



Reference Number: FOI-101004357730

Response provided under: Freedom of Information Act 2000

Request and Response:

1. The total number of FTE equivalent child and separately, adult, social worker posts for each year for the last ten years.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
FTE Adult Social Worker posts				113.48	129.62	121.41	116.93	138	142	143	146.3

Please note we only started recording structure in our Enterprise Resource Planning system from 2012 so we do not hold the information requested for 2009 to 2011.



Workforce return date	Children Social Worker posts including vacancies
30/09/18	272.28
30/09/17	264.04
30/09/16	268.54
30/09/15	267.18
30/09/14	269.87
30/09/13	241.50

Please note we do not hold the figures prior to 2013. The figures above are those reported to the Department for Education for the Childrens Social Worker Workforce returns.



2. The percentage vacancy rate for each quarter for each of the last ten years for child and separately, adult, social workers posts.

Adult Social Care does not record this information.

Workforce return date	Children Social Worker posts No. of vacancies
30/09/18	33.11
30/09/17	39.59
30/09/16	41.61
30/09/15	44.76
30/09/14	42
30/09/13	37

Please note we do not hold the figures prior to 2013 and figures are not held on a quarterly basis. The figures provided are actual numbers and not percentages as the information above is the information that is sent directly to the Department for Education.

3. The percentage of agency staff for each quarter for each of the last ten years for child and separately, adult, social worker posts.

	Quarter 1 2014	Quarter 2 2014	Quarter 3 2014	Quarter 4 2014
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	3.29%	4.94%	8.24%	9.06%

	Quarter 1 2015	Quarter 2 2015	Quarter 3 2015	Quarter 4 2015
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	9.41%	6.84%	7.70%	6.84%

	Quarter 1 2016	Quarter 2 2016	Quarter 3 2016	Quarter 4 2016
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	5.80%	7.25%	14.49%	19.57%

	Quarter 1 2017	Quarter 2 2017	Quarter 3 2017	Quarter 4 2017
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	15.49%	13.38%	16.90%	9.15%

	Quarter 1 2018	Quarter 2 2018	Quarter 3 2018	Quarter 4 2018
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	11.89%	16.08%	15.38%	18.18%



	Quarter 1 2019	Quarter 2 2019	Quarter 3 2019	Quarter 4 2019
% of agency staff Adult Social Workers against FTE	13.67%			

Please note that we only hold figures from 2014 to date.

Workforce return date	Children Social Workers Agency Staff
30/09/18	7.61
30/09/17	4.41
30/09/16	21
30/09/15	19
30/09/14	18
30/09/13	23

Please note we do not hold the figures prior to 2013 and figures are not held on a quarterly basis. The figures provided are actual numbers and not percentages as the information above is the information that is sent directly to the Department for Education.



4. The total number of staff for each of the last ten years that have been a) disciplined and b) dismissed for child and separately, adult, social worker posts.

I can confirm that Cornwall Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request; however the Council has only collated this information from the beginning of the financial year 2015/16. We estimate that the cost of complying with your request for the previous years would exceed the appropriate limit of £450 (18 hours) as it would take a vast amount of time to locate, retrieve and collate the information. This is because the information is not routinely collated in a discrete management information system and in order to respond to your request we would need to review individual's personnel files within the periods requested in order to identify information that would enable an accurate response to be made to your request.

The Council collates the information in financial years rather than calendar years, and the information presented below is therefore set out accordingly.

Please note the following:

- That the information below includes both Social Workers and Principal Social Workers.
- That some figures have been suppressed because the statistical value is less than 5.

We consider that the search result has resulted in information which is probable/likely to result in individuals or cases being identified. Therefore we consider that it should be withheld from disclosure to you pursuant to the provisions of Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act ("the Act").

Section 40 (2) applies where disclosure of third party personal information would breach any of the Data Protection Act 2018 principles.



The Council has a legal requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018 (“DPA”) to process personal data fairly and lawfully. The Council considers that releasing third party personal information would be unfair and as such a disclosure that would breach Principle One of the DPA.

