

Organisations were asked to summarise their approach to NQSW workload management. Their responses are reproduced here.

Local authority	<p>Consultation Process led by xxx took place within the CADS referrals team to ensure referrals received were actioned appropriately. This specific piece of work has resulted in appropriate cases progressing through the CSC service. With the reduction in referrals being actioned to CSC caseloads have fallen and Team Managers have been more readily able to ensure cases loads are protected for NQSW's. There has been a push to ensure that NQSW caseloads do not exceed 15 children. Whilst this is exceeded at times, there is a reporting system, which enables the Practice Development Team to monitor caseloads. Should a NQSW's caseload remain high, discussions take place with the NQSW and their Manager to look at ways to reduce the caseload to an acceptable level.</p> <p>The frontline safeguarding teams are moving to a generic working model, and it will be interesting to see how this may impact on caseloads across the board, but especially the caseloads of NQSWs.</p>
Local authority	<p>NQSWs have a protected caseload with a reduction of 10% of a caseload of a more experienced social worker; this means a maximum caseload of 18 children. The Support and Assessment Agreement meeting sets out expectations with regards to the level and complexity of work at each stage of the ASYE year. For example, initial case work being at low level Child in Need and progressing incrementally to more complex case work and then child protection work; there is an expectation that initial involvement in child protection work is as a co-worker so that they have supported learning prior to taking over responsibility as the allocated worker</p> <p>Where an NQSW's caseload goes beyond 18 children, this is highlighted and discussed with the Assessor and the Team Manager. Options are explored to reduce caseloads. For example, if any cases can be safely managed by the Early Help team and be stepped down, if cases can be re-allocated within the team or whether cases can be co-worked to alleviate some of the pressure. Consideration is also given to additional support that can be provided to the NQSW whilst the caseload is being reduced.</p> <p>If the NQSW is finding the case work too complex and it is felt to be beyond their level of development, this is discussed , and solutions are considered with additional support for the NQSW being identified. Options for reallocation or co-working with a more experienced social worker are explored so that guidance and support can be offered while still offering a learning opportunity to the NQSW.</p>

Local authority	<p>NQSWs completing the ASYE programme are provided with a 10% reduction in caseload compared to a non ASYE social worker over their ASYE year. They initially start by shadowing more experienced team member for at least 2-3 weeks. They are also encouraged to continue to shadow their peers when new situation arises such as Entry to Care panels, observe Child Protection Conferences and Court work.</p> <p>When they are allocated cases, this is done in a measured way to ensure that they are not overloaded. Cases are kept low to begin with, it is gradually increased at each stage in a pace that the NQSW is confident and managing. This is reviewed regularly and in consultation with the ASYE.</p> <p>Consideration is given to the NQSW's previous experience when deciding the rate at which to increase the workload/caseload over the course of the programme.</p> <p>Assessors are encouraged to allocate a range of cases that provides opportunities to develop the NQSW's assessment skills, direct work with children of different ages, critical thinking and professional curiosity. This helps the NQSW evidence their work in all areas of the PQS / KSS and PCF.</p> <p>NQSWs have 10% of their time (this equates to 0.5 days per week) set aside for undertaking learning and development activities including attending critical reflection groups, completing the portfolio, etc. Assessors and Line Managers discuss with the NQSW how this time can be used</p>
Local authority	<p>We acknowledge that the overall experience in some parts of the directorate for our NQSWs over the past 12 months has not been as positive as we would like – some organisational and leadership pressures compounded with staff turnover and the significant impact of Covid -19 has impacted significantly for some. This in part has meant that in Help and Protection for example, some NQSWs have had caseloads higher than we would want and the mentoring and support they require has not always been at the standard and frequency we would insist on.</p> <p>That said, the cohort has had the continued support and encouragement from our two highly skilled and experienced Advanced SW Practitioners who are resolved to ensure this first year in practice can be the best experience for our NQSWs including reflective practice sessions, group sessions and ensuring on-line learning is available to all.</p> <p>More recently we published our ASYE offer alongside our learning offer to all staff and this demonstrates that although we have had some tribulations on the way, we are committed to our NQSWs and have tried to support them through these unprecedented times.</p> <p>With regards to workload management, we now track every NQSWs caseload, and this is given to senior leaders to take action – Our Senior Leadership Team is now updated regarding their workloads and support in place and these leaders are committed to make the changes necessary to come back in line with reducing caseloads and increasing</p>

