

Corporate Parenting Panel

10 November 2023

Supporting Solutions & Family Group Conferencing Annual Report



Report of Rachel Farnham, Head of Children's Social Care, Children and Young People's Services, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide an update on activity and developments within the Supporting Solutions, Edge of Care and Family Group Conferencing (FGC) Service from April 2022 to March 2023.

Executive summary

- 2 The offer of support from Supporting Solutions includes:
 - (a) 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. Following a pilot of interventions available to younger children, this offer of support is now available to young people aged 7 plus;
 - (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) Out of Hours support – Provided by Supporting Solutions Service alongside Emergency Duty Team (EDT).
- 3 Supporting Solutions has successfully supported 83% (of children open to their service) to remain at home, either with family or long-term placements.
- 4 The outcome measures for those children open to Supporting Solutions shows interventions create improvements of all areas measured using the Team Star model: Drug & Alcohol, Well-being, Safety & Security, Structure & Education, Behaviour & Citizenship and Family/Adults.

- 5 The team have supported an additional 56 children aged 7-11, this year, following the age criteria being reduced. 77% of those aged 7-11 remained with family, a further 20% remained with their long-term carers. Only 3% needed to come into our care or move to a new placement.
- 6 The team have facilitated 191 Family Group Conferences (FGC) and 84 Review FGCs.
- 7 The outcomes for children open to Supporting Solutions is good, children benefit from targeted edge of care support. The plan now is to build on the existing Edge of Care service, creating a multi-agency team that provides a range of accommodation options and outreach support to children, young people and their families.

Recommendations

- 8 Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to:
 - (a) note the contents of this report.

Background

- 9 Supporting Solutions provides an edge of care service to children aged 7+. The team's initial criteria was for those children aged between 11-17, however the age range was broadened based on increasing numbers of younger children coming into our care.
- 10 A child on the 'edge of care' is someone who will need to enter care within days or weeks if support is not provided, due to family relationships or family breakdown. The team also work with children and young people accommodated in an emergency with a plan for a quick reunification, and those children in care where there is a risk of a placement breaking down.
- 11 There are 5 stages to Supporting Solutions involvement:
 - (a) Stage 1 Crisis Intervention (initial 24 hours);
 - (b) Stage 2 Rapid response (7-days);
 - (c) Stage 3 Engagement and Identification (4-weeks);
 - (d) Stage 4 Interventions Programme;
 - (e) Stage 5 De-escalation.
- 12 The Supporting Solutions Team also independently facilitate Family Group Conferences (FGC) within Durham. FGCs provide structured opportunity for a family-led meeting in which the family and friend network comes together to make, and review, a plan for a child.
- 13 Supporting Solutions work closely with a range of highly innovative services designed to support adolescents within County Wide Specialist Services. This includes ERASE (Missing and exploitation service), ASET, Social Work Team that support children at risk of extra familial harm, Rapid Response, for children who have been, or at risk of being admitted under Mental Health Act and Full Circle, a therapeutic Social Work team supporting the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children in our care.
- 14 The next steps for Edge of Care Service is to build a multi-agency service that brings together a range of accommodation options, services and outreach to support young people. It's our ambition to develop multi-agency input such as Speech and Language therapy and clinical psychology.

Supporting Solutions 2022/23

Staffing

- 15 The team is split into three; Mini's (7-11) Edge of Care (12-17) and FGC.
- 16 There are 4 full time equivalent staff in the Mini's Team. 12 Full Time employees working with young people 12-17. The FGC Team is made up of a Team Leader and 7.5 full time equivalent FGC coordinators. All three teams are overseen by a Team Manager. The teams also have access to a Therapeutic Social Worker from the Full Circle service who offers clinical supervision.

Outcomes Supporting Solutions

- 17 During 2022/23 Supporting Solutions supported 182 YP on the edge of care.

