

ALTENBERGER, I. and GRAHAM, G. 2024. The social work practitioner role and the multifaceted challenges posed by the environmental crisis. Presented at the 2024 United Nations sustainable development goals conference (2024 UN SDG), 29 May 2024, Paisley, UK.

# The social work practitioner role and the multifaceted challenges posed by the environmental crisis.

ALTENBERGER, I. and GRAHAM, G.

2024

**THE SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONER  
ROLE  
AND THE MULTIFACETED  
CHALLENGES POSED BY THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS.**

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1 NO POVERTY



2 ZERO

3 GOOD HEALTH

4 QUALITY

5 GENDER

6 CLEAN AND S

## UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

### G12 Responsible Consumption & Production

Sustainable consumption

Reduce waste production through recycling

Lead lifestyles in harmony with nature.

### G 13 Climate action:

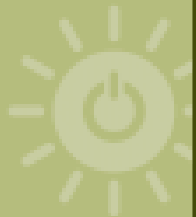
Resilience to climate-related hazards and natural disasters

Improve education to adapt and reduce impact.

### G 17 Global partnership for sustainable development

Policy and institutional coherence

7 AFFORDABLE  
CLEAN ENERGY



13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



12 RESP  
CONS  
AND I



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
GOALS

# The aim of this research :

- Explore the level of awareness social work practitioners have about climate change and its potential impact on their profession.
- To raise awareness and share knowledge about climate change and use coproduction as a tool to consider solutions.

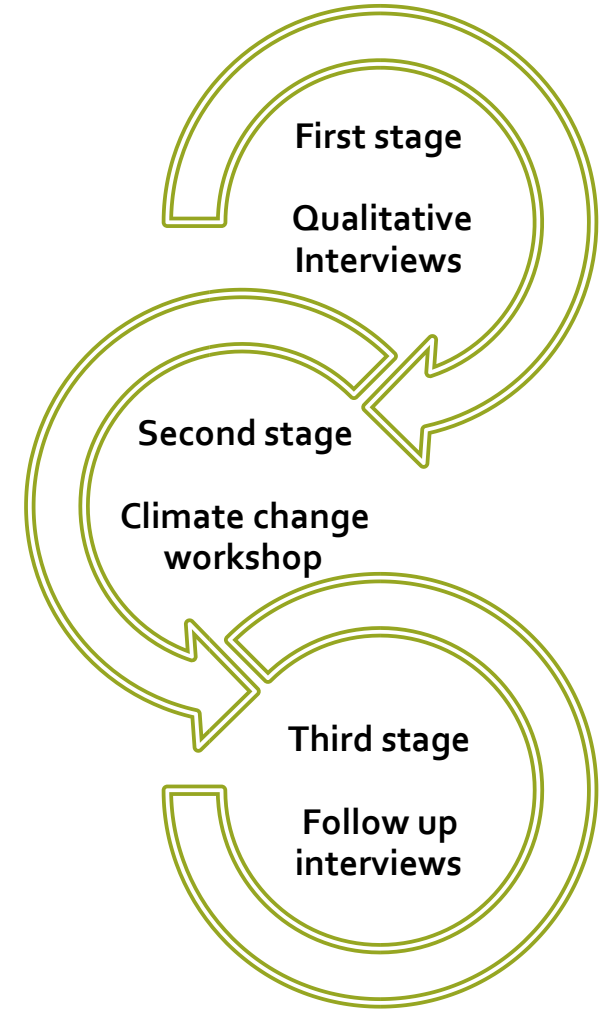
- Service Users lifestyle contribute less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than more prosperous
- They have limited financial resources to adapt their lifestyle to respond to climate change.

