



Report of Lisa Wood, Strategic Manager, Countywide Specialist Services, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

None

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report outlines the activity and development of the Supporting Solution Service (SSS) from 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022.

Executive Summary

- 2 The Supporting Solutions Service continues to develop to meet the needs of young people, parents and carers. The offer of support from Supporting Solutions includes:
- 3 Edge of care (EoC) support – intensive interventions to young people, parents and carers where there has been a relationship breakdown and without this support it is likely that the young person may need to become looked after or experience a placement move.
- 4 Initially the service was to support young people aged 11-18yrs but we now have a pilot offer of support to young people aged 7-10yrs until March 2023. This is a result of an increase in crisis support for younger children.
- 5 SSS has increased its offer to 16-17 young people on the edge of homelessness to try and repair relationships within the family and to support a young person to remain living with family.
- 6 Family Group Conference (FGC) – support to families to identify and establish a sustainable plan to meet the needs of children and young people within their family unit.

Recommendation

- 7 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this report.

Background

- 8 The offer of support from Supporting Solutions includes:
- (a) Edge of care (EoC) support – intensive interventions to young people (aged 7 plus), parents and carers where there has been a relationship breakdown and without this support it is likely that the young person may need to become looked after or experience a placement move;
 - (b) Family Group Conference (FGC) – support to families to identify and establish a sustainable plan to meet the needs of children and young people within their family unit;
 - (c) Access to crisis bed – staffed by SSS and Emergency Duty Team (EDT), this provides an out of hours, one night only crisis bed for a young person when all other options have been explored.

Outcomes Supporting Solutions

- 9 During 2021/22 Supporting Solutions supported 198 Young People on the edge of care. The details are on the table below.

Outcome	Number of young people
Young people received support	198 YP including 138 new referrals for YP
Young People/occasions emergency bed was accessed	59 YP 73 nights
Number of young people who are in the care of their parents or family/friend at time of closure / writing report plus those rehabilitated home from the care of the LA	130 6 YP rehabilitated home from care of LA
Number of young people who were in a long term placement and remained there	10
Number of young people who have become looked after children during SS interventions	21
Number of young people who are now living in supported accommodation as a CLA	11

Number of young people who are now living in Supported Accommodation not as a CLA	7
Number of young people who were already looked after but moved to a new placement	11
Number of young people detained under the Mental Health Act	1
Number of young people detained in secure accommodation	1

- 10 74% of young people who accessed support in 2021/22 are either at home / with extended family or have remained in their long term placement. This is the same % as the previous year.
- 11 21 young people (10.5%) who accessed support during 2021/22 have become looked after (foster care / children's home) during SSS interventions. On reviewing the situation for these young people it is clear that they came into our care, either because of safeguarding reasons or because home life became so untenable it was not safe for the young person to remain at home. It is also the role of SSS to ensure that all avenues of support have been explored and provide evidence to our social work colleagues where the best outcome for a YP would be to come into care. Some of these young people remain open to interventions from SSS in the hope that in future a return to family care can be supported.
- 12 16/17 years olds (5.5%) moved into supported accommodation and into our care. Some of these young people moved from foster placement to supported accommodation, however, the majority of these young people were supported to remain in the care of their family for as long as possible before the move to supported accommodation was made, this is the same for the 7 16/17 year olds (3.5%) who moved to supported accommodation and did not become a child in care.
- 13 11 young people (5.5%) moved to a new placement as relationship with carers had completely broken down.
- 14 1 young person was detained under the Mental Health Act and 1 young person was detained in secure accommodation (1%).
- 15 During 2021/22 intervention ended with 142 young people, at the point of closure 68% of young people were either at home / with extended family or have remained in their long term placement. There will be

further exploration into sustained outcomes for these YP 1 year post closure.

- 16 The table below illustrates the number of young people in County Durham aged 11yrs and above and the categories of why they came into our care.

Reporting Period	Entered care due to family dysfunction / family in acute stress	Entered care due to abuse or neglect	Other	Total number of YPs aged 11-17 who entered care
2021/2022	23	92	10	124

Profiling

- 17 For the YP's who started to access support in 2021/22, the following factors were present and had an impact on YP being on the edge of care. The table over the page shows these in % figures for each quarter in 2021/22 as well as a total % and comparisons to the previous 2 years:

Factor	Number of Children (%) Q1 figures	Number of Children (%) Q2 figures	Number of Children (%) Q3 figures	Number of Children (%) Q4 figures	Total for 2021 /22	Total for 2020 /21	Total for 2019 /20
Child Exploitation	37%	37%	48%	37%	40%	30%	30%
Missing from Home	40%	43%	58%	37%	45%	33%	44%
Already living out of parental care as long	33%	23%	16%	31%	25%	17%	17%

