

# The Standards for Employers of Social Workers

Social Work Health Check Report

Written by the team at Kinetiq  
Lead Researcher: Dr Martin Reddington



The text in this document may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. For any other use of this material please email Dr Martin Reddington at: [martin@kinetiq-uk.co.uk](mailto:martin@kinetiq-uk.co.uk)

The authors are not responsible for any third party material and where we have identified any such material you will need to obtain permission from the parties concerned. The authors' views expressed in this report are their own, based on the data supplied by social workers from the participating organisations across England.

The rights of the authors of this work have been asserted in accordance with Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Other trademarks are copyright of their respective owners. The survey items and underpinning modelling known as The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD®) are proprietary and copyrighted by Dr Martin Reddington and Professor Helen Francis.

Anyone wishing to use this for their own purposes must seek approval from Dr Martin Reddington at: [martin@kinetiq-uk.co.uk](mailto:martin@kinetiq-uk.co.uk)

The correct citation for this publication is: Reddington, M., Ahmadiyankooshkghazi, M., Bakhshalian, E., Kennedy, O. and Elmi, F. (2021) The Standards for Employers of Social Workers: Social Work Health Check Report. UK Report.

ISBN: 978-0-9956204-8-3

Report design: [www.pauldrummond.co.uk](http://www.pauldrummond.co.uk)

# Acknowledgements

The authors especially acknowledge a number of organisations, without whom this study would not have taken place:

- Local Government Association for commissioning the work and their ongoing active participation and support.
- Members of The Standards for Employers of Social Workers Group (shown below).
- ADCS, ADASS and the two PSW Chairs and Networks, in particular, for their help in communicating the Health Check.
- Claire Barcham, Senior Policy Advisor, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and Dr Ruth Allen, Chief Executive, BASW for their support and encouragement.

Members of The Standards for Employers of Social Workers Group:

The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS)

The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS)

British Association of Social workers (BASW)

The Department of Education (DfE)

The Department of Health (DHSC)

Health Education England

Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JucSWEC)

Local Government Association (LGA)

NSPCC

SCIE

Skills for Care (SfC)

Social Work England

UNISON the Public Service Union

What Works Centre

The Adult Principal Social Worker Network

The Children's Principal Social Worker Network

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Refreshed Standards</b>	<b>2</b>	Survey Design	
<b>1: Executive Summary</b>	<b>4</b>	Methodology: Survey Items and Data Collection	
1.1: Purpose of the Research		Methodology: Data Analysis	
1.2: Consolidated Findings		Methodology: Key Driver Analysis	
1.3: Demographics		<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>29</b>
1.4: Research Question 1		All Survey Items (National)	
1.5: Research Question 2		<b>Appendix 3</b>	<b>34</b>
1.6: Research Question 3		Participating Organisations	
1.7: Employee Voices		<b>Appendix 4</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>2: Free Text Analysis</b>	<b>11</b>	Demographic Comparison	
2.1: Reasons for working in social work		<b>Appendix 5</b>	<b>38</b>
2.2: Biggest Challenges Faced		National Averages By Demographics	
2.3: Organisation Personality		<b>Appendix 6</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>3: Demographic Comparison</b>	<b>14</b>	Regional Averages	
3.1: Type Of Social Worker		<b>References</b>	<b>45</b>
3.2: Ethnicity			
3.3: Ethnicity Narrative			
3.4: Gender			
3.5: Age			
3.6: Professional Status			
<b>4: Regional Comparison</b>	<b>20</b>		
4.1: Overall Average			
4.2: Adult Social Workers			
4.3: Children's Social Workers			
4.4: Mental Health Social Workers			
<b>5: Discussion</b>	<b>24</b>		

This timely report examines a number of critical questions about the experiences of Social Workers in England:

- How well do employers deliver the refreshed Standards?
- How do employees perceive their working environment?
- What factors influence them to remain engaged with their work and minded to stay with their organisations?

These questions feature prominently in regional and national news, as it is recognised that good social work can transform people's lives and protect them from harm. In order to achieve consistently high-quality outcomes for service users and their carers, social workers must have and maintain the skills and knowledge to establish effective relationships with children, adults, families, and professionals in a range of agencies and settings, and be the key connectors in communities.

The lessons that flow from the evidence in this report can and should shape the way leaders and managers in both the private and public sectors think about the people who work for them. They will also help to take forward the debate about what government and other policy makers can do to help promote a better environment to attract, develop and retain professional, compassionate and engaged staff who deliver high quality social work.

At the time of writing this report, with the country in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic, the reliance on their services has never been greater.

Lastly, enormous appreciation is extended to all organisations that encouraged their staff to take part in this piece of research.

Please note that this report relies primarily on data collected from social workers employed by local authorities and related agencies. While the data are considered to represent a reasonable, representative national sample, no claims are made for generalisation of the results to other areas of the UK. A supplement to this report will be issued in March 2021 that takes a closer look at how cultural climates in the workplace affect different respondent groups.

The employer standards for social workers in England were last refreshed in 2020. They set out the key components of whole systems approaches, and employers can use them, along with an appropriate supervision framework, to help develop a working environment where social work practice and social workers can flourish, in turn supporting recruitment and retention. They are explained in headline detail below:

## **Standard 1 – Strong and clear social work framework**

This standard is about promoting a clear statement about the principles that constitute good social work practice, and how those principles function across the full range of social work settings.

## **Standard 2 – Effective workforce planning systems**

This standard is about using effective workforce planning systems to make sure that the right number of social workers, with the right level of skills and experience, are available to meet current and future service demands.

## **Standard 3 – Safe workloads and case allocation**

This standard is about ensuring employees do not experience excessive workloads, resulting in unallocated cases and long waiting times for individuals.

## **Standard 4 – Wellbeing**

This standard is about promoting a positive culture for employee wellbeing and supporting social workers to have the practical tools, resources and the organisational environment they need to practice effectively and safely.

## **Standard 5 – Supervision**

This standard is about making sure students and qualified practitioners can reflect critically on their practice through high quality, regular supervision being an integral part of social work practice.

## **Standard 6 – Continuing professional development (CPD)**

This standard is about social workers being provided with the time and opportunity to learn, keep their knowledge and skills up to date, and critically reflect on the impact this has on their practice.

## **Standard 7 – Professional registration**

This standard is about supporting social workers to maintain their professional registration with the regulator.

## **Standard 8 – Strategic partnerships**

This standard is about creating strong partnerships and good collaboration between employers, higher education institutions and other training providers.

More information about these standards can be found at:

[www.local.gov.uk/standards-employers-social-workers-england-0](http://www.local.gov.uk/standards-employers-social-workers-england-0)

The survey items used to measure these standards can be found in appendix 2.

#### **Research Question 1**

How well do employers of social workers deliver the refreshed Employer Standards?

#### **Research Question 2**

How do social workers perceive their working environment?

#### **Research Question 2**

What factors influence them to remain in their organisations, or choose to leave?



The insights gained from this study provide a lens on the workplace environment experienced by employees involved in the delivery of social work across England. Some important features of the analysis are set out below in an 'at-a-glance' style. More granular details can be found in the report, with links to the relevant material.

### Composition of survey respondents compared to national workforce (excluding 'prefer not to say')



**Ethnicity  $\pm 5\%$**   
(except +16% for  
declared white  
population)



**Gender  $\pm 5\%$**



**Age  $\pm 5\%$**

### Employee voices

Most frequent themes:

- **Management**
- **Support**
- **Training & Development**
- **Team**
- **Workload**

### Research Question 1: Delivery of refreshed Employer Standards

Highest rated Standard overall:  
**Strong and Clear Social Work Framework**

Lowest rated Standard overall:  
**CPD – Continuous Professional Development**

### Research Question 2: Perception of Workplace Experience

Top three survey items having biggest impact on social worker contribution:

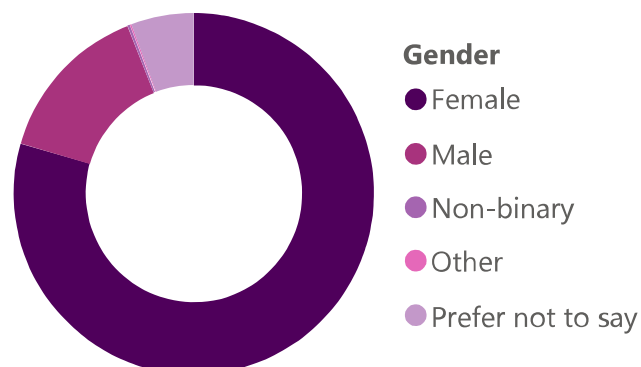
1. My organisation has a well-defined framework/approach to social work practice so I am clear about my role and accountability
2. I feel safe in my role & the work I am expected to do.
3. I am able to use my professional judgement, creativity and autonomous decision making where appropriate.

### Research Question 3: Factors influencing Desire to Stay

Top three survey items having biggest impact on desire to stay:

1. I can discuss workload and stress issues helpfully with my supervisor or manager and agree satisfactory ways forward
2. I am confident my organisation would support me if I challenged unsafe practice or reported other concerns about services
3. I feel safe in my role & the work I am expected to do.

**9095**  
Total  
responses



**86%** of respondents were registered professionals

**79%** of respondents were female

**10%** of respondents have been in their role for less than 1 year

**14%** of respondents have been in their role for 1-2 years

**19%** of respondents have been in their role for 3-5 years

**17%** of respondents have been in their role for 6-10 years

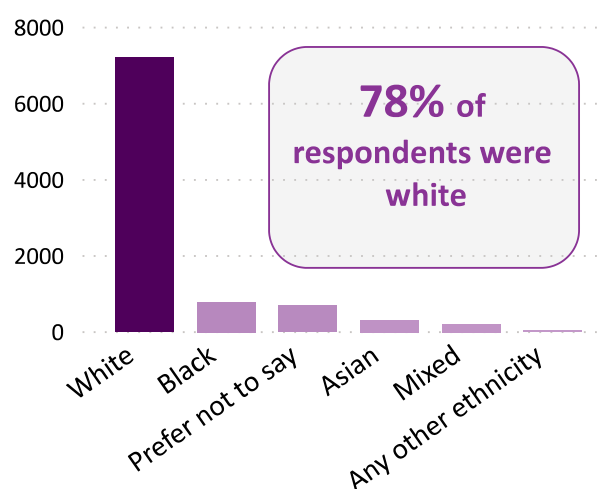
**23%** of respondents have been in their role for 11-20 years