## Ethical Considerations

# Methodology

The project was split into 3 steps

- 17 Semi-structured interviews with qualified social workers which started with an art-based component
- Workshop
  - focus group 15 at Aberdeen University with the School of Biological Sciences, Rowett Institute and NESCAN
- Follow-up interviews

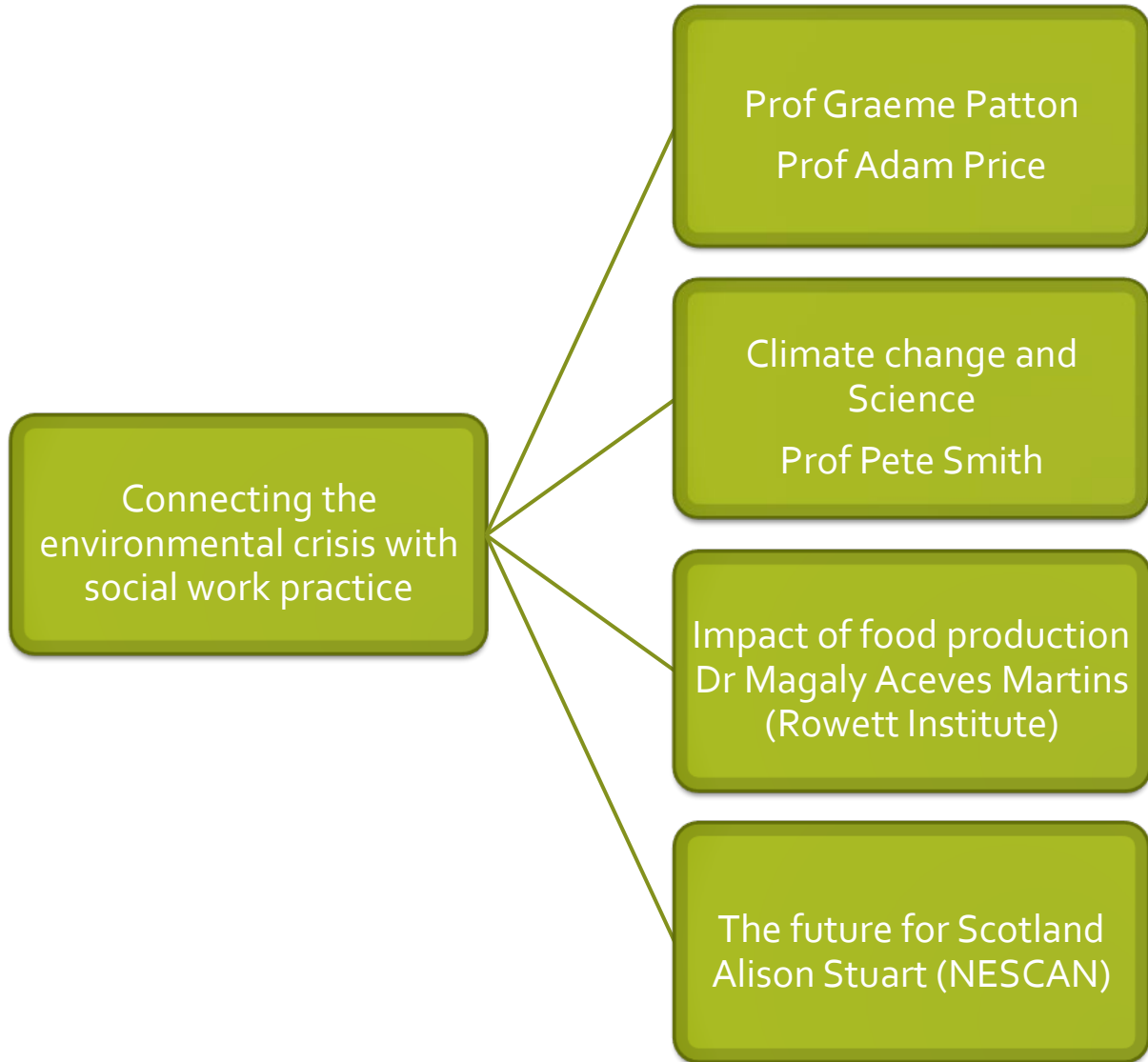


Reflective cycles



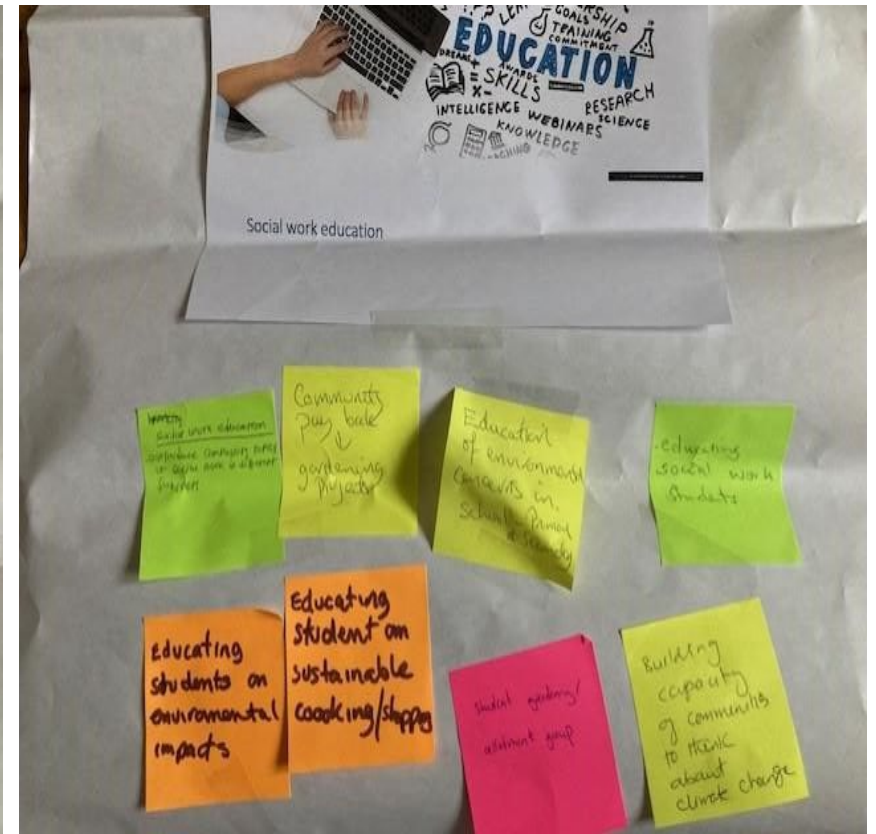
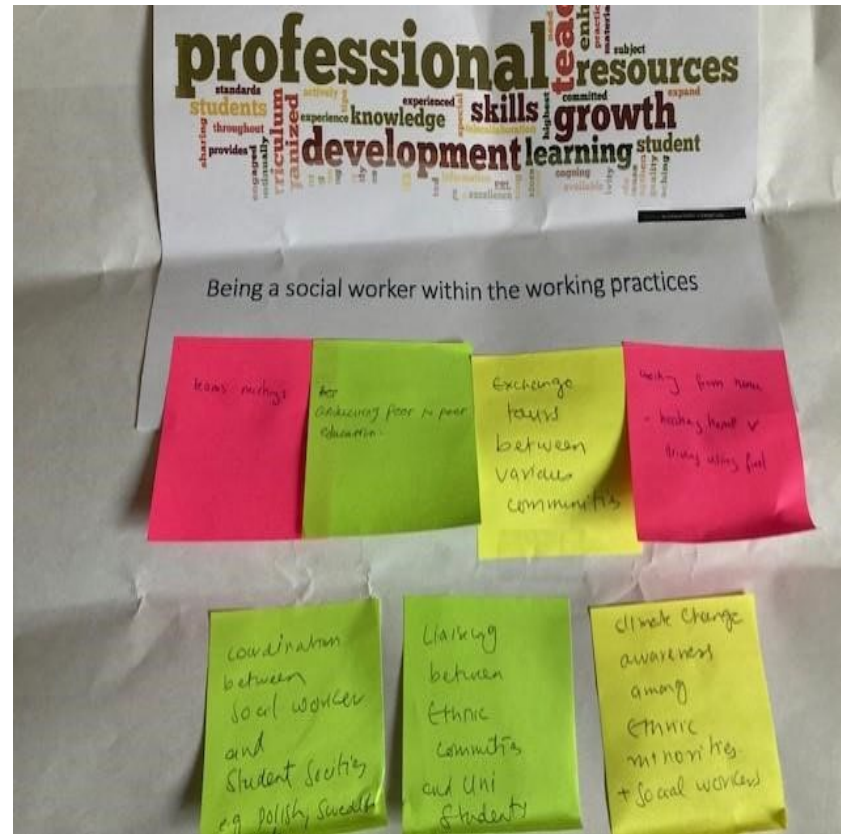
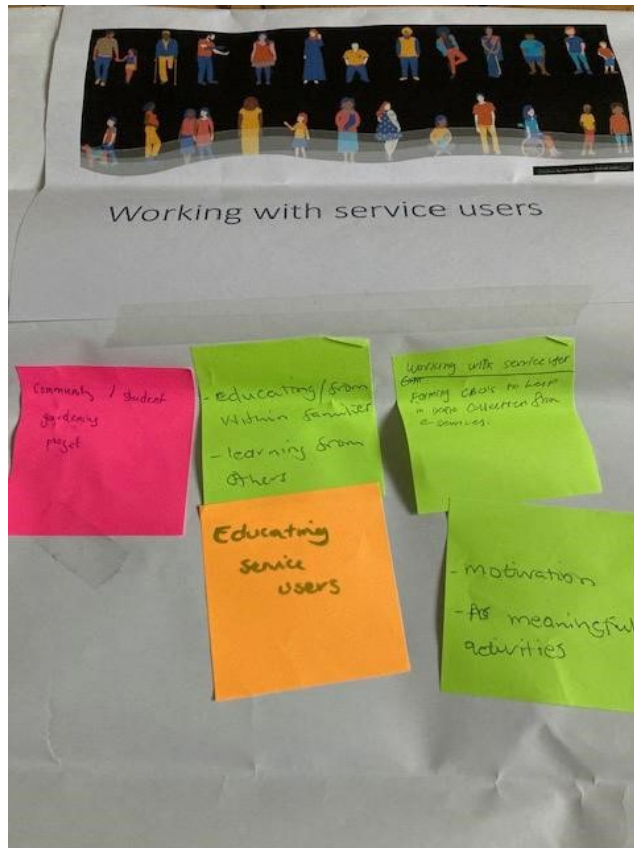