Outcome	Number of young people
Young people received support	182 YP including 126 new referrals for YP
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	135 10 YP rehabilitated from care of LA
Number of young people who were in a long-term placement and remained there	6
Number of young people who have become looked after children during SS interventions	20 (10 YP with foster carers, 8 in Children's Residential Homes and 2 in Secure Accommodation)
Number of young people who are now living in supported accommodation as a CLA	7
Number of young people who are now living in Supported Accommodation not as a CLA	3
Number of young people who were already looked after but moved to a new placement	1

83% of young people who accessed support in 2022/23 are either at home / with extended family or have remained in their long term placement. This is an increase of 9% compared to the previous year.

11% of young people who accessed support in 2022/23 have become Children Looked After (foster care / children's home) during SSS interventions. On reviewing these young people it is clear that they became CLA 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 SS 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 the care of the LA.

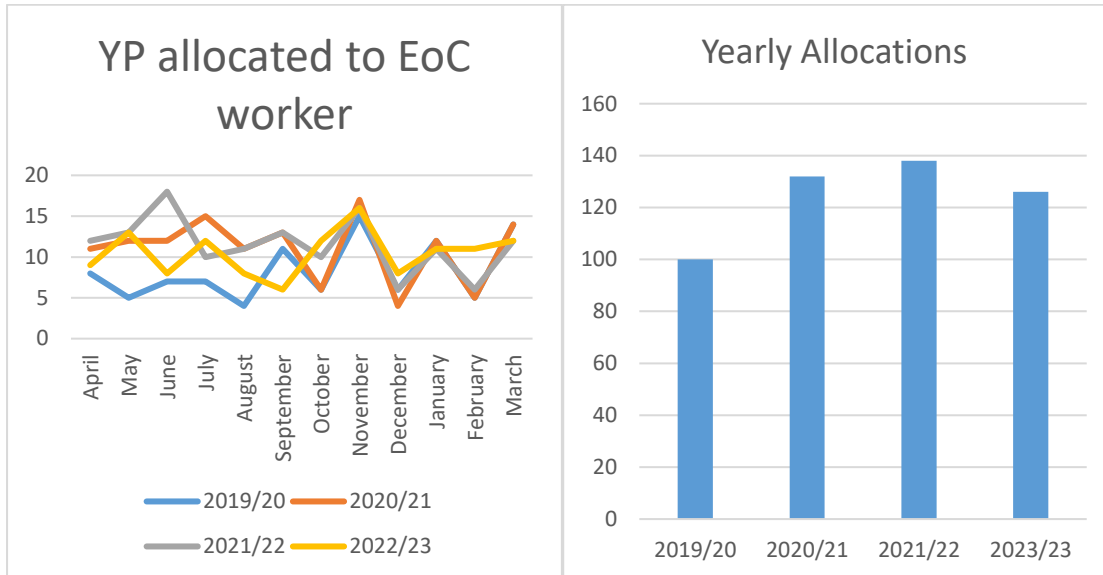
For the 10 16/17 year olds (5.5%) who moved into Supported Accommodated as CLA / not CLA the majority of these young people were supported to remain in the care of their family for as long as possible before the move to supported accommodation was made.

1 young person (0.5%) moved to a new placement as relationship with carers had completely broken down.

During 2022/23 intervention ended with 127 young people, at the point of closure 77% of young people were either at home / with extended family or have remained in their long-term placement. This is an increase of 9% from the previous year. There will be further exploration into sustained outcomes for these young people 1-2 years post closure.

- 18 The tables below show number of young people allocated to 11 plus edge of care workers, with a breakdown of allocated per month. One clear trend is that young people in need of intensive support spikes after the start of the school year but drops on the run up to Christmas. Allocations over all were down slightly in 2022/23, this is likely due to staff sickness within the team over Q3 and Q4, as we would have allocated some young people who we would have assessed as edging towards care, when resources allow. All young people in crisis have been allocated a worker, however, this has meant we have not allocated workers to some young people needing more preventative interventions.

