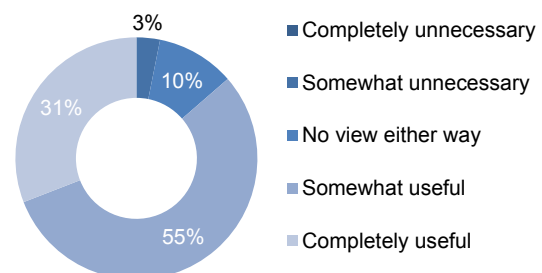
Figure E1.13.22: Participant Feedback DA PS SC8

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the scenarios section of the digital assessment?

- Not enough
- Very tight
- No view either way
- Just about right
- More than enough

12%
9%
13%
54%
13%
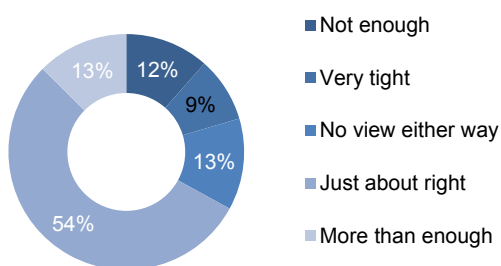
Figure E1.13.23: Participant Feedback DA PS SC9

E1.14   Participant feedback results – Simulated Observation CFP

How did you find following the format of the day to follow e.g. was it clear where you should be and what you should be doing?

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy

5%
4%
38%
54%
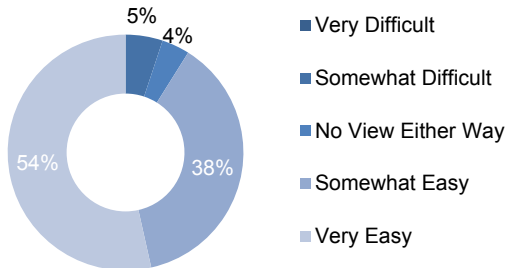
Figure E1.14.1: Participant Feedback SO CFP G1

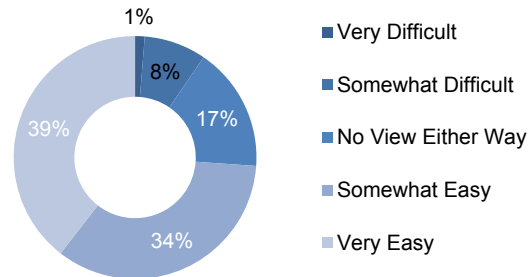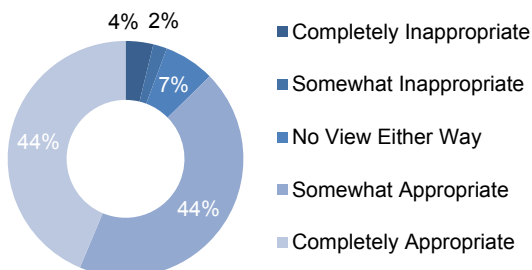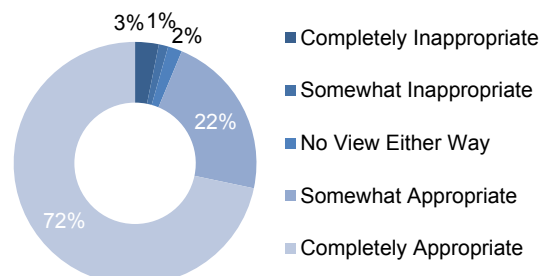**How did you find the assessment instructions you received before attending this assessment session?**

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy

1%
8%
17%
34%
39%

Figure E1.14.2: Participant Feedback SO CFP G2

How did you find the assessment instructions in the assessment session?

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy

1% 3%
5%
40%
51%
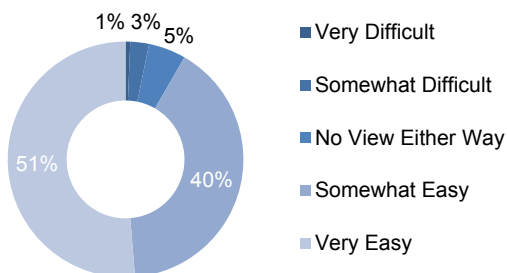
Figure E1.14.3: Participant Feedback SO CFP G3

How did you find the level of difficulty of the scenarios?