# Workshop: School of Biological Sciences, University of Aberdeen





# The workshop was guided by the Question- What will environmental changes mean...



# Findings

<b>Anxiety about understanding</b> <b>12 Sustainable Consumption</b>	<b>Anxiety about future</b> <b>13 Climate Action</b>	<b>Searching for SW role</b> <b>17 Global Partnerships</b>
<p>How to approach to subject</p> <p>Lack of knowledge</p> <p>Lack of engagement in subject</p> <p>Overwhelmed by immediate priorities</p> <p>Organisational barriers</p> <p>Helplessness</p>	<p>Lack of preparedness</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Poverty</p> <p>Food poverty</p> <p>Fuel poverty</p> <p>Flooding</p> <p>Storms</p> <p>Decreasing opportunities to connect with nature</p>	<p>Support to initiate change</p> <p>SW education</p> <p>Knowledge of solutions</p> <p>Collectiveness rather than individual responsibility</p> <p>Is this a profession that can enact change</p>

# Anxiety about understanding



How to approach to subject



Lack of knowledge



Lack of engagement



Overwhelmed



Organisational



Helplessness

*"I think not having enough knowledge or understanding about how we can facilitate change..."*

*"...there's so many other issues that are going on..."*

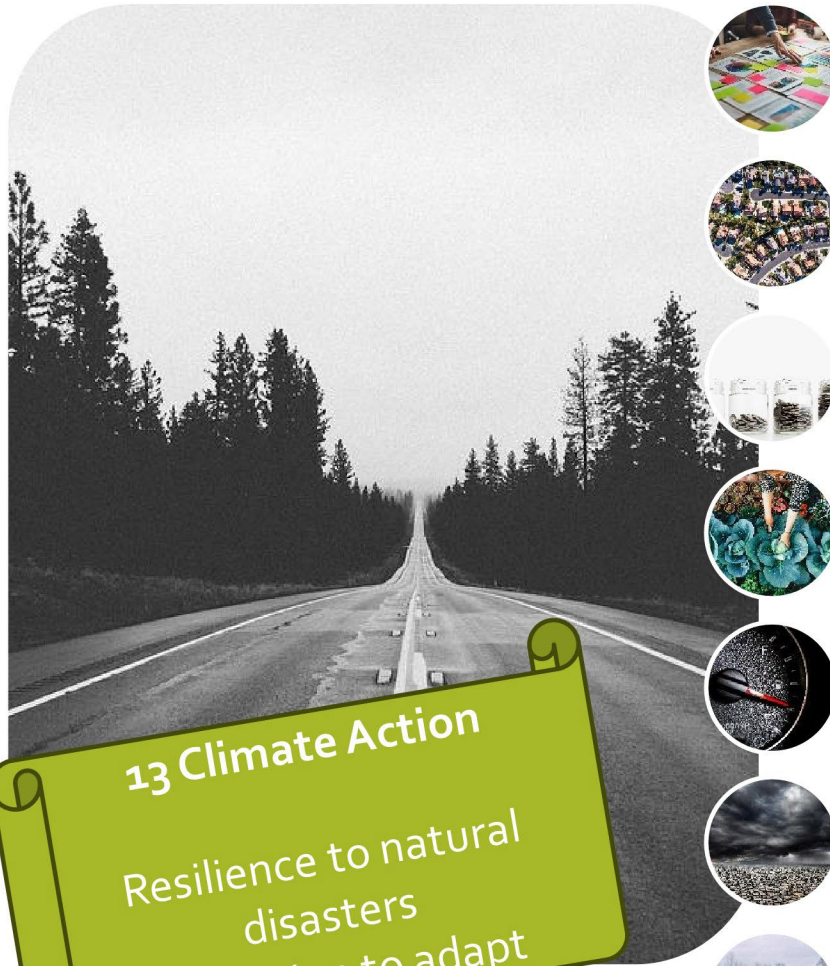
*"It is the government in bodies who need to be taking action, they've done a fantastic job at trying to blame individuals..."*

*"we don't have the time and energy to do it, to be completely frank, you know on the frontline we're just trying to... you know, Firefight all at the time"*

12 Consumption & Production  
Sustainable consumption  
Reduce waste lifestyles



# Anxiety about the future



13 Climate Action  
Resilience to natural  
disasters  
Education to adapt



Preparedness



Housing



Poverty



Food Poverty



Fuel poverty



Flooding/ storms



Loss of nature

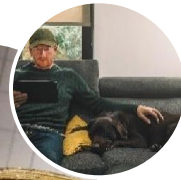
*"...at some point it's all gonna blow up and we will have been so unprepared for what's about to happen"*

*"...ice melting and obviously climate change, the land is shifting, where I'm going to house the people?"*

*"what people are worried about managing is food, gas ...the amount of times I go and pick up food parcels ...because there's no money, the amount of times I go to charities asking for fuel vouchers for families to heat their home"*

*"...green spaces that families locally have to use ... actually they're pretty limited"*

# Searching for the social work role



Support to Change

*"nobody seems to be really talking about it you know it's like never a priority as it because unless it affects us here and now immediately people just don't"*



SW Education

*"there's so much to talk about, structural oppression, structural inequality. Yet environmental factors weren't really considered in that [education]"*



Solutions

*"We work with people and actually we should be part of the bigger kind of environmental factors because I suppose that's part of our job, isn't it? Creating kind of a better living environment for all"*



Collectiveness

*"There's a definite role in and influence in planning, definitely in policy. And being part of those discussions "*



Is this a profession that can enact change?

17 Global Partnerships

policy and institutional coherence

## Concluding thoughts

- Questions relating to the SW role, is this a profession that can enact change rather than respond?
- What is the role of SW education
- Lack of structural support within institutions and at the national level



- The response to climate change needs to be community-led rather than individualist

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