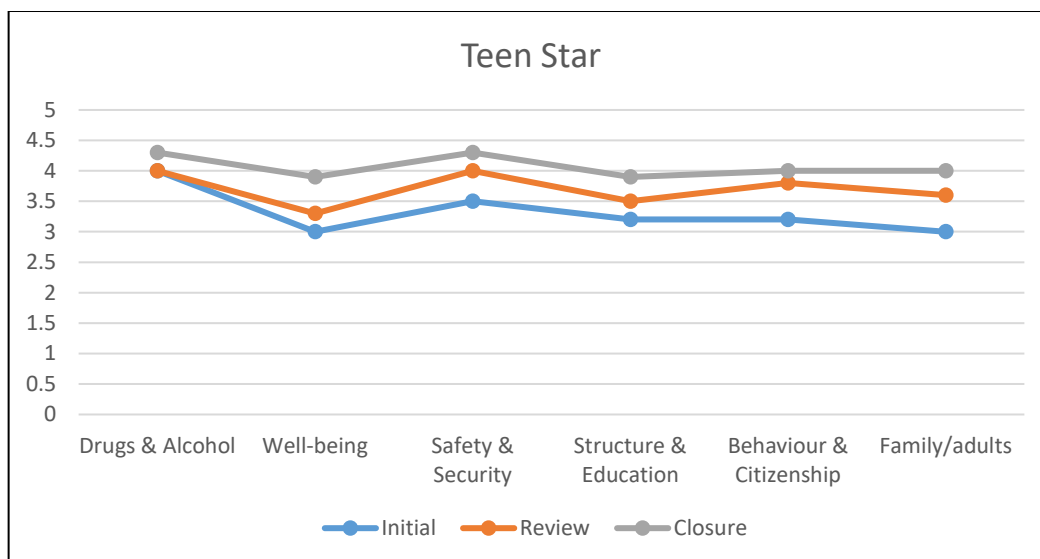
term plan							
Out of Education	23%	20%	17%	14%	18%	13%	21%
Parental Mental Health	49%	45%	32%	38%	41%	41%	27%
YP Mental Health	51%	61%	55%	59%	57%	75%	43%
Substance Misuse	16%	23%	39%	17%	24%	25%	27%
Contact with Police / Offending Behaviour	16%	37%	29%	21%	25%	23%	28%
16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness	7%	11%	26%	14%	15%	11%	9%
Adoption Breakdown	2%	6%	6%	14%	7%	3%	4%

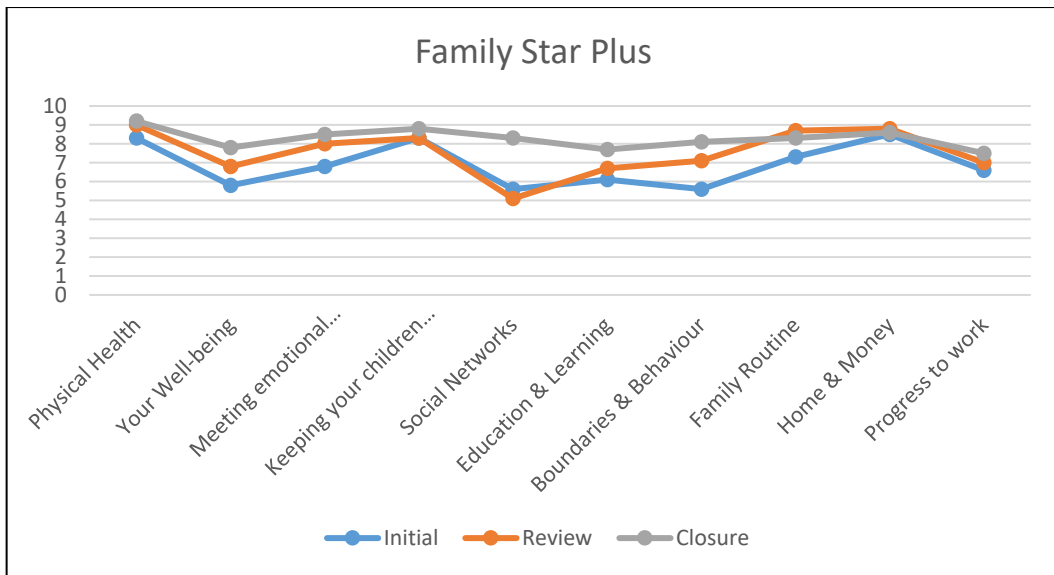
- 18 Since 2019/20 figures show an increase in young people on the edge of care also being subject to / at risk of exploitation. There remains a significant number of young people on the edge of care who have also had Missing from home episodes.

- 19 In addition to the above since 2019/20 we have seen an increase in young on the edge of care also experiencing issues with their own mental health needs, parental mental health needs and an increase in 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness and adoption breakdowns.