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy

4% 4%
32%
36%
24%
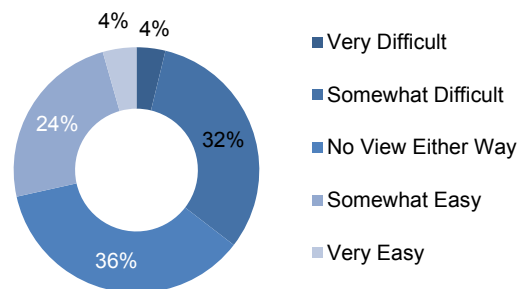
Figure E1.14.4: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC1

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?

- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

4% 2%
7%
44%
44%

Figure E1.14.5: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC2

Were the situations described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?

- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

3% 1% 2%
22%
72%

Figure E1.14.6: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC3

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the scenarios?

Not Enough
Very Tight
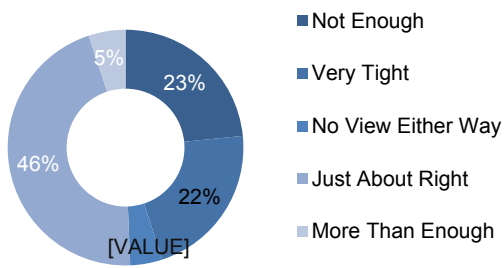No View Either Way
Just About Right
More Than Enough

23%
22%
[VALUE]
46%
5%

Figure E1.14.7: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC4

How did you find the amount of detail provided before each scenario?

Not Enough
Very Tight
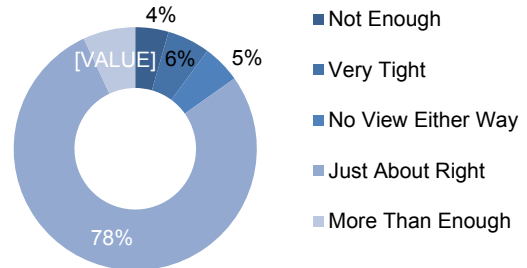No View Either Way
Just About Right
More Than Enough

4%
6%
5%
[VALUE]
78%

Figure E1.14.8: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC5

When considering the day to day work of child and family social workers, what did you think of the representation of the characters?

Completely Unrealistc
Somewhat Unrealistic
No View Either Way
Somewhat Realistic
Completely Realistic

1%
1%
3%
41%
55%
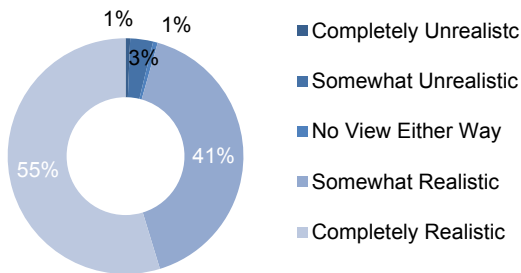
Figure E1.14.9: Participant Feedback SO CFP SC6

How difficult did you find it to understand the objective of the written assessment?

Very Difficult
Somewhat Difficult
No View Either Way
Somewhat Easy
Very Easy

1%
13%
18%
50%
19%
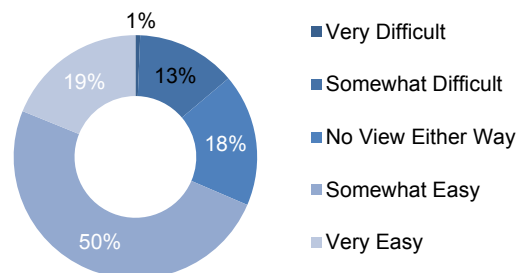
Figure E1.14.10: Participant Feedback SO CFP W1

How did you find the level of difficulty of the written assessment?

Very Difficult
Somewhat Difficult
No View Either Way
Somewhat Easy
Very Easy

1%
16%
30%
44%
9%
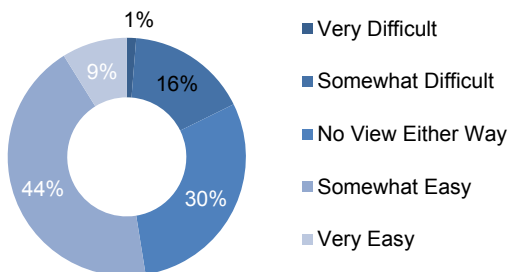
Figure E1.14.11: Participant Feedback SO CFP W2