**17%** of respondents have been in their role for more than 20 years

**47%** of respondents were Adult Social Workers

**36%** of respondents were Children's Social Workers

**7%** of respondents were Mental Health Social Workers



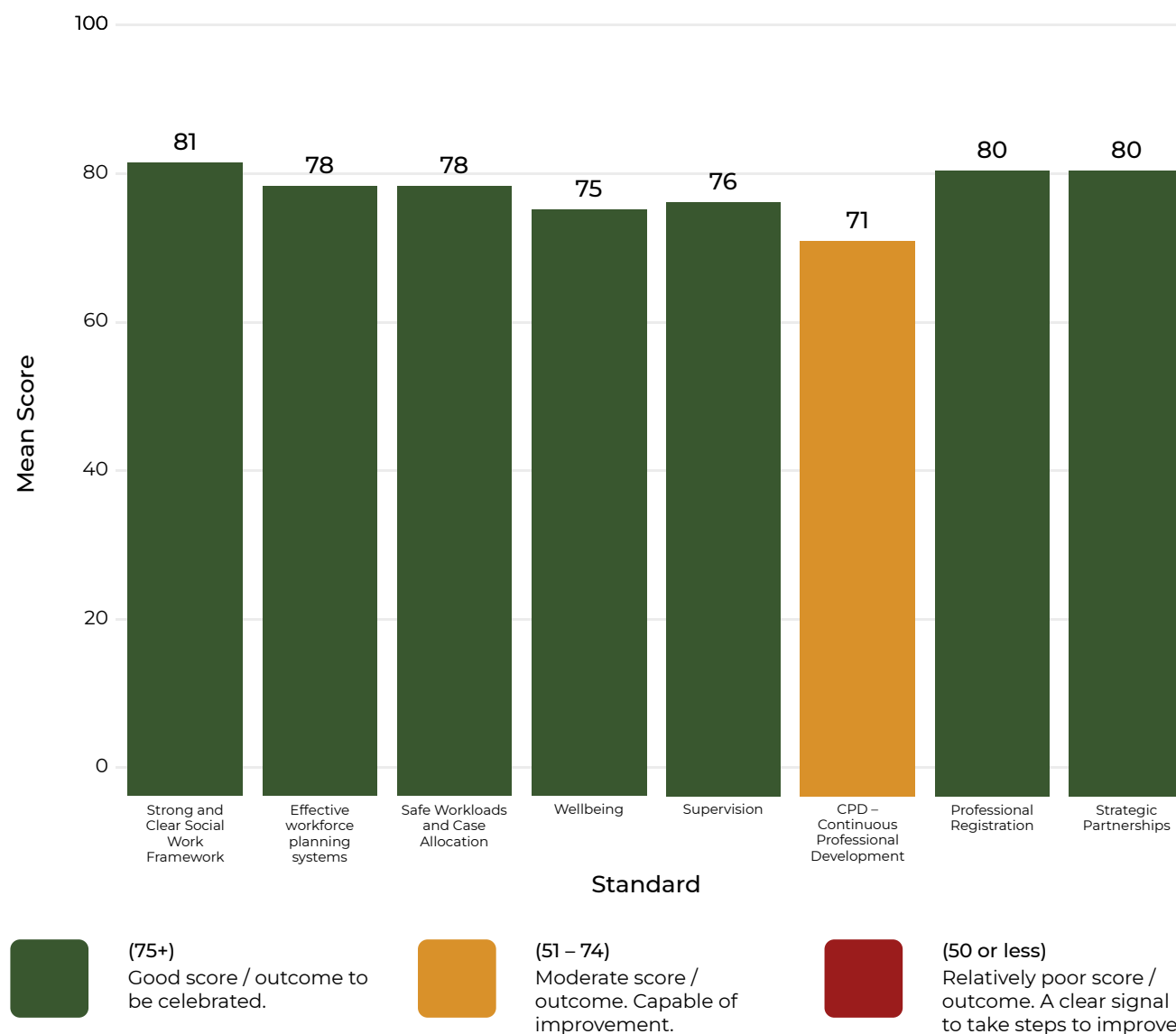
## How well do employers of social workers deliver the refreshed Employer Standards?

Figure 1 provides a visualisation of the mean scores across all Employer Standards.

The data shows that overall Standard 1 (Strong and Clear Social Work Framework) was most favourably received and Standard 6 (CPD - Continuous Professional Development) was least well received. The mean scores for all individual survey items that represent the standards can be found in appendix 2.

More granular analysis of the mean scores for a sample of demographic groups can be found in appendix 5.

Figure 1: National Scores for each standard



## How do social workers perceive their working environment?

Key Driver Analysis (KDA) was used to discover which aspects of the Employer Standards were most potent (impactful) in driving employee contribution in the workplace. These aspects are highlighted below in figures 2 & 3, which feature the top six drivers in each case. The model used in this research – The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD®) – and the technique behind KDA are explained in more detail in appendix 1.

The analysis showed that Employers' delivery of various forms of Covid-related support and the ability for employers to demonstrate a *well-defined framework/approach to social work practice and clarity around role and accountability* had the greatest impact.

Figure 2: Employee Contribution at the Standard Level

INCREASED IMPACT	KDA Employee Contribution (Top 6)	Standard	Mean Score
	COVID	COVID	72
	Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	1	81
	Wellbeing	4	75
	Professional Registration	7	80
	Strategic Partnerships	8	80
	Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	3	78

Figure 3: Employee Contribution at the more Granular Level

INCREASED IMPACT	KDA Employee Contribution (Top 6)	Standard	Mean Score
	My organisation has a well-defined framework/approach to social work practice so I am clear about my role and accountability	1	82
	I feel safe in my role & the work I am expected to do	4	78
	I am able to use my professional judgement, creativity and autonomous decision making where appropriate	1	84
	I receive an appropriate balance of professional support and reflective challenge (e.g. through supervision) to keep learning and developing my practice	1	78
	I have felt positive and able to cope with work most of the Covid time	COVID	69
	I have been able to maintain enough, high quality, safe Covid contact with the people I work with to ensure their welfare and to meet my statutory and/or organisational responsibilities	COVID	83

## What factors influence them to remain in their organisations, or choose to leave?

Key Driver Analysis was also used to discover which aspects of the working environment were most potent in driving employee retention – the propensity or mindedness for employees to stay with their existing employers. These aspects are highlighted below in figures 4 & 5. The model used in this research – The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD®) – is explained in more detail in appendix 1.

The analysis showed that Employer's delivery of various forms of wellbeing related support and the ability for employers to create an environment in which employees can *discuss workload and stress issues helpfully with their supervisor or manager and agree satisfactory ways forward* had the greatest impact.

Figure 4: Desire to Stay at the Standard Level

INCREASED IMPACT	KDA Desire to leave (Top 6)	Standard	Mean Score
	Wellbeing	4	75
	COVID	COVID	72
	Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	3	78
	Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	1	81
	Effective workforce planning systems	2	78
	Supervision	5	76

Figure 5: Desire to Stay at the more Granular Level

INCREASED IMPACT	KDA Desire to leave (Top 6)	Standard	Mean Score
	I can discuss workload and stress issues helpfully with my supervisor or manager and agree satisfactory ways forward	3	82
	I am confident my organisation would support me if I challenged unsafe practice or reported other concerns about services	7	75
	I feel safe in my role & the work I am expected to do	4	78
	I identify my learning needs and access professional development opportunities and training through supervision	5	78
	My organisation recognises the emotional demands of social work and provides me with the supervision, support and tools I need to deal with this	4	70
	I have felt positive and able to cope with work most of the Covid time	COVID	69

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide free text comments throughout the survey. The bubble chart below outlines the frequency rank of the top five themes from the free text comments. There are free text examples colour coordinated to the relevant theme.

Figure 6: Key Themes Bubble Chart



Survey respondents were given an opportunity, via the use of free-text, to provide more insights into their reasons for being a social worker. A selection of responses is provided below in figure 7.

Figure 7: Reasons For Working In Social Work Free Text Comments



Survey respondents were given an opportunity, via the use of free-text, to provide more insights into challenges faced in the workplace. A selection of responses is provided below in figure 8.

Figure 8: Biggest Challenges Faced Free Text Comments

*Uncertainty about the future for the organisation and changes that may come about.*

*There is not enough staff within the team I work in, which then leads to substantial pressure on the permanent staff on the team to take on a lot of the complex work.*

*Insufficient support to create a safe working environment at home to promote remote working due to Covid-19.*

*At present I feel challenged in a positive manner, I have the opportunity to be involved in a lot of learning opportunities and reviewing/updating of policies and procedures.*

*No inspiring leadership and sense of purpose which we all need now, instead too much focus on data and not enough about how to meet children's needs in a pandemic.*

*The constant battle of not having enough time to do the job as well as I would like, while managing the stress that this causes under the constant pay freezes the current government imposes.*

*Service manager being too far removed from front line practice, yet micro-managing to ill effect.*



The positive and negative responses have been converted into two word clouds, shown in figures 9 and 10. The size of the word reflects its frequency of use.

[illegible][illegible]

Figure 11 displays the overall mean scores for each standard as reported by different types of social workers.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 5.

The results show that all types of social worker perceived the delivery of the standards to be in the good range, with Adult Social Workers slightly ahead of their Children's and Mental Health counterparts.