	Allocations 2019/20	Allocations 2020/21	Allocations 2021/22	Allocations 2022/23
Totals	100	132	138	126



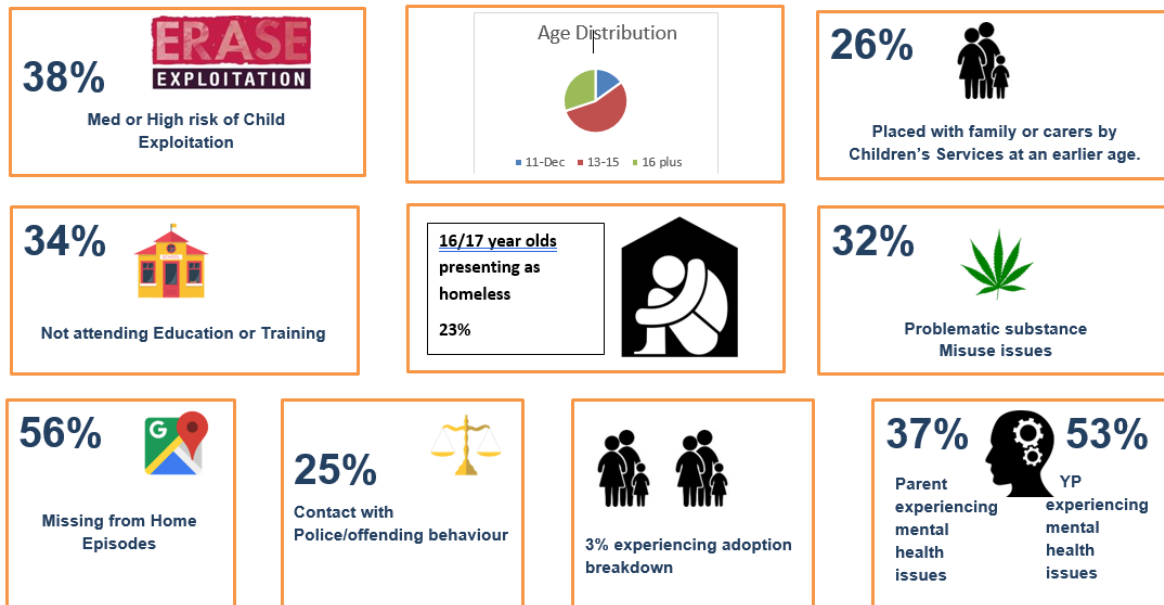
Duty Visits and Consultations

- 19 During 2022/23 SS duty workers spent 228.5 hours completing home visits to young people and families exploring if there was a role for Supporting Solutions or supporting young people already accessing support who were experiencing a crisis.

- 20 SS also completed 124 consultations / duty visits with SWs where the outcome was not to allocate an edge of care worker. Consultations were arranged either because of a request from a SW or because of EDT involvement with a family. Where the outcome was that there was no role for an edge of care worker at that time other avenues of support were suggested, for example, FGC, family worker interventions, independent visitor, CAMHS, Full Circle, Harbour, Humankind and the VCS. Following these consultations, further referrals were made for 14 of these young people, at this point edge of care workers were allocated due to more imminent risk that young person may need to come into the care of the LA / experience a placement breakdown. Out of those young people 79% remain in the care of their family / long term carer.