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

Completely Inappropriate
Somewhat Inappropriate
No View Either Way
Somewhat Appropriate
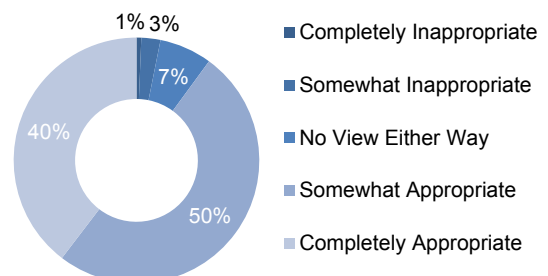Completely Appropriate

1% 3%
7%
50%
40%

Figure E1.14.12: Participant Feedback SO CFP W3

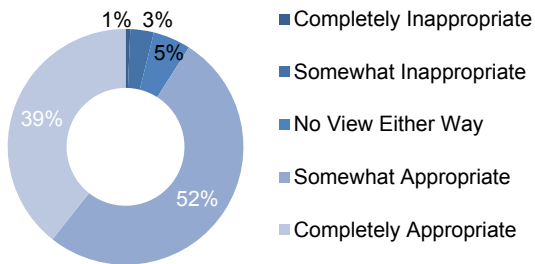## When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?

Legend:
- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

Values: 1%, 3%, 5%, 39%, 52%

Figure E1.14.13: Participant Feedback SO CFP W4

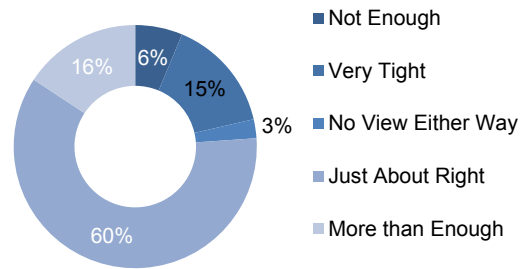## How did you find the amount of time allocated for the written assessment?

Legend:
- Not Enough
- Very Tight
- No View Either Way
- Just About Right
- More than Enough

Values: 6%, 15%, 3%, 60%, 16%

Figure E1.14.14: Participant Feedback SO CFP W5

Did this provide you with the opportunity to explain your rationale for your actions?

Legend:
- Insufficient Opportunity
- Somewhat Sufficient
- No View Either Way
- Sufficient Opportunity
- Ample Opportunity

Values: 3%, 25%, 7%, 44%, 21%
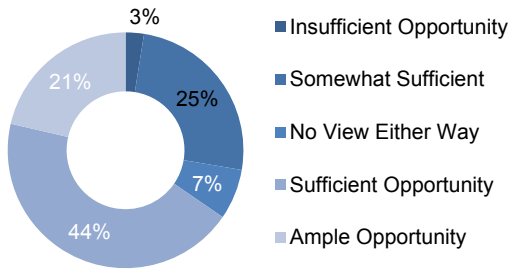
Figure E1.14.15: Participant Feedback SO CFP R1

159

E1.15 Participant feedback results – Simulated Observation PS

How did you find following the format of the day to follow e.g. was it clear where you should be and what you should be doing?

2%
9%
40%
49%

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy
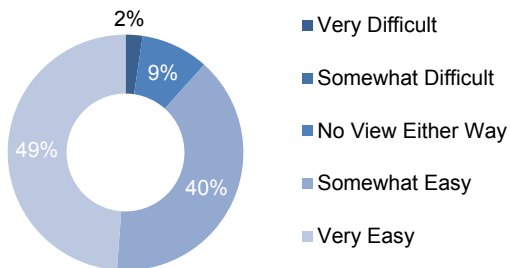
Figure E1.15.1: Participant Feedback SO PS G1

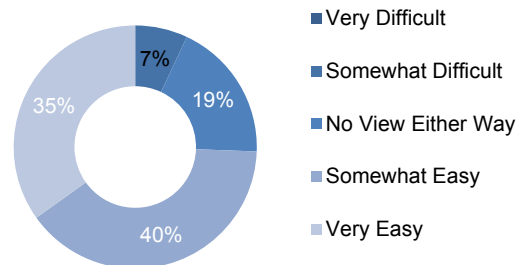**How did you find the assessment instructions you received before attending this assessment session?**

7%
19%
40%
35%

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy

Figure E1.15.2: Participant Feedback SO PS G2

How did you find the assessment instructions in the assessment session?

2% 2%
5%
42%
49%

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy
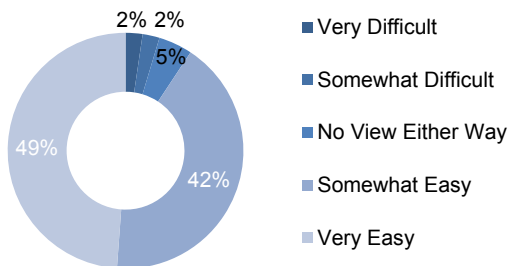
Figure E1.15.3: Participant Feedback SO PS G3

How did you find the level of difficulty of the scenarios?