Figure 11: Overall Average by Type of Social Worker

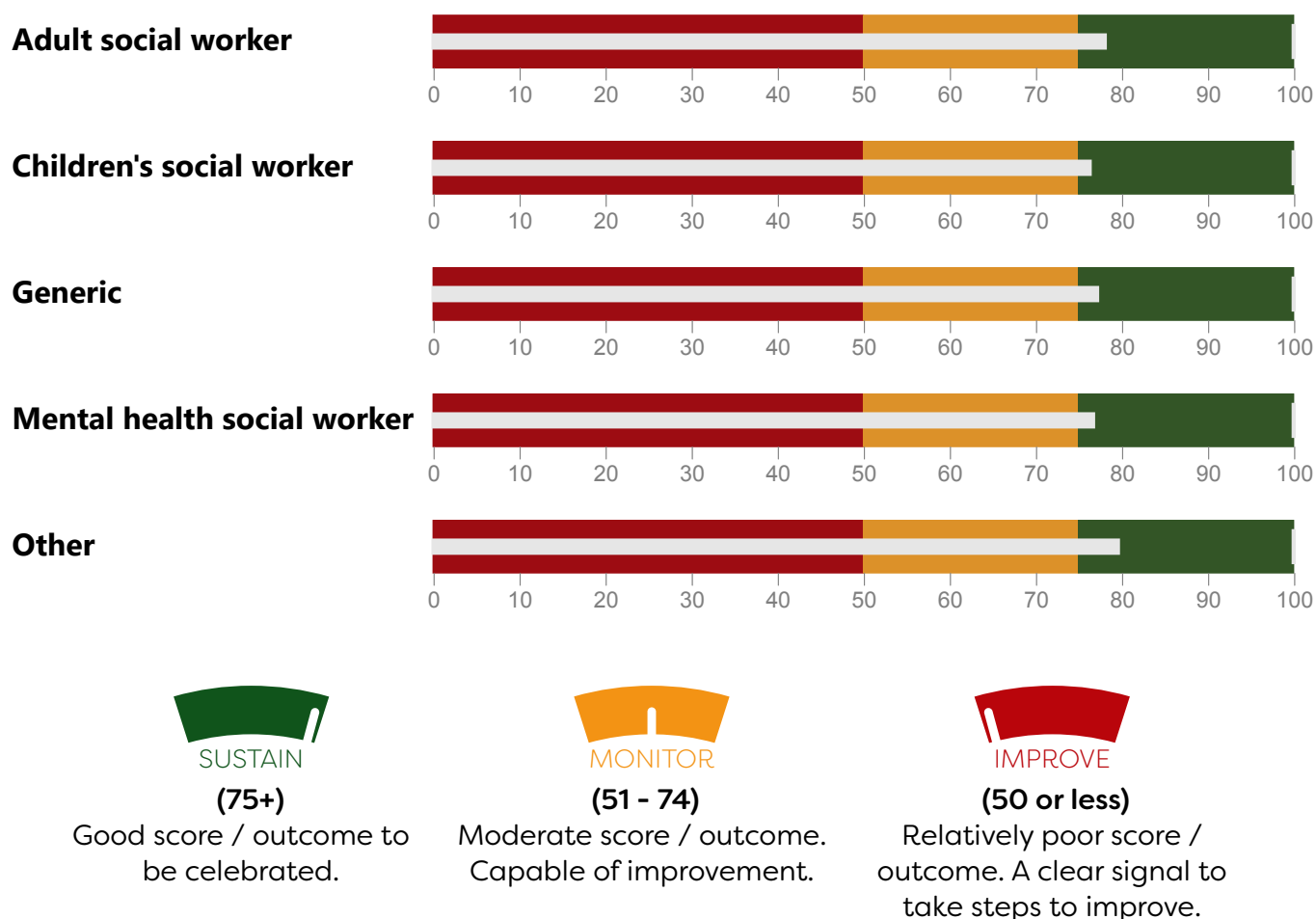
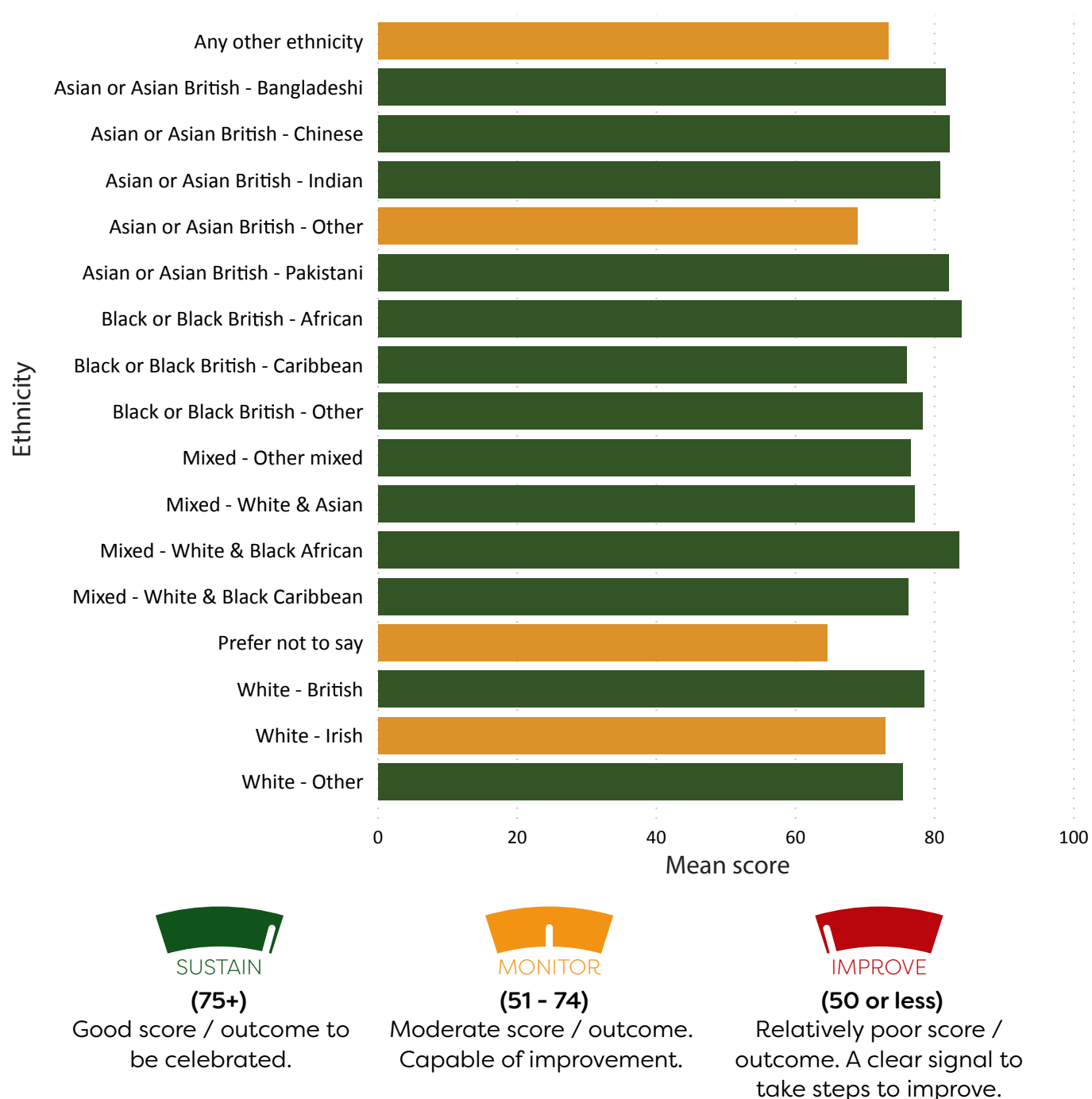


Figure 12 displays the overall mean scores for each standard as reported by different ethnic groups within the social worker population.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 5.

The results showed a variance of 19% across the surveyed population. The respondents who identified as *mixed (white & black African)* had the highest favourability rating in the good range and those who *prefer not to say* had the lowest favourability rating in the moderate range.

Figure 12: Overall Average by Ethnicity



### 3: Demographic Comparison

### 3.3: Ethnicity Narrative

Survey respondents were asked the question: If your organisation came to life as a person, what single word would you use to describe it?

Figures 13 & 14 present these findings for the Black Asian Minority Ethnic population and figures 15 and 16 for the White population.

The data shows a broad commonality of the types and relative frequencies of words, suggesting that these populations view their organisations as similar ‘persons’.

Figure 13: Positive sentiment Black Asian Minority Ethnic population



Figure 14: Negative sentiment Black Asian Minority Ethnic population



Figure 15: Positive sentiment White population



Figure 16: Negative sentiment White population



Figure 17 below displays the overall mean scores for each standard as reported by gender within the social worker population.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 5.

The results showed a variance of 19% across the surveyed population. The respondents who identified as *female* had the highest favourability rating in the good range and those who identify as *other* had the lowest favourability rating in the moderate range.

Figure 17: Overall Average by Gender

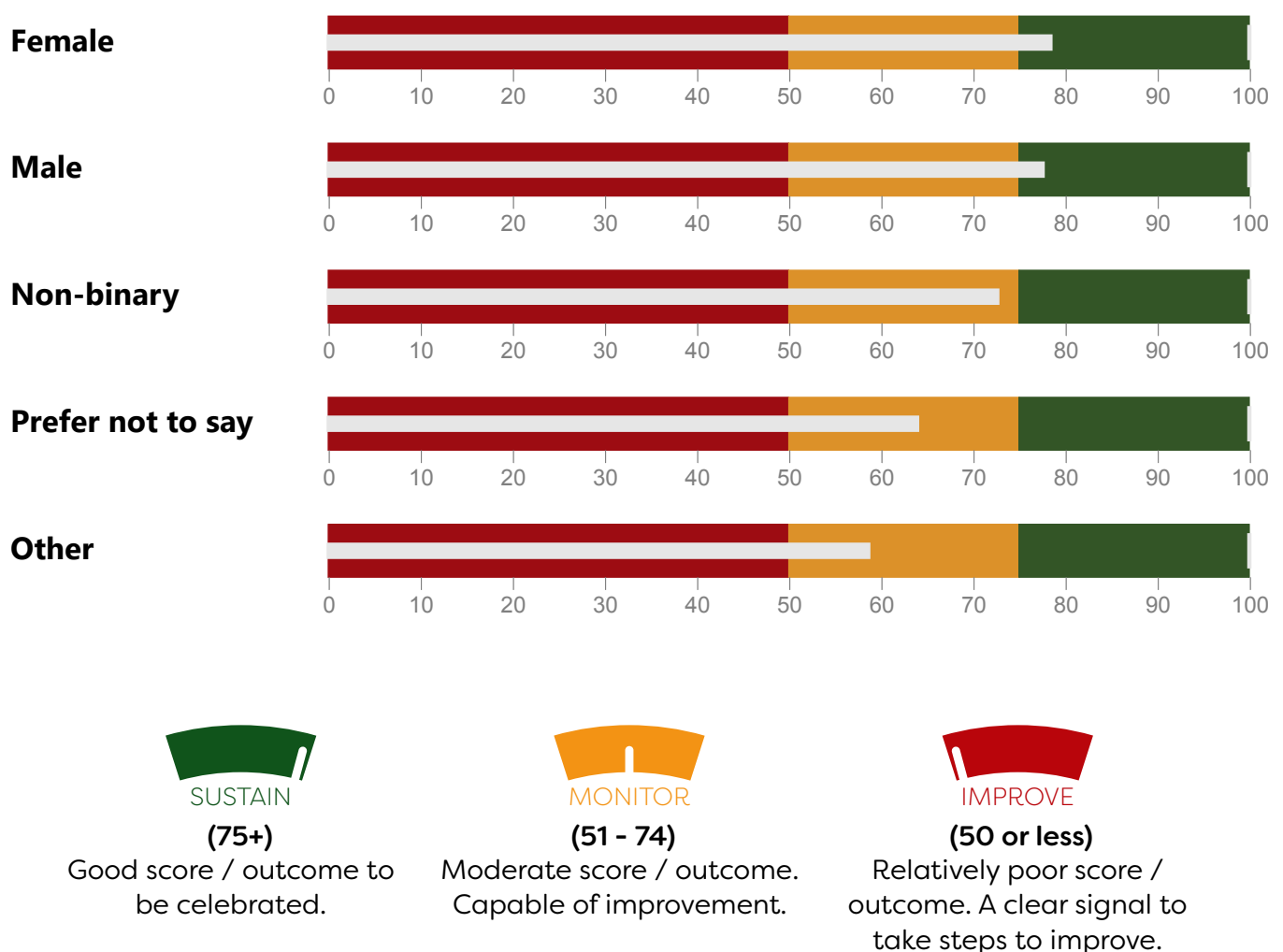
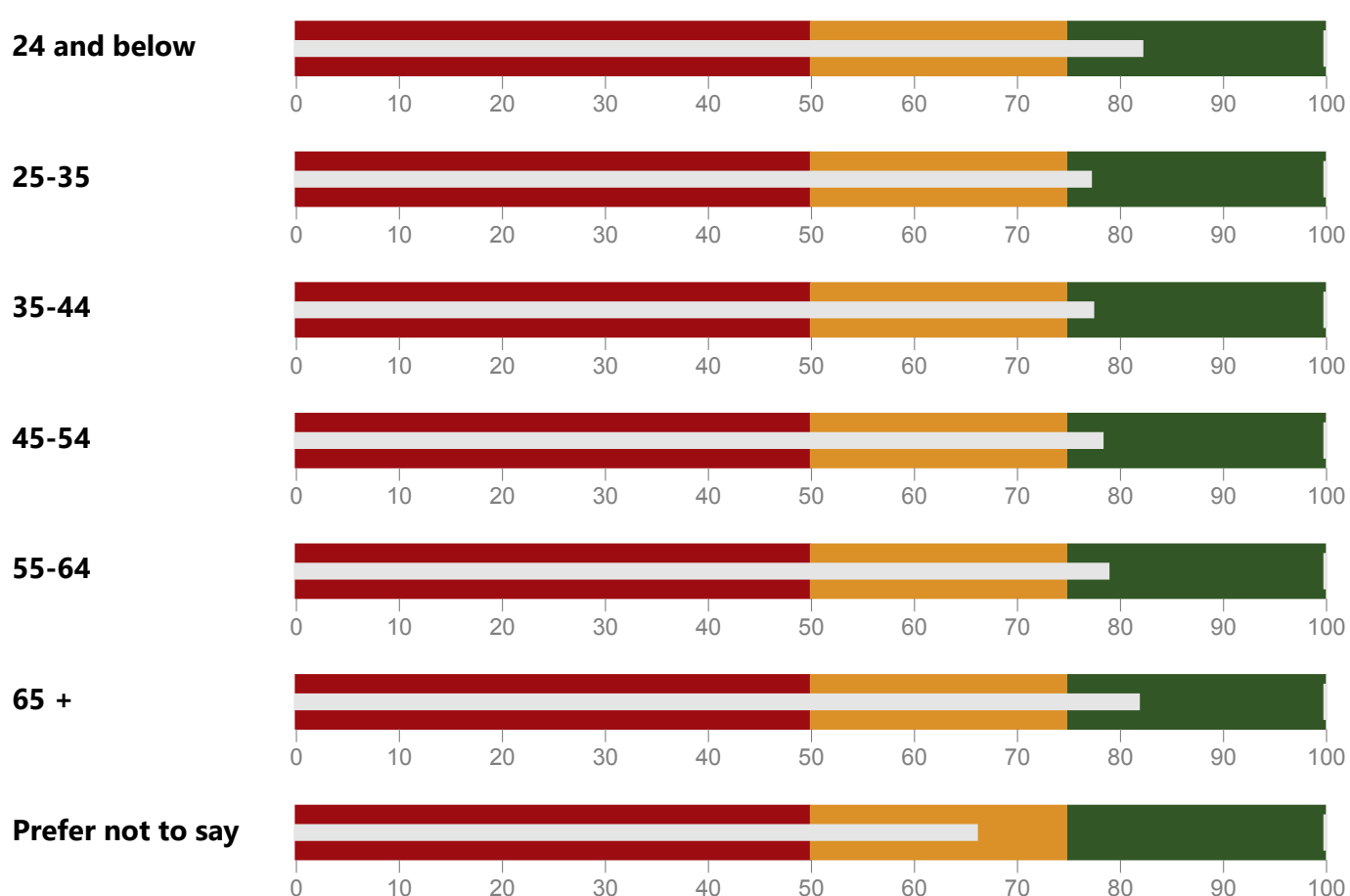