Individual Young People Journey Mapping (soft outcomes)

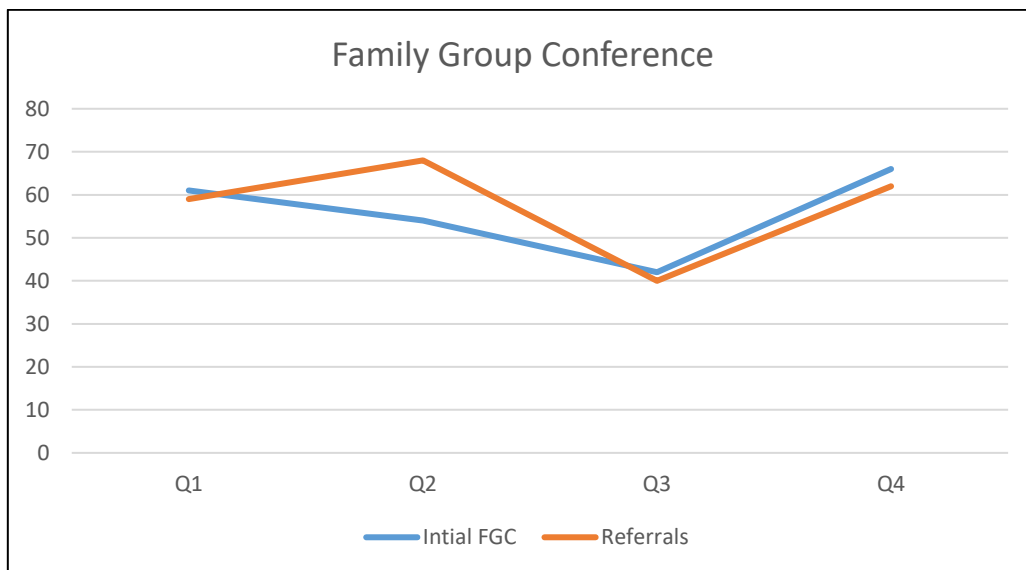
- 20 All young people as part of their engagement with Supporting Solutions are asked to complete the Teen Outcomes Star and parents / carers are asked to complete the Family Star Plus. This helps to identify distance travelled in terms of young people, parents and carers achieving the best possible outcomes. Outcome stars are also used as motivational tools and assist workers in being able to offer targeted support to young people and families.
- 21 The tables demonstrate that in the majority areas of the Teen Star and Family Star Plus young people, parents / carers felt they had made improvements after accessing Supporting Solutions interventions. The average score on the Family Star Plus identifies that parents/carers thought there had been a very slight dip in 'family routines' and 'home and money'.





Performance – Family Group Conferencing

- 22 The chart below shows the number of initial family group conferences against the number of referrals made.



- 23 In Q3 there was a clear dip in referrals being made for FGC which has impacted on the number of initial FGCs being completed in that quarter. As a result of this, FGC service was promoted further in social work teams and since then referrals and outcomes have increased.
- 24 The tables below show the outcomes following a Family Group Conference, where families devised their own plan which has then been agreed by the social worker at the time of the conference.

FGC - Performance Activity	Target	Achieved
Referrals Received	233	204
Initial FGC's completed	264	231

Initial FGC – Outcomes for children	Number of Children
Awaiting Outcomes from Assessments and court	32
Rehabilitation plan from care of LA to parents	1
Rehabilitation plan from care of LA to extended family / friends	5
Rehabilitation plan from the care of extended family / friends to the care of parents.	0
Remain with Extended Family / private fostering arrangement	28
Remain looked after by Local Authority	17
Remained with parents with support / safety plan from identified network	145
Alternative Carers Identified	1
Support / safety plan for young person who is in/or moving to - independent living / residential / foster care	2
Grand Total	231

Review Family Group Conference

- 25 Every family who completes an initial FGC is offered a review FGC. In 2021/22 FGC reviews were completed for 134 children and young people.

Review FGC – Outcomes for children	
Remained with parent/carer	122
Remained looked after by Local Authority	12
Grand Total	134

Conclusion

- 26 Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel will have an oversight and understanding of the Supporting Solutions Service, and will be aware of the continuous developments within the service to ensure we strive to meet the needs of young people, their parent's and carers.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Report includes number of young people detailed under the Mental Health Act

Duties under Children & SW Act / Children's Act to act in the best interests of CYP etc

Finance

None

Consultation

None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Of the CYP the SSS have supported, 3% were transgender

Climate Change

None

Human Rights

All CYP are supported to identify suitable alternative care arrangements where they cannot continue to remain at home safely.

CYP have access to the DCC complaints process

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

Current agreed staff ratios are - EoC – 12 x FTE, EoC 7plus – 4 x FTE, 1x Team Leader (7plus), FGC – 7.5 x FTE. The team also have access to a Therapeutic Social Worker from the Full Circle service and clinical supervision.

Within staffing levels there are currently the following temp posts:

- 2 x FTE EoC workers until March 2023
- 1 x TL and 4 x FTE EoC 7plus workers until March 2023.

Supporting Solutions have increased their pool of sessional workers, this has ensured that there is an additional rota of staff on call to the Emergency Duty

Team and Supporting Solutions to respond to the needs of families experiencing crisis out of hours

Accommodation

Should CYP come into the care of the LA, there is a need to ensure there is sufficient suitable placements

Risk

The risk of not supporting CYP and their families and carers meant that we are increasing the risk of the young people becoming looked after, or needing to change placements which could cause disruption to the young people.

Procurement

None