

Relationship based social work practice

Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2021

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Relationship based social work practice

- We are committed to embedding relationship-based practice across all services, ensuring that the relationship between the child, young person, parent or carer and the practitioners who work with them is central to our practice.
- The quality of the relationship has a significant impact on the ability to achieve good outcomes for children and young people.
- We know from the feedback we get from children and young people how important the relationship is with their social worker.
- Key factors in achieving our ambition:
 - Strong workforce strategy
 - Manageable caseloads
 - Practice Framework – Signs of Safety

Key elements of the workforce strategy

- **Recruitment**

- Invested additional funding of **£2.716** million in front line social work between 2019-20 and 2021-22
- Development of ASYE academy
- Over recruitment of ASYEs
- Creation of new roles – Enhanced Practitioners
- Different routes into social work – Frontline, Step-Up, Apprenticeship, Return to Social Work

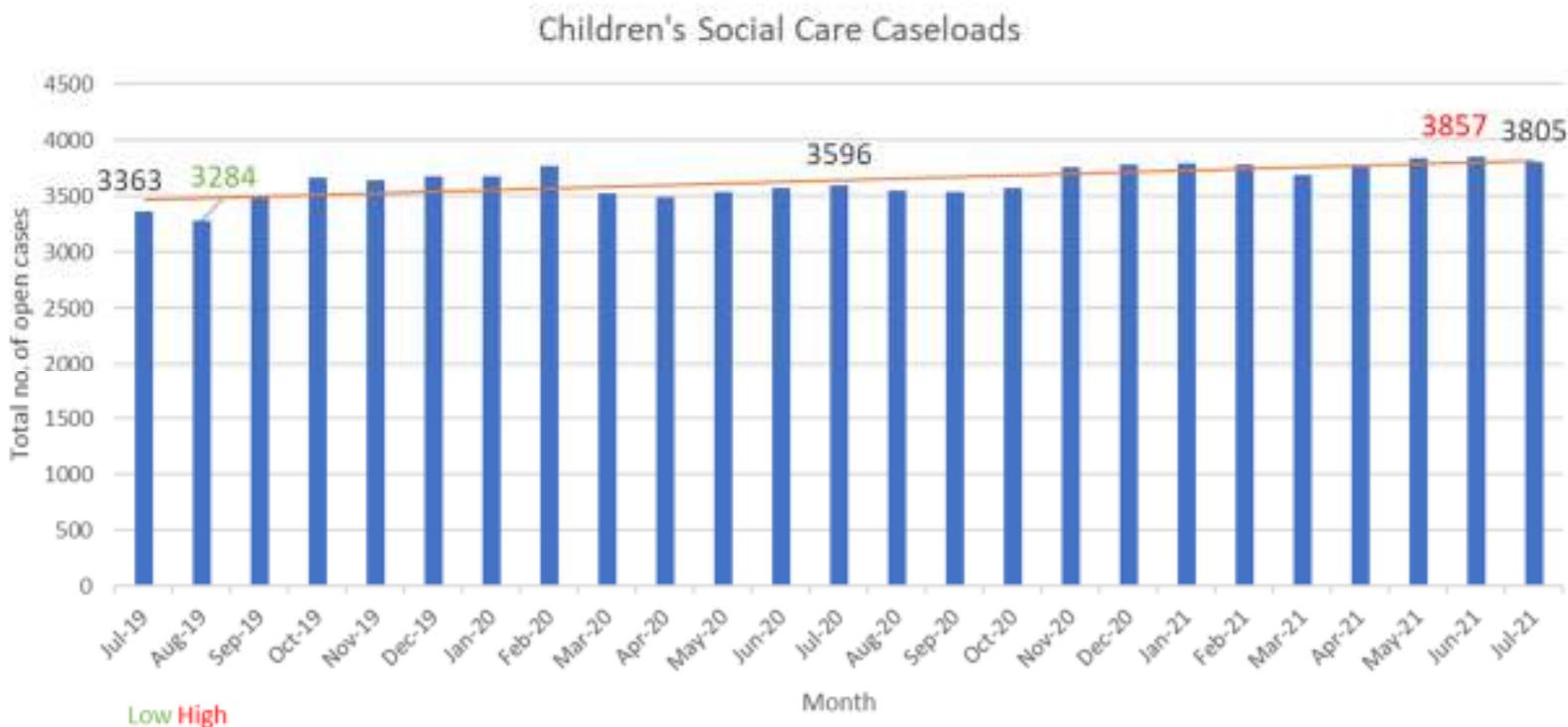
- **Retention**

- Emotional wellbeing offer
- Clear practice framework
- Investment in electronic recording system – Liquid Logic
- Development of Leadership Academy
- Recruitment and retention allowance for “hard to fill posts”
- Creation of new specialist teams – Pre-Birth and ASET
- Aspiring Managers programme

Impact of workforce strategy

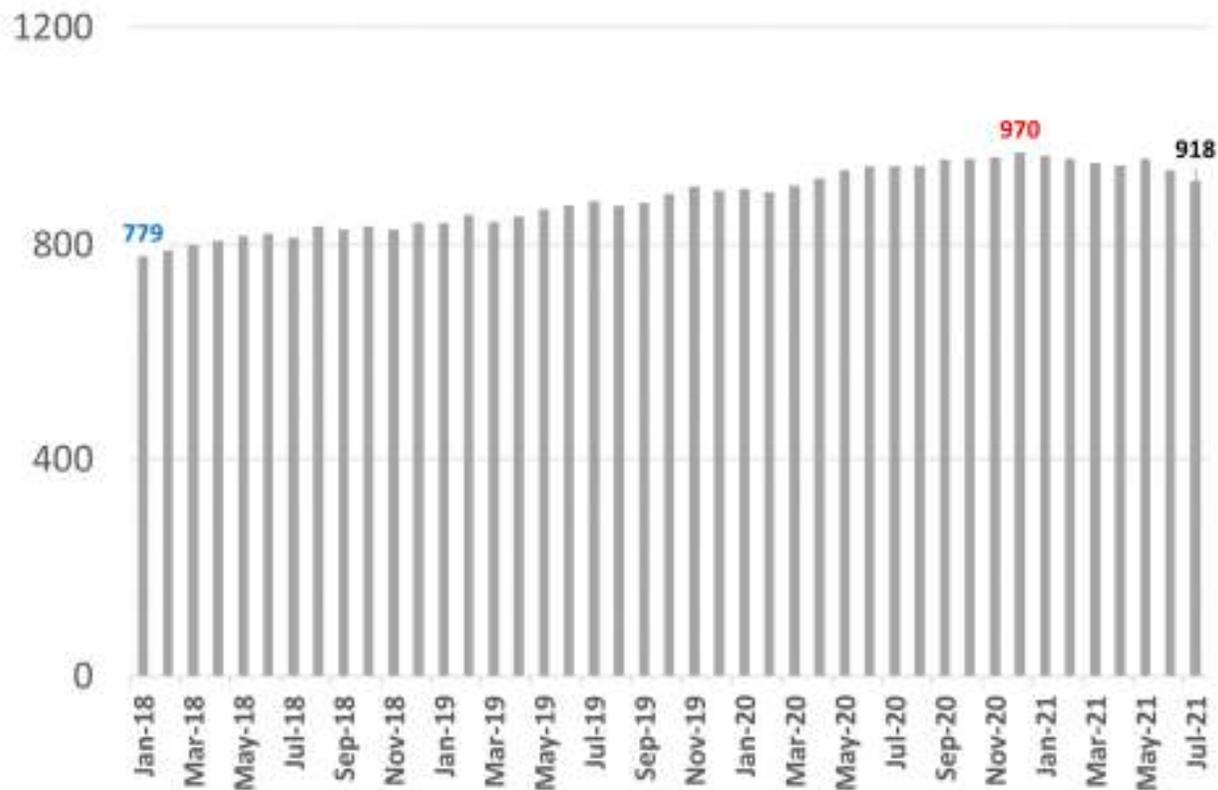
- Average vacancy rate over 12-month period reduced from **14.22% (Aug 2019) to 8.04% (Aug 21)**.
- Our current agency rate of **7.64%** is lower than both the regional average (**10.2%**) and the national average (**15.4%**).
- Our leavers have increased slightly between 2019 – 2021. There were **46** leavers in year ending 2021.
- Staff survey (68% response rate) found **76%** were satisfied with their employment deal and **85%** would recommend their employer to a friend.
- **80%** of respondents felt cared about by their manager.