Figure 18 below displays the overall mean scores for each standard as reported by different age groups within the social worker population.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 6

The results showed a variance of 16% across the surveyed population. The respondents who identified as *24 and below* and *65 plus* had the highest favourability rating in the good range and those who identify as *prefer not to say* had the lowest favourability rating in the moderate range.

Figure 18: Overall Average by Age



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

Figure 19 displays the overall mean scores for each standard as reported by professional status within the workforce population.

The results showed a variance of 1% across the surveyed population, suggesting that each group views the overall delivery of the standards similarly.

Figure 20 displays the overall mean scores for each standard as report by different types of registered professionals.

The results showed a variance of 1% across the surveyed population, suggesting that each type views the overall delivery of the standards similarly.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 5.

Figure 19: Overall Average by Professional Status

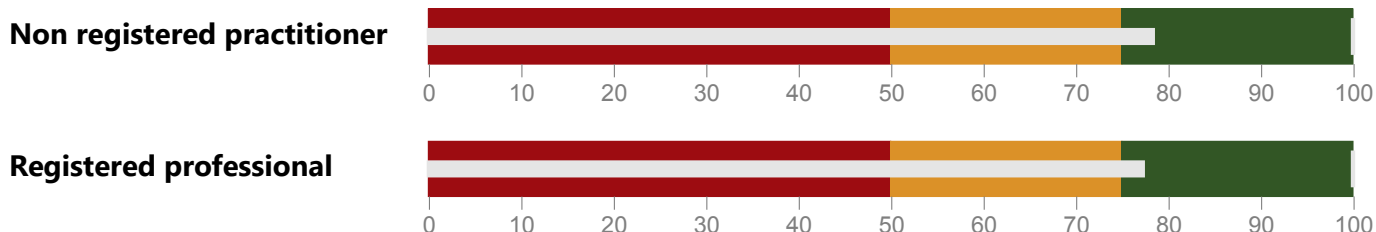
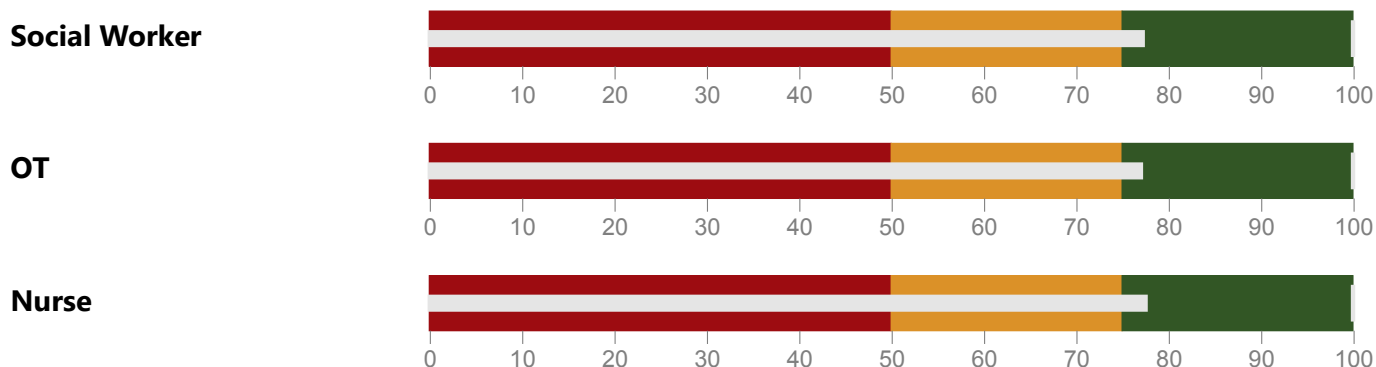


Figure 20: Overall Average by Type of Registered Professional



Roles within the *non registered practitioner* group included:

- Family support worker
- Physiotherapist Commissioner
- Early help coordinator
- Best interest assessor

**SUSTAIN**  
**(75+)**  
Good score / outcome to be celebrated.

**MONITOR**  
**(51 - 74)**  
Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.

**IMPROVE**  
**(50 or less)**  
Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

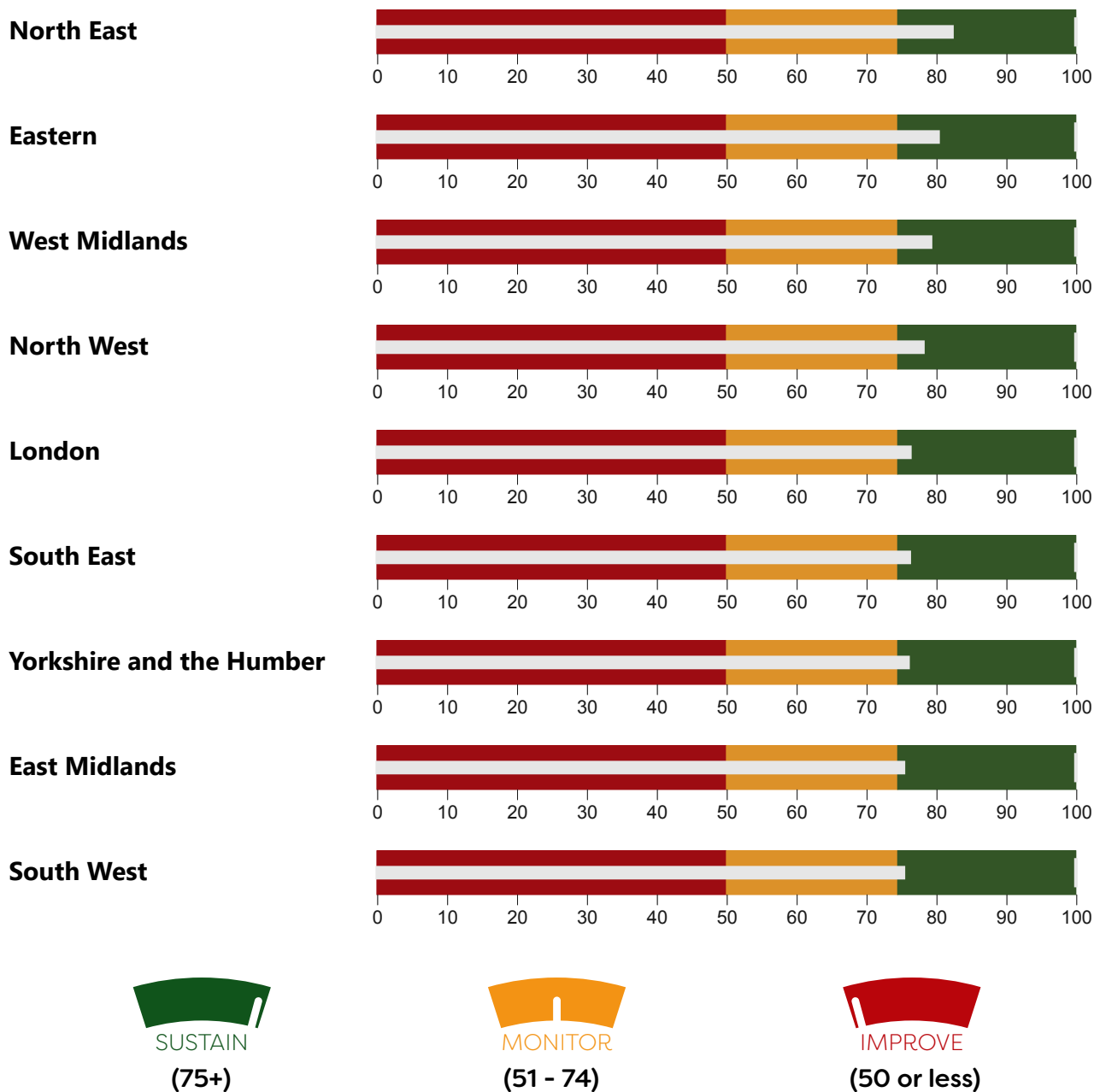


Figure 21 below displays the combined overall mean score for all standards, as reported by each region.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 6.

The results show a variance of 7% across the surveyed population. North East region had the highest favourability rating in the good range and South West had the least favourable rating – but also in the good range.

Figure 21: Overall Average by Region



Good score / outcome to be celebrated.

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.



Figure 22 below displays the combined overall mean score for all standards, as reported by adult social workers.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 6.

