

What do Northern Ireland social workers think about social work leadership?

Social workers and social work students registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council were invited to take part in The Social Work Leadership Framework Survey. We are sharing with you some of what they said.

TOP FIVE KEY FINDINGS:

1



Overall awareness and interest in the Leadership Framework was positive

81% of respondents indicated prior awareness of the Leadership Framework and **56%** had already read the document. **71%** were positive they would like to find out more about the Leadership Framework.

2

Social work student awareness and interest in the Leadership Framework was positive

Four students were included in the **104** responses that were received, all of whom reported awareness of the Leadership Framework. Two of these students had already read the Leadership Framework and three out of the four students expressed interest in learning more.

3

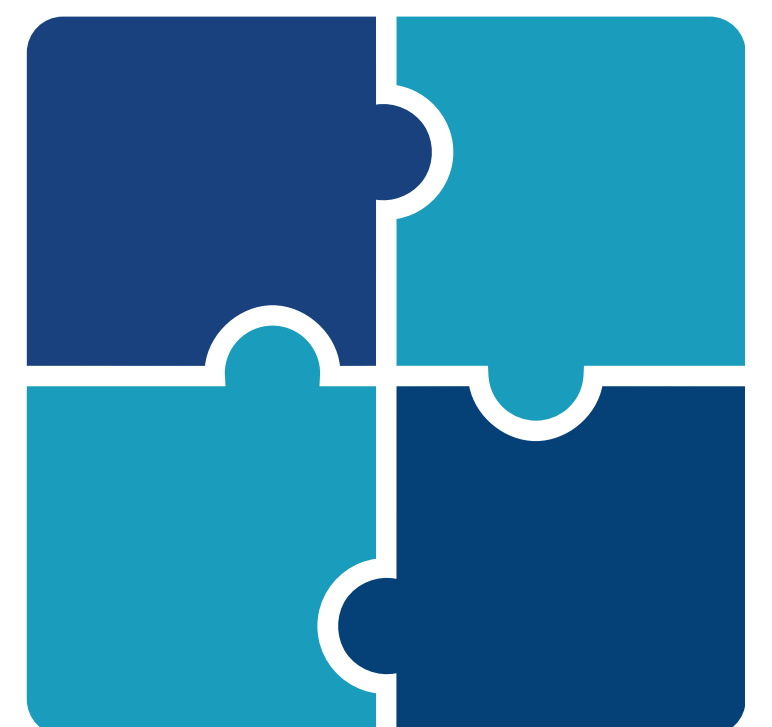
Awareness of the Leadership Framework was strongest amongst social workers in more senior roles

There was no evidence that other demographics e.g. age, gender, location, sector or role impacted on a social worker's likelihood of being aware of/interested in the Leadership Framework.

4

A significant number of respondents identified their role within the four domains

A minimum of **70%** of respondents identified their role within each of the four Leadership Framework domains. **Leading self** was the role that was most positively identified and **Leading the profession** was the least positive. Those who had greater prior awareness indicated stronger identification of their role within the four domains.



5

Face-to-face communication and case studies

These were identified as the best methods to share information about the Leadership Framework and to support engagement.

Benchmarking what we can build on...



72%

*responded
positively to say they have a role in
'leading the profession'*



81%

responded said they
had prior knowledge
of the Leadership
Framework prior to
the survey

While only four social work
students responded most
indicated they would be
interested in finding out
more about the
Leadership Framework



56%

of respondents had
already read the
Leadership Framework
prior to the survey

92%

responded
positively to
say they have a role in
'Leading self'



86%

responded positively to
say they have a role in
'Leading with others'

84%

responded positively to
say they have a role in
'Leading practice'



Insight we shouldn't ignore

Supporting staff to realise their potential as leaders in social work:

- Protected time for personal development
- Career structures to support development (horizontal as well as vertical)
- Increased staffing capacity to allow development time
- IT skills development
- Peer support, mentoring and/or coaching
- Improved connections with professional in practice (PiP)/continuous professional development (CPD) and progression

Developing potential to be a leader in social work:

- Incorporated into supervision and reflective practice sessions
- Social work management training, leading to a qualification
- Seeing good leadership modelled
- Peer support with others in a similar role
- Senior role models and access to mentoring and coaching, as well as supervision

Challenges to staff and organisations linked to the Leadership Framework:

- Having time to properly engage with it
- Vacancies and sickness absence within teams

What's next?

Listen: Your feedback on leadership in social work directly informs our work, helping us understand what matters most to you.

Benchmark: By comparing our findings over time, we will track progress and gauge awareness of the leadership framework.

Reach: The insights gathered will help us engage more effectively with social workers and social work students across all sectors.

View a full copy of the Leadership Framework on the Northern Ireland Social Care Council website, or click the icon beside.



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