21%
33%
45%

- Very Difficult
- Somewhat Difficult
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Easy
- Very Easy
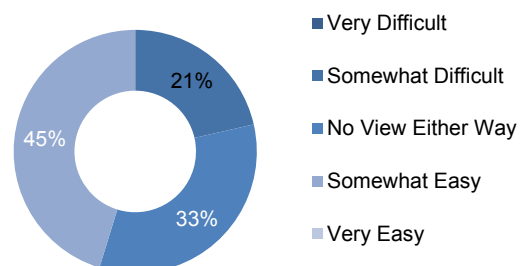
Figure E1.15.4: Participant Feedback SO PS SC1

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
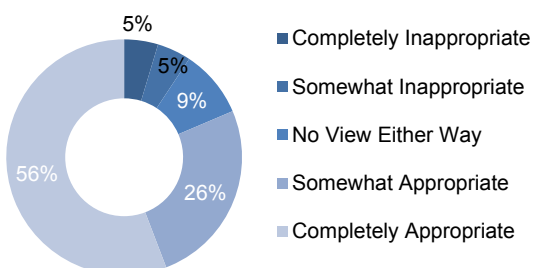
5%
5%
9%
26%
56%

- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

Figure E1.15.5: Participant Feedback SO PS SC2

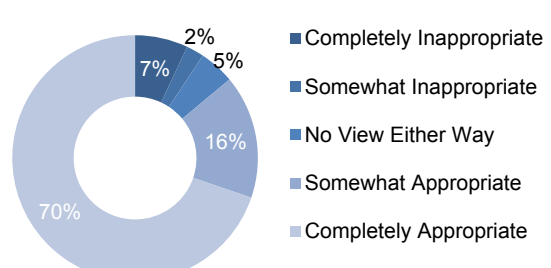**Were the situations described appropriate to the work of child and family social workers?**

2%
5%
7%
16%
70%

- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

Figure E1.15.6: Participant Feedback SO PS SC3

How did you find the amount of time allocated for the scenarios?

Not Enough
Very Tight
No View Either Way
Just About Right
More Than Enough

28%
28%
2%
42%

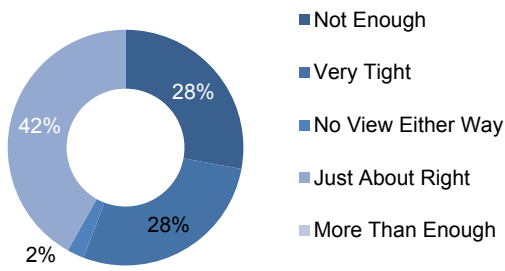**Figure E1.15.7: Participant Feedback SO PS SC4**

How did you find the amount of detail provided before each scenario?

Not Enough
Very Tight
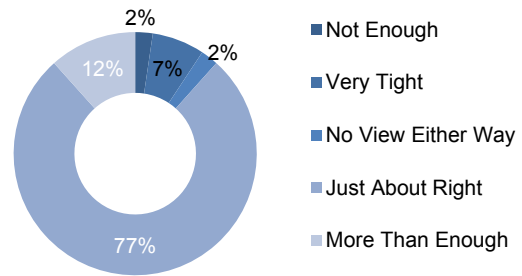No View Either Way
Just About Right
More Than Enough

2%
2%
7%
12%
77%

Figure E1.15.8: Participant Feedback SO PS SC5

When considering the day to day work of child and family social workers, what did you think of the representation of the characters?

Completely Unrealistc
Somewhat Unrealistic
No View Either Way
Somewhat Realistic
Completely Realistic

36%
64%
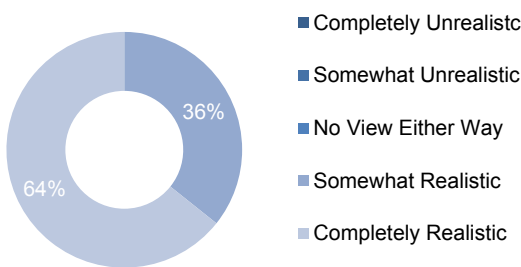
Figure E1.15.9: Participant Feedback SO PS SC6

How difficult did you find it to understand the objective of the written assessment?