The results show a variance of 12% across the surveyed population. North East region had the highest favourability rating in the good range and East Midlands had the least favourable rating in the moderate range.

Figure 22: Adult Social Worker Regional Comparison



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

Figure 23 displays the combined overall mean score for all standards, as reported by children's social workers.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 6.

The results show a variance of 10% across the surveyed population. North East region had the highest favourability rating in the good range and South East had the least favourable rating in the moderate range.

Figure 23: Children's Social Worker Regional Comparison

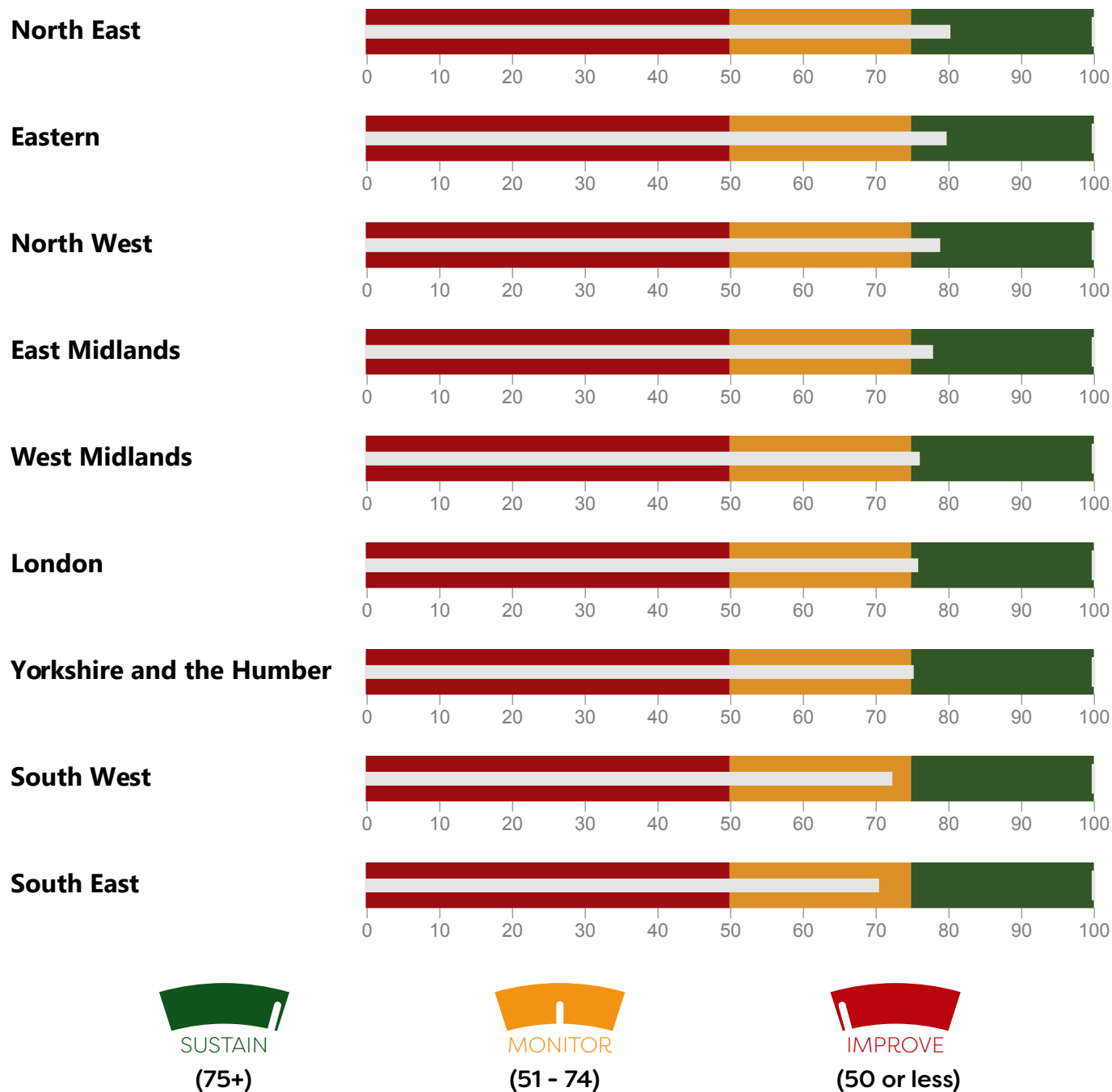
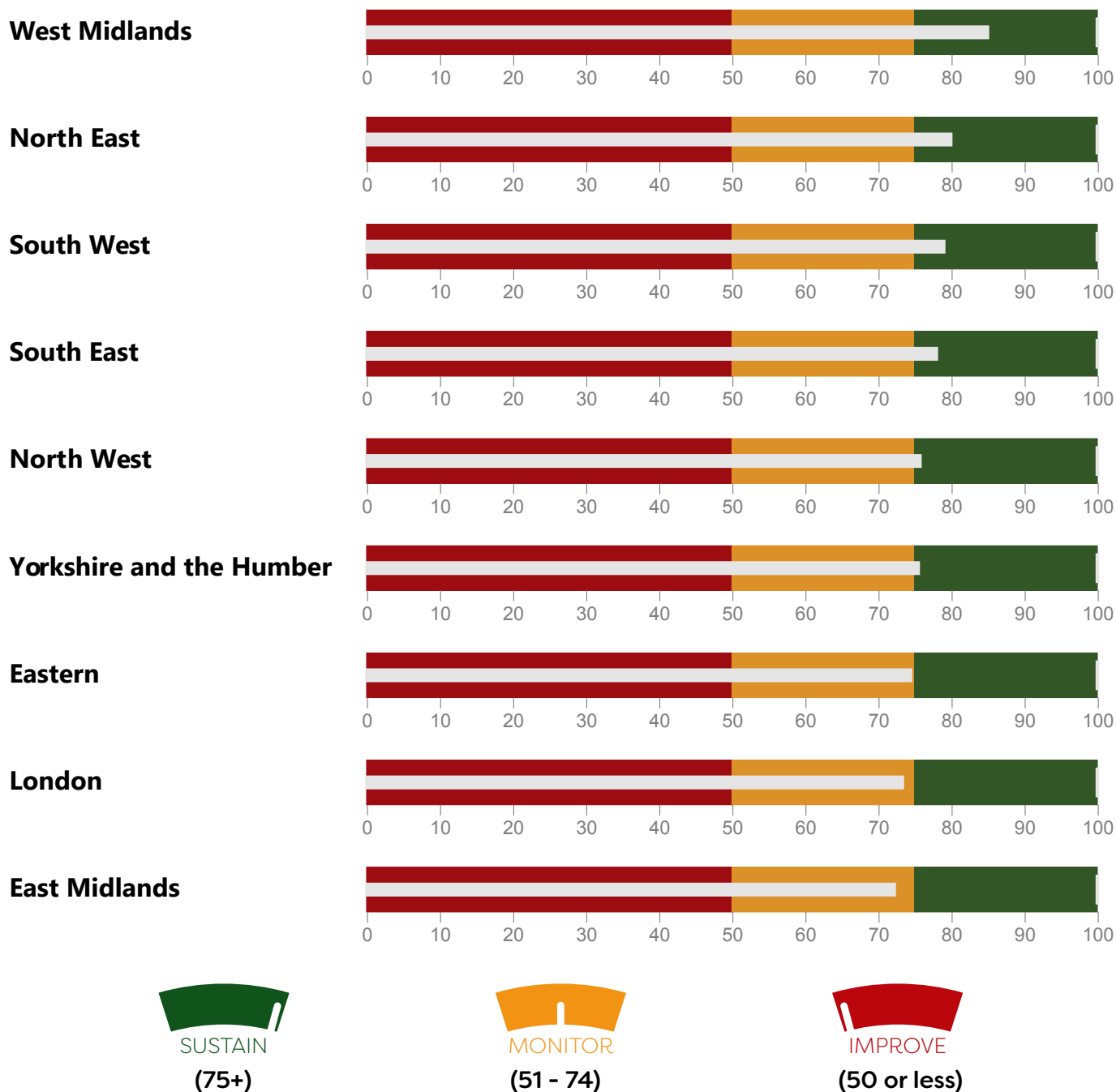


Figure 24 displays the combined overall mean score for all standards, as reported by mental health social workers.

A more granular analysis is provided by the table in appendix 6.

The results show a variance of 13% across the surveyed population. West Midlands region had the highest favourability rating in the good range and East Midlands had the least favourable rating in the moderate range.

Figure 24: Mental Health Social Worker Regional Comparison



## 5: Discussion

The evidence set out in this report provides an opportunity for organisations and related agencies involved in the delivery of social work to undertake *conversations for change* about how to improve the engagement and retention of staff through the adoption and delivery of the refreshed Employer Standards.

The research revealed a number of key themes, which have been examined in some detail within the main body of the report. These findings are broadly and succinctly summarized below:

### 1: Perception of Employer Standards

Overall, the delivery of the eight standards (with the exception of CPD) was perceived favourably. While this should be a source of encouragement to employers, it also means that ongoing efforts will be required to sustain and improve those levels. It is also important to note that overall views of employers' COVID-19 responses were similarly well received and opportunities to maintain good practices 'post COVID-19' should be explored and infused into the 'new normal' operating environment.

### 2: Biggest impact on staff engagement

The quality of the employment relationship is shaped by the reliable delivery of obligations and promises by the employer. For example, the expectation that as an employee you will have access to adequate support, be treated fairly and offered the training essential to one's job role. In the narrative analysis, there were many positive comments regarding the existence of strong support structures helping to encourage a sense of wellbeing and belonging, reinforced by a sense of 'camaraderie' amongst staff and role autonomy.

### 3: Biggest impact on staff retention (desire to stay)

The desire to stay with an organisation is a measure of organisational commitment. The evidence pointed strongly to key shaping influences such as the quality of supervisory support, feeling safe in the role and being able to identify and access suitable training.

Following discussion among stakeholders, it was recognised that useful, additional analysis could be performed to identify with greater clarity and precision the respondents experiencing the most inspirational, and conversely the most challenging, work climates. This supplementary piece of work is now underway and will be published in March.

The new Employer Standards were refreshed most recently in 2020. The Local Government Association hosts the standards on its website on behalf of the sector and continues to work with stakeholder partners on their regular review through the Standards for Employers Working Group.

Supplementary items specifically related to the impact of Covid-19 and job/organisational engagement were added. The latter were drawn from TEDD® – an approach based on the concept of Social Exchange Theory (SET), which places the notion of reciprocity and mutuality at the heart of the employment relationship (also called the employment deal). This is used to create an expression of how employee engagement is encouraged, experienced and personified (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Conway and Briner, 2009; Francis et. al, 2012; Guest, 2014; Reddington and Weber, 2016).

A simplified illustration is shown in Figure 25 below. For a more detailed explanation, refer to an online report – [Developing a New Employment Deal for Local Government \(2017\)](#) 1.

The model allows the delivery of the employer standards and Covid effort to be regarded as *Employer Contributions*, thereby permitting key driver analysis when viewing *Employee Contributions* and *Desire to Stay* as targets of interest.