Profiling

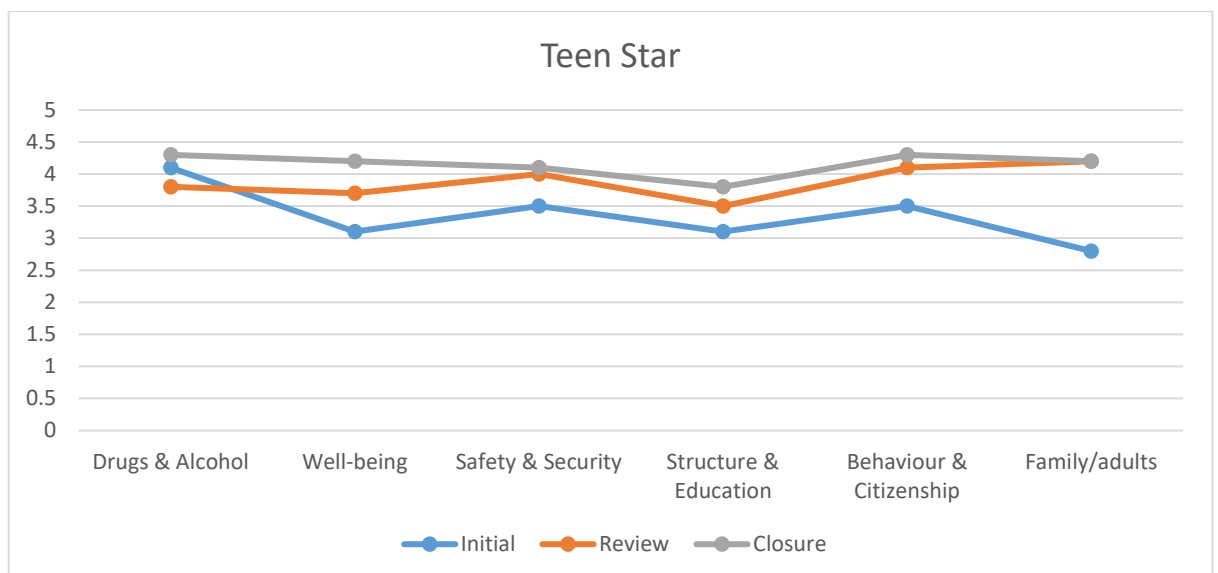
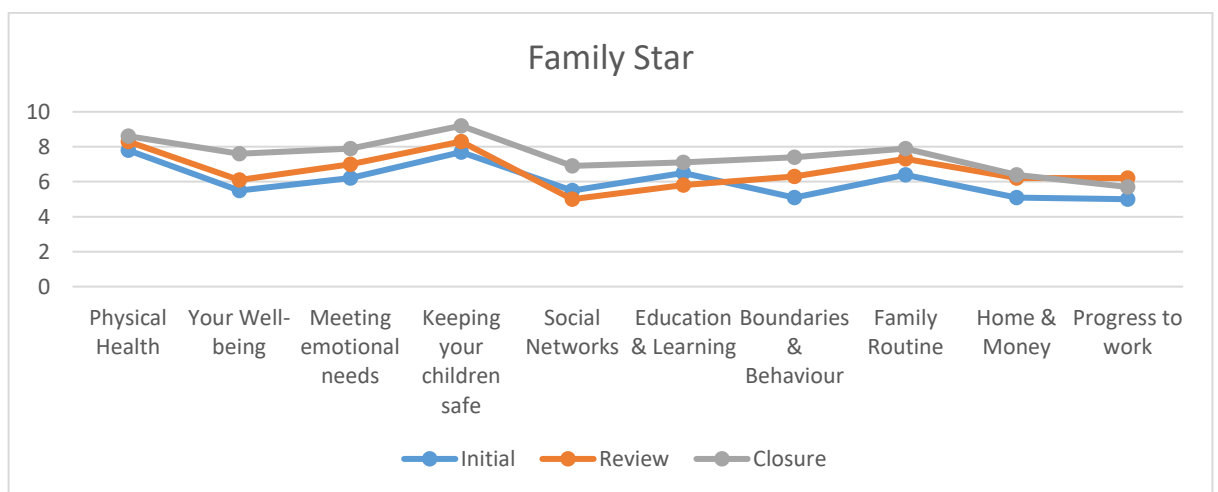
- 21 For the YP who started to access support in 2022/23, the following factors were present and had an impact on YP being on the edge of care. The information below shows these in % figures for 2022/23



- 22 There continues to be a significant cross over in the number of young people on the edge of care who are also subject to or at risk of Child Exploitation and have also had Missing from Home Episodes. Many young people on the Edge of Care are also experiencing issues in education, whether this be exclusion, refusal to attend or out of education altogether. This means that young people spend more time at home, which has an additional pressure on parent/carer where they are already experiencing difficulties in their relationship with their child.
- 23 In addition to this there continues to be an increase in young people who are experiencing worries with their mental health needs. For all the young people where their parent /carer had difficulties with their mental health this was also a factor for the young person.
- 24 Supporting Solutions edge of care workers continue to support more 16/17-year-olds at risk of homelessness helping to ensure that all options to return to the care of parents or alternative people in their network are explored before alternative accommodation is considered. This year the team worked with 29 YP, who presented as Homeless, 20 open to ASET and 9 FF. this is an area of development for the service in terms of performance monitoring.