Very Difficult
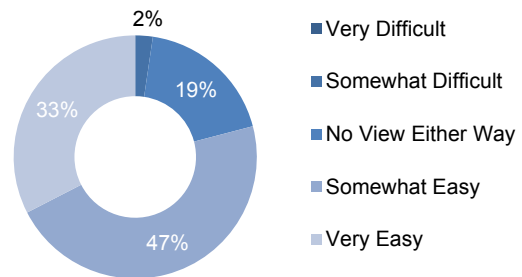Somewhat Difficult
No View Either Way
Somewhat Easy
Very Easy

2%
19%
33%
47%

Figure E1.15.10: Participant Feedback SO PS W1

How did you find the level of difficulty of the written assessment?

Very Difficult
Somewhat Difficult
No View Either Way
Somewhat Easy
Very Easy

2%
21%
35%
42%

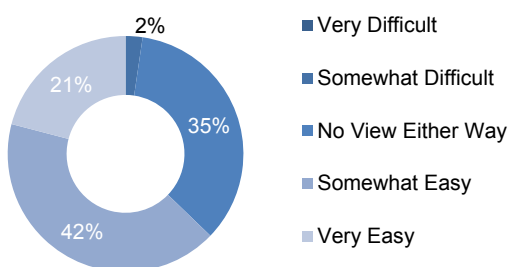**Figure E1.15.11: Participant Feedback SO PS W2**

Do you think the level of questions were appropriate to the status (CFP/PS)?

Completely Inappropriate
Somewhat Inappropriate
No View Either Way
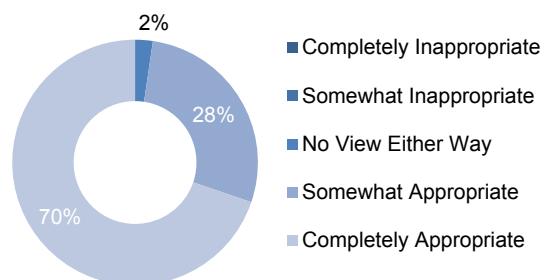Somewhat Appropriate
Completely Appropriate

2%
28%
70%

Figure E1.15.12: Participant Feedback SO PS W3

When considering the knowledge and skills statements how appropriate do you think the content of the assessment was?
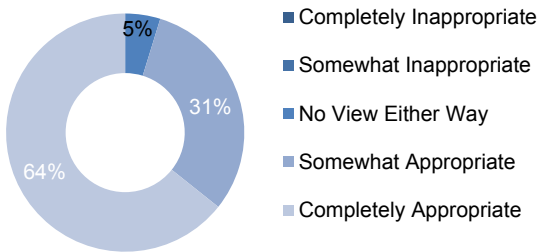

- Completely Inappropriate
- Somewhat Inappropriate
- No View Either Way
- Somewhat Appropriate
- Completely Appropriate

5%
31%
64%

Figure E1.15.13: Participant Feedback SO PS W4

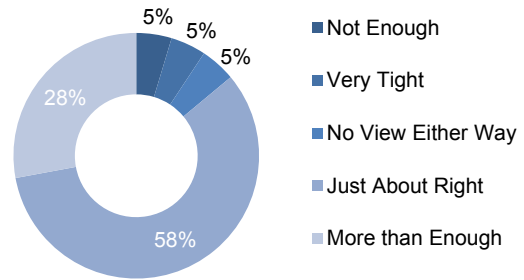## How did you find the amount of time allocated for the written assessment?

- Not Enough
- Very Tight
- No View Either Way
- Just About Right
- More than Enough

5% 5%
5%
28%
58%

Figure E1.15.14: Participant Feedback SO PS W5

Did this provide you with the opportunity to explain your rationale for your actions?

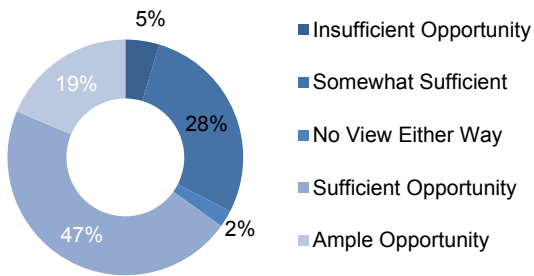- Insufficient Opportunity
- Somewhat Sufficient
- No View Either Way
- Sufficient Opportunity
- Ample Opportunity

5%
28%
2%
47%
19%

Figure E1.15.15: Participant Feedback SO PS R1

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