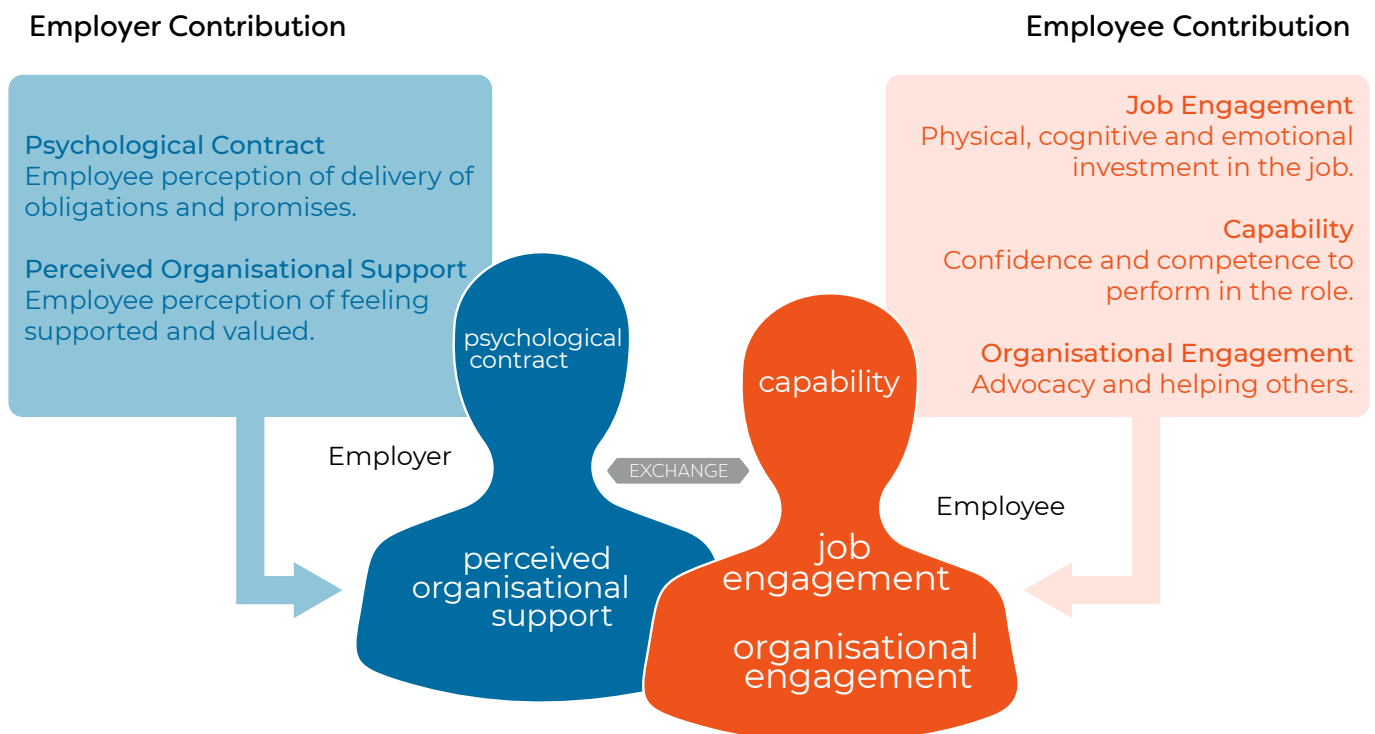


Figure 25: The Employment Relationship

The survey comprised the following elements:

- a. 59 rateable items using a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' through 'Strongly Disagree' covering perceptions of the 8 Employer standards, the impact of Covid-19 and job/organisational engagement.
- b. Respondents had an opportunity to enhance their answers to the rateable questions with free text.
- c. A single free text item specifically requested a one-word answer about the 'personality' of the organisation.
- d. Demographics seeking information about a respondent's job role, length of service, employment status, work location, age, gender and ethnicity.

The survey question set can be found in appendix 2.

The data collection phase for social services provider organisations in England was initiated through an email campaign managed by the LGA. These emails were sent out between 16th – 20th November, before the official launch date of the survey on 23 November. Further email reminders were sent out until the closing date on 22nd December 2020 to all contacts that had given permission via GDPR to be approached for marketing purposes. The emails were sent out centrally, region-by-region. Various social media channels were also used to raise awareness of the exercise, supplemented by newsletters (such as Social Work England).

All of these initiatives were designed to drive enquiries to a specific LGA workforce email address. The LGA team assumed ownership of the relationship with each participating organisation and provided further support and guidance to facilitate participation in the project, supported by the Kinetiq research team as appropriate.

All organisations that expressed a willingness to participate were checked for eligibility to do so by the LGA and the successful ones were then provided with a link to an online survey home page and a unique code that would allow more granular analytics to be performed on the data.

The LGA published regular response level updates to encourage maximum engagement with the exercise.

The quantitative (numeric) data was exposed to a variety of statistical analysis techniques:

- Cronbach's Alpha – a test for internal consistency and reliability of the responses.
- Test for Significance – a formal procedure for assessing the confidence of claims made from the analysis of the data
- Multiple Regression – a formal procedure to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. This is the basis of **key driver analysis**, explained in more detail on page 28.

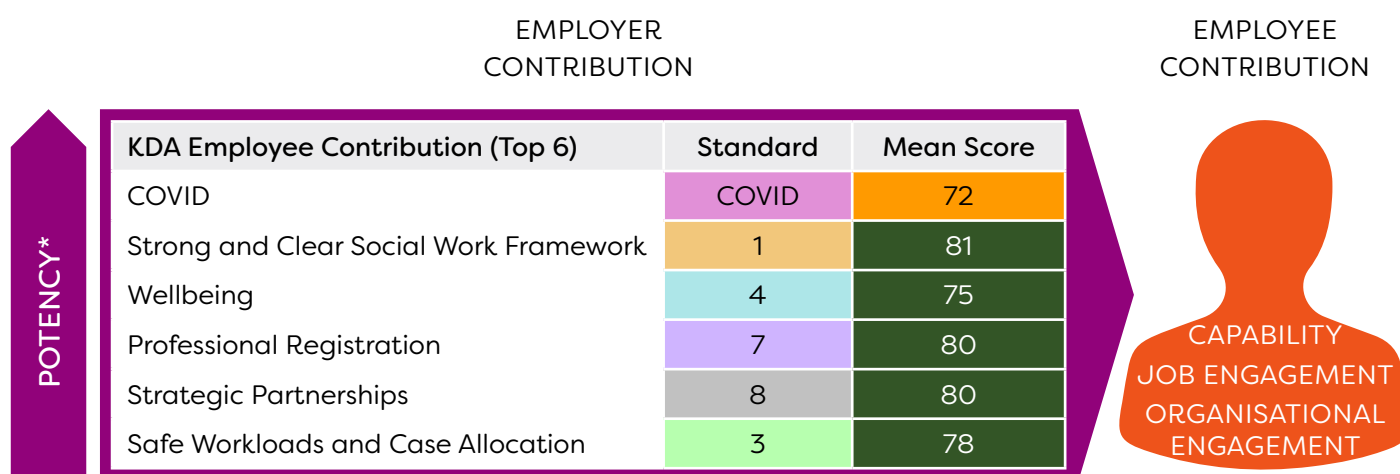
The results for the rateable items were calculated using mean values, as illustrated below. The thematic analysis of the qualitative data (free text) was conducted individually then collectively by the research team. Numeration (i.e. the frequency in which a theme appears within the data) was used to pull together the final set of themes, since numeration is one way of indicating their relative importance (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) and is widely used by researchers where this type of evidence is a significant source. The other technique used was sentiment weighting. Employees' responses to the free-text questions were analysed using NVivo (a qualitative software analysis package), which helped to identify and extract opinions, emotions and attitudes from the qualitative data.

The research team were then able to blend statistical and free-text data to provide an enriched interpretation, with the relative importance of the different themes revealed when matched with the key drivers.

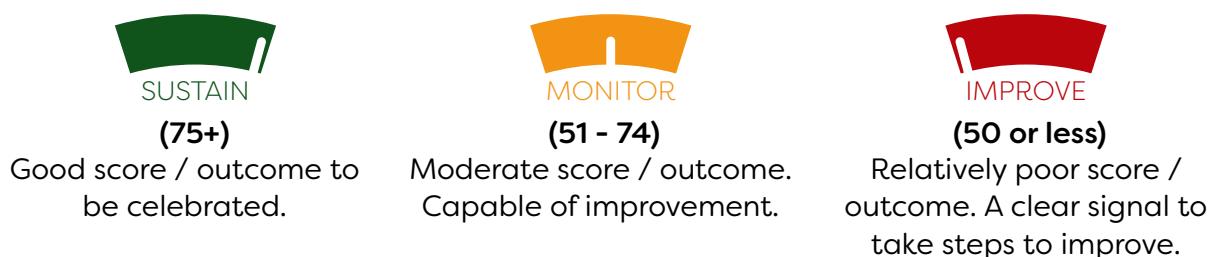
Example Survey Question:				
My supervisor and/or manager encourage and motivate me in my career development				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
100	75	50	25	0
✓				
				✓
			✓	
	✓			
	✓			
		✓		
Total				
Respondents' Overall Score (Total ÷ 6)				

Key Driver Analysis (KDA) helps to focus on those features of the employment relationship that have the greatest impact on how employees contribute at work, expressed as job engagement, organisational engagement and capability – see figure 26 below. Using an analysis technique known as multiple regression, the key drivers (predictor variables) are shown as rateable items from the survey with their associated mean scores and arranged in ascending order of potency on Employee Contribution (outcome variable). The relevance of these results is explained in more detail on pages 8 and 9 of this report.

Figure 26 : Illustration of Key Drivers impacting Employee Contribution



\*Potency is an expression of the impact a change in the predictor variable has on the outcome variable.