Year	Number of Childrens’ Social Workers subject to formal disciplinary action	Number of Childrens’ Social Workers Dismissed	Number of Adults’ Social Workers subject to formal disciplinary action	Number of Adults’ Social Workers Dismissed
2009 – 31/3/2015	Please see explanation in response.			
1/4/2015 – 31/3/2016	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5	Less than 5
1/4/2016 – 31/3/2017	Less than 5	0	0	0
1/4/2017 – 31/3/2018	Less than 5	0	Less than 5	0
1/4/2018 – 19/3/2019	Less than 5	0	Less than 5	Less than 5



5. The average caseload for a social worker for each quarter of the last ten years for child and separately, adult, social workers.

In Adult Social Care workers caseloads change on a daily basis. We do not hold this information.

In Children and Family Services we do not hold this information historically. Current caseloads are guided by the attached Framework.

Information provided by: Adult Social Care

Date of response: 8th April 2019

Children's Early Help, Psychology and Social Care

Framework for a Balanced Workload

Background

1. The overarching aim of the Framework for a Balanced Workload (FBW) is to lay down the principles underpinning the way managers and supervisors work with practitioners to balance the competing demands of meeting the needs of service users, achieving practice quality standards and protecting staff from unreasonable workloads.

2. The FBW sets out expectations of productivity and value for money for individual practitioners and teams. It addresses the mutual expectations between managers. It also addresses the way teams are expected to work together to achieve a whole service approach to dealing with peaks and uneven demand, especially if that demand falls heavily on one part of the Service.

3. The FBW lays down a benchmark for an average workload for a full time equivalent (FTE) practitioner in different roles who have achieved the required standard of capability as a practitioner to undertake their role. The benchmark can be aggregated, pro rata to the number of FTE practitioners in a team, to establish the standards of efficiency and productivity expected of a team by the Head of Service and Senior Manager – acting as a compact between managers and staff.

4. In applying the FBW managers and supervisors must take into account a range of tasks, not just cases. Account must be taken, for example, of the time needed for a newly qualified practitioner to continue learning in order to achieve the required level of professional capabilities to progress. A manager/supervisor must also take into account cases of exceptional complexity, casework crises, travel demands and any personal circumstances impacting upon an individual's capability to undertake a full workload.

5. The critical process for achieving a balanced workload for an individual practitioner is professional supervision. Together, the practitioner and manager/supervisor have the best understanding about the practitioner's capabilities, the nature of the cases and any factors affecting capability or capacity at any given point in time. The same is true for achieving the standard for the efficiency and productivity of a team. Professional supervision is where discussion about the workload and workload pressures should be resolved in the context of a duty, on both sides, to be fair and reasonable.

6. Managers/supervisors are expected to support practitioners to achieve and maintain the required standards in volume, throughput and quality of practice. This is done through supervision, coaching and accessing relevant training to improve capabilities in supervision and maintaining workplace wellbeing. Supervisors also need to identify how other resources can be deployed to support practitioners in dealing with the demands on their workload.

7. Whilst a detailed system of workload weighting is not required or desirable, the FBW encourages managers/supervisors and staff to develop a simple tool for monitoring an individual and team workload over time. The tool must be geared to specific practitioners and teams and enables comparisons between practitioners and teams.

Defining the core practitioner tasks

8. All appropriately experienced and trained practitioners are expected to demonstrate that they possess the capabilities required to achieve the core practice quality standards in:

- a) Carrying out a range of assessments, undertaking analysis of the information gathered, and formulating decisions, supported by a clear rationale
- b) Drawing up, implementing and reviewing the full range of child plans
- c) Undertaking child protection enquiries, acting as lead professional to implement and review child protection plans

9. Although some more specialist practitioners, such as fostering and adoption practitioners, undertake a range of tasks specific to their practice area and will not routinely undertake the wider range of core practice tasks, they should maintain the transferable capabilities in order to do so. All qualified social workers, for example, may be called upon in certain circumstances to undertake the core tasks, with appropriate coaching, support and supervision.