Individual Young People Journey Mapping (soft outcomes)

- 25 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.
- 26 The tables demonstrate that in all areas of the Teen Star and Family Star Plus young people, parents / carers felt they had made improvements after accessing Supporting Solutions interventions.



Performance Supporting Solutions, Edge of Care 7 plus

- 27 During 2022-223, 56 young people received support from the SSS minis service, 48 of these were referred in 2022/23, whilst the other 8 had been referred prior to this.

Outcome	Number of young people
Young people received support.	56 (48 new referrals)
Young people who remained in the care of their family	43 (77%)
Young people who remained with their long term foster carers	11 (20%)
Young people who became CLA or had to move to a new placement	2 (3%)

Closures

- 28 Interventions ended with 34 young people during 2022/23, 94% of these young people at the point of closure were at home with parents / family members or living with their long term foster carer.

Performance – Family Group Conferencing

FGC - Performance Activity	Target for Year	Achieved
Referrals Received		234
Initial FGC's completed	360	191

- 29 The overall target for FGCs is 360 per year (4 per month x 7.5 FGC workers). The number of referrals received did not reach this target. Work will be done to raise awareness and promote use of the FGC Team in the coming year.
- 30 The table below shows 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. Overall, 72%

of FGCs resulted in the child/young person being in the care of their parents or extended family

Initial FGC – Outcomes for children	Number of FGCs
Awaiting Outcomes from Assessments and court	45
Rehabilitation plan from care of LA to parents	7
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.	3
Remain with Extended Family / private fostering arrangement	16
Remain looked after by Local Authority	5
Remained with parents with support / safety plan from identified network	107
Alternative Carers Identified	0
Support / safety plan for young person who is in/or moving to – independent living / residential / foster care	3
Grand Total	191

- 31 NFAs – 43 FGC referrals did not progress to an initial conference either because family withdrew consent at a later stage, family did not engage in the process or family circumstances changed and FGC was no longer required.

Review FGC

- 32 Every family who completes an initial FGC is offered a review FGC. In 2022/23 FGC reviews were completed for 84 families. Overall, 89% of FGC reviews resulted in the child/young person being in the care of their parents or extended family.

Review FGC – Outcomes for FGCs	
Remained with parent	74
Remained with extended family	1
Remained looked after by Local Authority	8
Other:	1
Grand Total	84

Development

- 33 The service have identified a series of development aims for 2023/2024, which are listed below:
- (a) Continue to develop the minis service and evidence the ongoing need for more intensive interventions for younger children;
 - (b) Age range of the minis to be changed to 7-11 to ensure that all transition support for children moving from primary to secondary school is captured by the same team;
 - (c) Develop a multi-agency edge of care service that brings together a range of accommodation options, services, and outreach support for young people on the edge of care;
 - (d) Supporting Solutions Edge of Care management team continue to recognise the need for intervention to be available in the team for young people and families where Domestic Abuse had been a factor in family life. SS are working with Harbour to co-deliver the Respect Young People's Programme (RYPP), all EoC workers have already completed this training or will do so in the near future;
 - (e) Extension of FGC service to be explored in relation to Community Conferences and Lifelong Links to help ensure that meaningful support from networks is explored to help ensure that children and young people are safely cared for at home, moving onto independent living and feel safe in their communities;
 - (f) Re-establish regional network for FGCs, use these links to better understand targets for other LAs and how impact is monitored.

Conclusion

- 34 The Supporting Solutions Service has successfully supported 83% children (12+) and 97% (7-11) on the edge of care to remain within their home, whether this is with family or long-term placement in our care.
- 35 The Family Group Conferencing Team have carried out 191 conferences and 84 reviews, however, there now needs to be further work to raise awareness and increase uptake of the service.
- 36 The next steps are to increase the number of children supported to remain at home, and also build on the existing Edge of Care Service that offers a range of accommodation options, services and outreach support to young people. The ambition is to be a multi-agency service, bringing in speech and language therapy and clinical psychology.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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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

No implications.

Consultation

Children and young people are involved in consultation where necessary

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

No implications.

Climate Change

No implications.

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

No implications.

Staffing

No implications.

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

No implications.