Context of increasing demand



- Chart shows the total no. of children and young people open to Children's Social Care as a snapshot each month over the last 2 years
- This highlights an increasing trend
- The high and low points are highlighted as well as July of each year
- In comparison to July 2019, there has been a **13% increase (+442 CYP)** – This is equivalent to 2.5 additional Social Work Teams (at a caseload of 175 each)
- And a **6% increase** from July 2020 (**+209 CYP**), which is equivalent to 1.2 additional SW Teams

Children Looked After



- The number of children in care has **grown by 25%** between start of 2018 and end of 2020
- This is the equivalent to almost **200 additional children in care.**
- Since then numbers have fallen back but remain high compared to historical standards.
- These trends are a combination of long term growth and short term impacts from covid

Caseload data in the context of increasing demand

- Different social work role have different caseloads:

Social Worker role	Caseload
Social Worker	22
Enhanced Practitioner	15
ASYE	8 – 18

- **85%** of Social Workers have less than 25 cases
- Average Social Worker caseload is **19** at Sept 2021

Practice Framework

- 2018 – Signs of Safety
 - Provides a method and suite of tools to give as much responsibility as possible to families and their network for the safety of their children
 - Strength based approach, balancing what we are worried about against strengths and safety within a family
- 2020 – Trauma Informed Care
 - Strengthened are relationship based approach by ensuring that practitioners and managers are supported to work in a way that acknowledges the trauma and ensures subsequent interventions and care respond to this

Impact

- Continued reduction in re-referral rate suggesting more sustainable change being achieved
- Relationship based practice is strongest feature in our collaborative evaluation programme:

“The social worker has worked with her perfectly, they have worked together and done everything they can ... they talk about everything and they have open discussions. She says she has felt involved in agreeing the plan and everything has gone well since the initial conference.”

“They are lovely, has followed up on any issues and ensures they are involved with meetings. Mother feels as though they take everything which they say into account and are truthful about concerns. Mother said she feels comfortable to say if something is going wrong now, can ring up and ask anything.”

Compliments and complaints

- Complaints continue to be at much lower levels than pre-covid
- Compliments have begun to increase over same time period:

“We want to sincerely thank you for your support, professionalism and commitment to supporting us as a family through the most challenging times. You have always remained so composed and guided us through the most difficult process and remained vigilant and impartial to respond to the needs of our children. As a social worker you have renewed our trust in services with your professional conduct, thorough assessments and responses to matters that have arisen always keeping us informed and the children at the heart of it.” Parent to CLS FF

“Thank you for all your time and effort you have put into me for 6 years. Its been a pleasure to work with you and have some good laughs 😊 I hope all is well in the future for you. I’ll see you for family time with Take care of yourself and stay safe. Goodbye its going to be hard to see you leave me after 6 years, but thank you once again.” Young Person to CLA 1

Ofsted Focused Visit – 2021

*“Social workers are positive about working for Durham. They report good management support and supervision which enables them to discuss issues and make appropriate decisions for children. **A strong workforce development strategy has ensured workforce stability. This is helping workers to consistently support children and they have developed positive and informed relationships.**”*