## Strong and Clear Social Work Framework

Questions	Mean
1. My organisation has a well-defined framework/approach to social work practice so I am clear about my role and accountability	82
2. I am able to use my professional judgement, creativity and autonomous decision making where appropriate	84
3. I receive an appropriate balance of professional support and reflective challenge (e.g. through supervision) to keep learning and developing my practice.	78
4. I have access to support and advice from senior social work leader/s within my organisation (e.g. Principal Social Worker or Senior Managers)	82

## Effective workforce planning systems

Questions	Mean
1. Through my organisation, I can access the post-qualifying training and development support I need to do my role and keep progressing	80
2. My supervisor and/or manager encourage and motivate me in my career development.	80
3. My organisation ensures fair and equal treatment of all staff.	73

## Safe Workloads and Case Allocation

Questions	Mean
1. I am usually allocated (or otherwise pick up) work through a fair process that takes account of my workload, my capabilities/skills and my health and wellbeing.	74
2. I can discuss workload and stress issues helpfully with my supervisor or manager and agree satisfactory ways forward	82
3. I know where to go to get help in my organisation if I am concerned about my wellbeing in respect of amount or nature of work I am expected to do	82
4. I would feel able to contact my Professional Association and/or Trade Union if I am concerned about safe working	82
5. I usually have a satisfactory level of control over my workload and the resources I need to fulfil my responsibilities	70



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

Wellbeing	
Questions	Mean
1. I am encouraged and empowered by my organisation to make time for my own self-care and wellbeing activities	70
2. I have time and space for supportive peer to peer and team discussion	73
3. My organisation recognises the emotional demands of social work and provides me with the supervision, support and tools I need to deal with this	70
4. My organisation takes appropriate action to prevent and deal with risks of violence, bullying and harassment in any aspect of my work.	75
5. My organisation is actively committed to anti-racism and a positive, inclusive culture of opportunity for members of staff of all backgrounds and protected characteristics	82
6. My organisation facilitates my access to my Professional Association, Trade Union and other supportive organisations.	74
7. I feel cared for by my managers and/or supervisor.	80
8. I feel safe in my role & the work I am expected to do.	78
9. I have access to private, quality space in order to meet my supervisor & people I work with.	76
10. My employer has in place caring and effective systems for reporting and responding to concerns I raise, and will act to ensure I am able to work safely.	74

Supervision	
Questions	Mean
1. I have uninterrupted, scheduled supervision at a suitable frequency with an appropriately skilled social work supervisor	80
2. Supervision helps me critically reflect on my work including working relationships, emotions and use of evidence	77
3. I identify my learning needs and access professional development opportunities and training through supervision	78
4. Supervision helps me reflect on how I meet professional regulatory standards	72
5. My supervisor coaches me in the development my professional judgement, creativity and autonomous decision making	75
6. I can raise concerns about the quality and suitability of my supervision with an appropriate person in the organisation if I need to	74



SUSTAIN

**(75+)**

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

**(51 - 74)**

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

**(50 or less)**

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

## CPD - Continuous Professional Development

Questions	Mean
1. My organisation provides effective induction for all social workers when they join the organisation	72
2. (If you completed the ASYE in the last three years in your current organisation) My ASYE programme was effective in helping me learn and develop as a social worker and be more confident.	74
3. My organisation provides regular/annual appraisals (or performance reviews) that are relevant for social workers.	70
4. Within my organisation, I have an up to date plan of my professional development needs and how I and my employer will contribute to them (review)	63
5. I have dedicated time, resources, opportunities and support to carry out my CPD and record my learning in line with regulatory requirements	61
6. My organisation has non-discriminatory and transparent systems to enable all social workers to develop their professional skills, knowledge, specialisms and careers including access to accredited courses	76
7. I take action to ensure I am up to date with my CPD	88

## Professional Registration

Questions	Mean
1. I have found the registration/re-registration process with Social Work England straightforward	85
2. My organisation supports me in keeping my CPD record up to date on the Social Work England website	74
3. My organisation understands, supports and provides conditions for social work practice that help me meet my professional standards	79
4. My organisation promotes a working environment that upholds ethical practice and quality standards	82
5. I am aware of the circumstances under which I could be referred to the regulator	87
6. I am confident my organisation would support me if I challenged unsafe practice or reported other concerns about services	75

## Strategic Partnerships

Questions	Mean
1. I have good and effective relationships with key partners such as in the NHS, wider social care, education, housing, the third sector etc	84
2. My employer has a clear policy for recruiting, training and supporting social workers to train as practice educators, and practice supervisors.	76



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

Covid	
Questions	Mean
1. I have been supported by my organisation to continue to work safely and effectively within a clear social work practice framework.	83
2. I have had access to the practice guidance and technology I have needed to work online/remotely with people using services and colleagues	85
3. My organisation has ensured all staff are appropriately protected from the risk of infection by the virus and taken account of different individual risks of infection on grounds of (e.g.) age, ethnicity, prior health conditions, caring for others etc.	83
4. I have been able to maintain enough, high quality, safe contact with the people I work with to ensure their welfare and to meet my statutory and/or organisational responsibilities	83
5. I have experienced an increase in severity of need in people being referred to me and/or my team*	80
6. I have felt positive and able to cope with work most of the time	69
7. I have continued to have satisfactory one to one supervision	80
8. My supervisor has helped me manage my overall wellbeing and work life balance.	76
9. I have been able to continue to access relevant learning opportunities and training through my organisation	80
10. Changes during the pandemic have enabled me to work in a more strength based way with my clients.	63
Employee contribution	
Questions	Mean
1. I am confident in carrying out my role	88
2. I feel a sense of pride about my job	89
3. I would recommend my employer to a friend	79



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

\*Indicates scores are reverse logic, i.e. a higher score is a relatively poor outcome:

(0-50)

(51 - 74)

(75+)

Tensions	
Questions	Mean
1. I am often required to do more with less resources*	81
Overall satisfaction	
Questions	Mean
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my employment 'deal' – what my employer provides for me and what I am expected to provide in return	76
Desire to stay	
Questions	Mean
1. As I see currently see things, I do not intend to leave my employer over the next 12 months	80
Total number of responses	9095



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

\*Indicates scores are reverse logic, i.e. a higher score is a relatively poor outcome:

(0-50)

(51 - 74)

(75+)

**North East**

Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Newcastle upon Tyne City Council  
 Middlesbrough Council  
 Sunderland City Council  
 Durham County Council  
 South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Northumberland County Council  
 Northumbria Healthcare Alliance Trust  
 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
 Redcar & Cleveland Council  
 Hartlepool Borough Council

**North West**

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council  
 Halton Borough Council  
 Manchester City Council  
 Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Liverpool City Council  
 Cumbria County Council  
 Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Trafford Council  
 Cheshire East Council  
 Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Warrington Borough Council  
 Cheshire West and Chester Council  
 Lancashire County Council  
 Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Blackpool Council  
 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Salford City Council

Salford Royal NHS Trust  
 Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

**Yorkshire and the Humber**

Focus  
 Leeds City Council  
 Kirklees Council  
 Sheffield City Council  
 Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council  
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
 Kingston upon Hull City Council  
 City of York Council  
 North Yorkshire County Council

**West Midlands**

Worcester City Council  
 Warwickshire County Council  
 Telford & Wrekin Council  
 Staffordshire County Council  
 Herefordshire Council  
 Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
 Shropshire Council  
 Coventry City Council  
 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council  
 Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

**South West**

Somerset County Council  
 Bristol City Council  
 Swindon Borough Council  
 Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council  
 Torbay Council

Dorset Council  
 South Gloucestershire Council  
 Devon County Council  
 North Somerset Council  
 Bath & North East Somerset Council  
 Plymouth City Council

### East Midlands

Northamptonshire County Council  
 Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Leicester City Council  
 Rutland County Council  
 Derbyshire County Council  
 Leicestershire County Council  
 Derby City Council

### Eastern

Central Bedfordshire Council  
 Hertfordshire County Council  
 Thurrock Council  
 Bedford Borough Council  
 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
 Suffolk County Council  
 Essex County Council  
 Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust  
 Northamptonshire Children's Trust

### South East

Brighter Futures for Children, Reading  
 Children Social Care  
 Milton Keynes Council  
 Portsmouth City Council  
 Wokingham Borough Council  
 Hampshire County Council  
 Medway Council

Oxfordshire County Council  
 West Berkshire Council  
 Isle of Wight Council  
 East Sussex County Council  
 Surrey County Council  
 Reading Borough Council  
 Slough Borough Council  
 Southampton City Council  
 Brighton & Hove City Council  
 Buckinghamshire Council  
 West Sussex County Council  
 Bracknell Forest Council  
 Oxford NHS Foundation Trust

### London

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
 London Borough of Sutton  
 Westminster City Council  
 London Borough of Islington  
 London Borough of Ealing  
 Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea  
 London Borough of Croydon  
 London Borough of Merton  
 London Borough of Newham  
 London Borough of Harrow  
 London Borough of Haringey  
 London Royal Borough of Greenwich  
 Enfield Council  
 London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
 London Borough of Barking & Dagenham  
 London Borough of Camden  
 London Borough of Havering  
 London Borough of Southwark

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

London Borough of Waltham Forest

London Borough of Brent

London Borough of Hounslow

London Borough of Bexley

London Borough of Redbridge

London Borough of Hackney

London Borough of Lewisham

London Borough of Hillingdon

West London NHS Trust

South West London & St George's Mental  
Health NHS Trust

### No Region

Jersey Council

NAVIGO

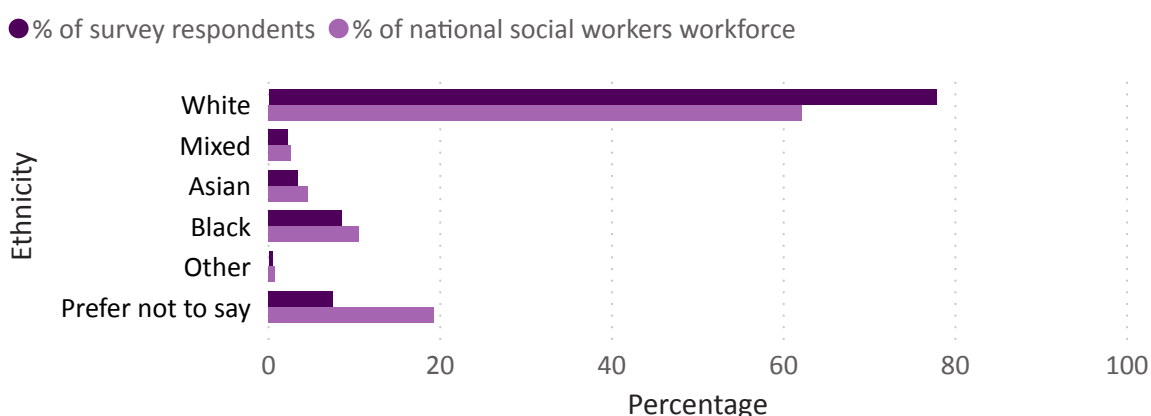
Care Plus Group



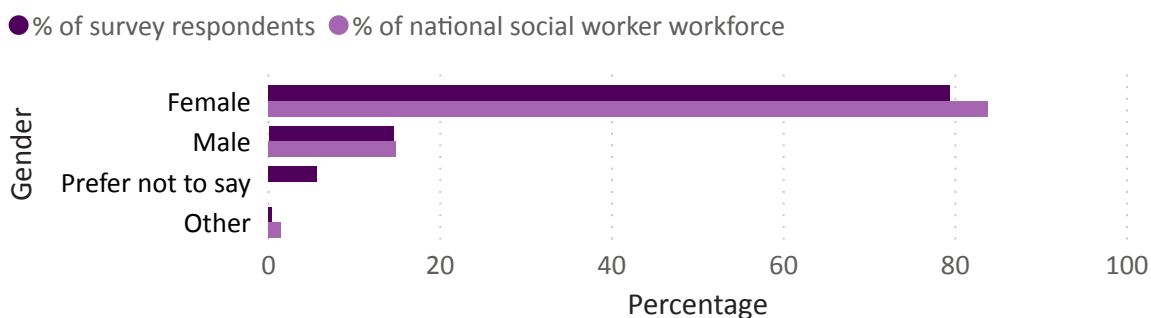
The tables below compare the survey data sample with national measures for three demographic elements – ethnicity, gender and age – of the social worker population in England. All comparisons were within  $\pm 5\%$  variance (excluding prefer not to say) with the exception of the declared White population, which was  $+16\%$ .