10. In addition to the core practice tasks, practitioners are required to undertake a range of other tasks specific to the function of their team, their role and grade, including: providing advice and consultancy to other professionals; undertaking duty in referral and assessment processes; contributing to multi-agency planning meetings; supervision; practice teaching and training. These tasks and duties must be taken into account when maintaining a balanced workload within the parameters of the FBW.

Defining the core tasks of a manager/supervisor

11. All appropriately experienced and trained managers and supervisors are expected to demonstrate that they possess the capabilities required to achieve standards in the core tasks:

- a) Supervision, support and ensuring continuous professional development of a team or group of practitioners, including qualified social workers
- b) Oversight of casework and practice quality standards, including the full range of core practice tasks
- c) Collaborative working with other professionals, settings, partner agencies and voluntary organisations, including participation in local partnership groups
- d) Implementing team improvement plans and managing within cash-limited resources

The context for achieving a balanced workload

12. Every team must produce an annual Team Improvement Plan (TIP) that forms a service level agreement between the team and Senior Management Team. The TIP describes the range of tasks and priorities for improvement specific to the function of the team and an agreed baseline for efficiency and productivity, including activity, throughput and other agreed tasks in line with service priorities.

13. The FBW takes into account normal levels of availability by using an 81% calculation of available hours (42 of 52 weeks). This calculation takes into account supervision, team meetings and bank holidays (8 days) and averages for annual leave (25-28 days), training (8 days) and sickness (6 days). The calculation, then, is based on 1,558 available hours per worker per annum. Team managers may request exemptions from their Senior Manager when exceptional circumstances prevent them from achieving the team standard for efficiency and productivity, such as higher than normal levels of sickness absence or unfilled vacancies that are not covered by interim social workers.

14. Team managers are entitled to expect reasonable notice in the allocation and transfer of work and that cases will be up-to-date and in good order at the point of transfer. Case transfers should be based on a discussion between team managers in the first instance. Additional notice should be given to allow for negotiation when a team is asked to take work or cases beyond its normal purpose and function in order to meet service needs.

15. Team managers will make an allowance for newly qualified practitioners in order for them to build up to a full workload within a year of qualifying. A reasonable allowance should also be given to practitioners moving between different specialisms and a flexible approach must be taken to building up the workload of practitioners returning from extended periods of leave or absence. A flexible approach must also be taken in applying the standard in respect of practitioners who have chronic health or disability issues that impact upon their capacity and capability, on the basis of advice and guidance from the Occupational Health Service. Managers and supervisors must also take into account the exceptional complexity of some cases and prolonged case crises when allocating work.

16. The other factors to take into account when considering capacity are:

- a) Temporary agreement to a reduced caseload in light of personal circumstances
- b) Agreed additional responsibilities such as involvement in a task and finish group
- c) Agreed training in excess of 8 training days per annum
- d) Certain specialisms, which require other regular tasks such as participation in a duty rota (does not include out of hours)

17. Consideration of any other factors, which could reduce the capacity of an individual or team to undertake the core workload and meet the agreed standards for productivity should be discussed and agreed with the Senior Manager. The final decision by the Senior Manager must take account of the needs and entitlements of service users, statutory duties, Council policy and service priorities.

Whole service approach in responding to peaks in demand

18. Statutory work must be prioritised for allocation over all other tasks. In circumstances when one part of the service is under exceptional pressure to allocate statutory work the Senior Manager should raise the issue within their operational management group and consider the following steps:

- a) Check team and individual workloads against the baseline expectations
- b) Look for any spare capacity across the whole service and consider the allocation work on a time-limited basis
- c) Re-deploy resources into the service/team that is under pressure on a temporary basis
- d) Secure additional resources on a temporary basis to meet the exceptional demand

- e) Undertake an analysis of need, forecast demand and bring forward proposals to SMT for adjusting;
- Thresholds;
 - Systems and processes;
 - Quality standards; and as a last resort
 - Redeploying resources on a permanent basis.