It should also be noted that the age comparison data is for adult social workers only, as it was not possible to accurately compare other social worker types due to reporting incompatibilities.

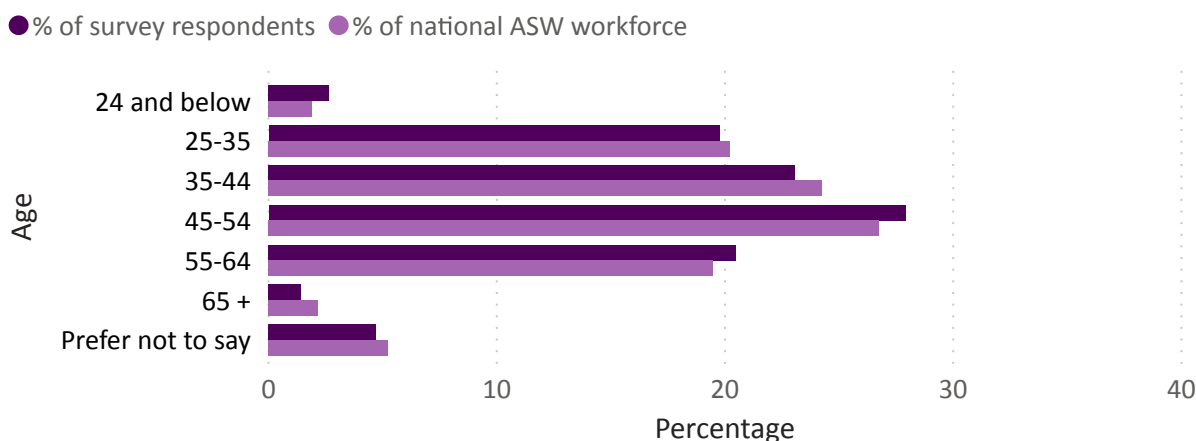
#### Survey Respondents and National Workforce Ethnicity Comparison



#### Survey Respondents and National Workforce Gender Comparison



#### Survey Respondents and ASW Workforce Age Comparison



The table below outlines the national scores for the eight Standards across different types of social worker and ethnicity.

### Standards by type of social worker

Standard	Adult social worker	Children's social worker	Generic	Mental health social worker	Other
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	81	81	82	80	83
Effective workforce planning systems	78	78	76	78	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	75	79	79	82
Wellbeing	76	73	74	74	81
Supervision	76	75	78	74	80
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	72	69	73	72	73
Professional Registration	81	79	78	80	81
Strategic Partnerships	80	81	77	77	81
N	4290	3289	107	665	743

### Standards by ethnicity (Asian population)

Standard	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	Asian or Asian British - Chinese	Asian or Asian British - Indian	Asian or Asian British - Other	Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	89	88	85	75	86
Effective workforce planning systems	82	87	78	65	80
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	81	80	68	84
Wellbeing	79	80	77	66	80
Supervision	83	79	82	68	82
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	74	80	77	62	76
Professional Registration	83	80	83	73	86
Strategic Partnerships	83	82	84	73	83
N	39	14	167	34	54



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

The table below outlines the national scores for the eight Standards across different ages and genders.

### Standards by age

Standard	24 and below	25-35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	Prefer not to say
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	86	81	81	82	83	85	70
Effective workforce planning systems	87	81	78	77	77	79	64
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	76	78	80	80	85	64
Wellbeing	81	75	75	76	77	81	62
Supervision	84	77	76	76	77	78	62
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	78	71	71	72	73	78	61
Professional Registration	85	80	81	81	81	83	70
Strategic Partnerships	79	79	80	81	82	84	72
N	246	1833	2141	2589	1899	133	436

### Standards by gender

Standard	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other	Prefer not to say
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	82	82	78	55	67
Effective workforce planning systems	79	79	70	56	62
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	79	74	57	63
Wellbeing	76	76	68	53	60
Supervision	77	77	69	57	62
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	72	71	70	50	60
Professional Registration	81	79	80	70	68
Strategic Partnerships	81	78	74	73	71
N	7362	1350	21	12	524



SUSTAIN

(75+)

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

(51 - 74)

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

(50 or less)

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

## Standards by ethnicity (Black population)

Standard	Black or Black British - African	Black or Black British - Caribbean	Black or Black British - Other
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	90	82	82
Effective workforce planning systems	83	75	75
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	83	79	79
Wellbeing	81	72	76
Supervision	85	72	77
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	79	70	74
Professional Registration	85	78	84
Strategic Partnerships	84	80	79
N	475	231	48

## Standards by ethnicity (Mixed population)

Standard	Mixed - Other mixed	Mixed - White & Asian	Mixed - White & Black African	Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	83	82	89	79
Effective workforce planning systems	80	81	85	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	76	76	79	74
Wellbeing	73	76	79	74
Supervision	75	75	82	73
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	70	71	80	74
Professional Registration	81	76	87	81
Strategic Partnerships	76	80	87	79
N	67	37	24	81

## Standards by ethnicity (White population)

Standard	White - British	White - Irish	White - Other
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	82	77	80
Effective workforce planning systems	79	74	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	75	75
Wellbeing	77	72	73
Supervision	77	68	74
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	72	67	69
Professional Registration	81	75	78
Strategic Partnerships	81	76	79
N	6581	135	382

## Standards by ethnicity (additional categories)

Standard	Any other ethnicity	Prefer not to say
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	76	68
Effective workforce planning systems	70	63
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	71	64
Wellbeing	70	61
Supervision	72	62
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	72	61
Professional Registration	78	68
Strategic Partnerships	78	70
N	40	685

## Standards by age

Standard	24 and below	25-35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	Prefer not to say
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	86	81	81	82	83	85	70
Effective workforce planning systems	87	81	78	77	77	79	64
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	76	78	80	80	85	64
Wellbeing	81	75	75	76	77	81	62
Supervision	84	77	76	76	77	78	62
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	78	71	71	72	73	78	61
Professional Registration	85	80	81	81	81	83	70
Strategic Partnerships	79	79	80	81	82	84	72
N	240	1814	2107	2535	1845	124	429

## Standards by gender

Standard	Female	Male	Non-binary	Other	Prefer not to say
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	82	82	78	55	67
Effective workforce planning systems	79	79	70	56	62
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	79	74	57	63
Wellbeing	76	76	68	53	60
Supervision	77	77	69	57	62
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	72	71	70	50	60
Professional Registration	81	79	80	70	68
Strategic Partnerships	81	78	74	73	71
N	7228	1312	21	11	515

## Standards by professional status

Standard	Non registered practitioner	Registered professional
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	83	81
Effective workforce planning systems	76	78
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	80	77
Wellbeing	79	75
Supervision	81	75
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	70	71
Professional Registration	78	81
Strategic Partnerships	80	80
N	1243	7820

## Standards by type of registered professional

Standard	Nurse	OT	Other	Social Worker
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	80	84	85	81
Effective workforce planning systems	75	71	78	78
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	79	83	84	77
Wellbeing	82	79	80	74
Supervision	81	74	81	75
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	73	70	78	71
Professional Registration	76	79	81	81
Strategic Partnerships	76	77	82	80
N	21	136	66	7594



SUSTAIN

**(75+)**

Good score / outcome to be celebrated.



MONITOR

**(51 - 74)**

Moderate score / outcome. Capable of improvement.



IMPROVE

**(50 or less)**

Relatively poor score / outcome. A clear signal to take steps to improve.

The following tables outlines the national workforce, ASW's, CSW and Mental Health Social worker regional scores.

### Standards by region

Standard	East Midlands	Eastern	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	80	85	82	85	81	80	79	82	80
Effective workforce planning systems	75	81	77	84	79	76	75	80	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	77	79	76	81	78	78	78	79	75
Wellbeing	72	79	74	80	76	74	74	78	73
Supervision	73	78	74	81	77	76	75	78	74
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	68	76	70	77	70	70	68	75	71
Professional Registration	78	82	79	85	82	78	78	83	79
Strategic Partnerships	79	82	79	85	82	78	77	80	81
N	942	718	1402	646	1589	1189	915	997	657

### ASW regional scores

Standard	East Midlands	Eastern	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	76	86	82	87	80	82	78	83	80
Effective workforce planning systems	71	82	77	86	78	78	75	80	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	76	80	78	83	78	81	80	80	78
Wellbeing	70	80	75	82	76	77	75	79	74
Supervision	70	79	75	83	75	77	76	80	75
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	65	77	72	82	70	72	69	77	71
Professional Registration	77	83	80	88	82	80	79	85	80
Strategic Partnerships	76	82	80	87	81	79	77	79	80
N	349	392	599	290	764	676	498	441	267

The tables below outlines the CSW and Mental Health Social Worker's regional scores.

### CSW regional scores

Standard	East Midlands	Eastern	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	83	85	83	84	84	74	77	80	80
Effective workforce planning systems	79	81	77	82	80	71	74	78	76
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	77	78	73	78	77	69	71	74	72
Wellbeing	73	77	72	78	76	66	69	73	71
Supervision	75	79	74	79	79	69	71	73	73
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	71	74	69	72	70	64	65	70	70
Professional Registration	81	81	78	84	81	74	74	80	79
Strategic Partnerships	82	83	79	83	83	75	76	80	81
N	416	244	573	244	578	305	242	374	299

### Mental Health Social Worker regional scores

Standard	East Midlands	Eastern	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and the Humber
Strong and Clear Social Work Framework	78	76	76	83	77	83	83	88	76
Effective workforce planning systems	75	77	75	83	76	78	78	86	79
Safe Workloads and Case Allocation	75	74	78	80	77	81	83	87	78
Wellbeing	66	73	72	76	73	74	75	84	71
Supervision	69	71	69	75	72	79	81	83	68
CPD - Continuous Professional Development	67	75	68	78	70	73	73	81	76
Professional Registration	74	78	78	84	81	80	80	86	79
Strategic Partnerships	74	73	71	82	80	76	80	84	77
N	52	33	128	57	96	125	61	66	38



## References

- Conway, N. and Briner, R. B. (2009) Fifty years of psychological contract research: What do we know and what are the main challenges? *International Review of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 21. Pp. 71-131
- Cropanzano, R. & Mitchell, M.S. (2005). 'Social exchange theory: an interdisciplinary review', *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31 (6), 874 – 900
- Elmi, F., Bakhshalian, E., Ahmadiyankooshkghazi, M and Reddington, M. (2017) *Developing a New Employment Deal for Local Government*. Report Published April 2017. Accessible at: <https://indd.adobe.com/embed/533f449b-7355-4da4-9285-ae3d6a796ccc?>
- Francis, H. M., Holbeche, L.S., & Reddington, M. (Eds). (2012): *People and Organisational Development: A New Agenda for Organisational Effectiveness*, London: CIPD
- Guest, D. 2014. Employee engagement: a sceptical analysis. *Journal of Organisational Effectiveness*, 1 (2), 141-156
- Reddington, M., & Weber, S. (2016). *Employee and Organisational Engagement (OE) in times of austerity – A longitudinal study of a public sector organisation*. Conference Paper
- Smith, J.A., Flowers P. & Larkin, M (2009) *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*, Sage Publications.