19. Managers must ensure that proposals for recruitment take into account service pressures and workflow, efficiency and productivity, staff welfare and workplace wellbeing. Proposals for recruitment to a team or service, which is falling below the baseline expectation of a balanced workload, will be discussed with the Head of Service before agreement is given.

A baseline for individual and team workloads

20. Team managers must have a consistent expectation regarding individual capacity and capability. The baseline workload for individual social work and specialist social care practitioners in different settings is described in the Appendix. The baseline for a team can be aggregated, pro rata, to reflect the number of FTE practitioners. Achieving the standard for productivity should be reflected in annual PDS targets. Managers and supervisors are responsible for supporting practitioners to achieve the required standards in the quality, volume and throughput of work.

Workload monitoring

21. Team managers are encouraged to develop a simple workload monitoring system for tracking the workload of individual practitioners and the team, in order to ensure an appropriate balance between the demands of meeting the needs of service users, achieving professional practice standards and protecting staff from unreasonable expectations. An activity report, including team efficiency and productivity, will be considered at the quarterly Quality Assurance and Performance Management Conference.

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Children's Early Help, Psychology and Social Care Services
Education, Health and Social Care
Cornwall Council

1. Context:

2,800-3,000 social work assessments per annum
800-1,000 child protection enquiries
520-550 initial child protection conferences
1500-1700 child in need plans
400-410 child protection plans
420-440 children in care
70-80 care proceedings
280 care leavers

2. The following productivity standards are based on these averages:

Child protection enquiries = 15 hours
Children in need assessments = 12 hours
Social care assessments = 10 hours
Plan reviews = 10 hours
Care proceedings = 80 hours
Fostering and Adoption assessments = 80 hours
Cases = 15-18

3. Agreed exemptions and allowances:

- Trainee social work practitioners (75%)
- Newly qualified practitioners (70% up to 100% by month 9)
- Post qualifying training in excess of 8 days per individual
- Staff from another specialist team (80% up to 100% by month 6)
- Absence from work in excess of 6 days

4. Baseline average workloads for individual FTE practitioners per annum:

- Social worker: 83 child protection enquiries pa or 104 children in need assessments per annum (1 day a week team duty deducted)
- Social worker: 15 care proceedings per annum
- Social worker: 20 fostering and adoption assessments per annum
- Social care practitioner: 104 early help/signs of wellbeing assessments per annum (1 day a week team duty deducted)
- Lead professional/caseworker: 15-18 cases

5. Model Statement of Efficiency and Productivity in an annual Team Improvement Plan for a Children in Need Team:

For a team establishment (FTE) of:

- Team Manager
- Principal Social Worker
- 6 Social Workers
- 4 Social Care Practitioners (Family Workers, Outreach Workers and Targeted Youth Support Workers)

Core casework tasks

- Social work assessments
- Child protection enquiries

- Signs of Wellbeing assessments
- Implementing child plans
- Plan reviews

Standard for FTE team efficiency and productivity

- 150 – 180 cases
- 280-300 social work assessments/enquiries pa
- 180-200 Social care assessments pa

6. Model Statement of Efficiency and Productivity in an annual Team Improvement Plan for a CP/Court Team:

For a team establishment (FTE) of:

- Team Manager
- Principal Social Worker
- 6 Social Workers

Core casework tasks

- Social work assessments
- Child protection enquiries
- Implementing child plans
- Plan reviews
- Care proceedings

Standard for FTE team efficiency and productivity

- 98 – 117 cases
- 50-60 social work assessments/enquiries pa
- 30 care proceedings

6. Model Statement of Efficiency and Productivity in an annual Team Improvement Plan for a Children in Care Team:

For a team establishment (FTE) of:

- Team Manager
- Principal Social Worker
- 6 Social Workers

Core casework tasks

- Social work assessments
- Child protection enquiries
- Implementing child plans
- Plan reviews
- Care proceedings

Standard for FTE team efficiency and productivity

- 98 – 117 cases
- 50-60 social work assessments/enquiries pa
- 10 care proceedings
- 30 life stories
- 30 transitions