	support via external mentors being identified for every NQSW until we have a little more stability in our own workforce
Local authority	First of all, we cap the number of NQSWs/ASYE that are accepted into Children's Services at each intake, to ensure that we have appropriate support available for them throughout the programme. All teams are aware of the additional learning and development needs of an ASYE/NQSW and will actively support where they can. We have a clear policy of capped caseloads in line with the 10% reduction compared to more experienced staff, and this is monitored through weekly caseload reporting. Spot checks are also carried out by our Quality Assurance service. When more challenging cases are allocated to NQSWs (or become so), we try to joint work with more experienced Social Workers and will also involve alternatively qualified children's practitioners to offer specific interventions. In our Family Safeguarding teams we also work alongside seconded professionals from drug and alcohol, domestic abuse and mental health services, and these staff are frequently of enormous support to NQSWs.
Local authority	<p>The SWA has been working well since 2018 in supporting and protecting NQSW's for the initial six months of their ASYE, and thereafter with the practice educator support.</p> <p>In response to the management of caseloads, there is an agreement from the wider service the SWA do this. We achieve this by screening the work prior to allocation to ensure it is meeting the learning needs of the NQSW. They have a maximum of five children allocated in the first three months, moving to ten children in the 3-6-month period. Once the NQSW is out in their teams, this rises to fifteen children during the remainder of their ASYE. Whilst this is the model, Team Managers oversee the development and workload of each NQSW in light of development needs of each NQSW and the complexity of work allocated. Whilst in the SWA Team Managers ensure there is a rich learning experience offered.</p> <p>The learning and development workshops, alongside the group supervision offers support and guidance in preparing NQSW's to complete their role and manage increasing caseloads. This allows for teaching and peer learning. This helps with any anxieties of having increased accountability for children, and in the completion and progression of work. This process also allows them to "slow down their thinking" to ensure they are developing good social work practice standards, which facilitates better and more confident working with children and families moving forward.</p> <p>The PPE's monitor and work with TMs to ensure consistency and clarity of the NQSW role.</p>
Local authority	We have a clear statement within our ASYE programme with regard to a progressively increasing caseload over the course of the programme, which is reviewed at each review stage with the NQSW and their manager, so that a consensus can be reached as to whether the NQSW is ready to manage a more complex case load. We also stipulate at what point an NQSW can start to work with child

	<p>safeguarding and again, this is progressive so that the NQSW has the opportunity to observe, then co-work and finally be solely allocated child safeguarding practice.</p> <p>Once the ASYE programme has commenced, during group reflective supervision sessions, we check the current numbers of children allocated to the individual NQSW. Within ASYE reviews, we record how many children are allocated to the NQSW and how well they are managing their workload.</p> <p>Finally, there is a clear escalation strategy if needed. Initially, this is raised with team managers if the number of children being supported by the individual becomes too high or unmanageable. If this is not effective, the matter is escalated to the team manager in the Centre for Professional Practice (CPP) who then escalates to service managers. If this is not effective, this is then further escalated to the CPP Service Manager, who then escalates to Head of Service. There are very clear timescales with the escalation process and managers usually respond promptly.</p> <p>However, we do have a caveat that if agreed between all parties, the NQSW can be allocated a higher numbers of children, whilst still also recognising that NQSWs have a number of professional development activities, group reflective supervision and a bespoke training and development plan.</p> <p>Within the review process, numbers of allocated children are threaded throughout the portfolio and handbook, so there is consensus amongst those involved around workloads.</p> <p>NQSWs from the Frontline programme are also required to attend monthly recall days so we also take this into account when assessing workload.</p>
Local authority	<p>The ASYE Consultant and ASYE Mentor have regular check-ins with the NQSW's where they will discuss numbers of cases and challenges including any issues around complexity. The ASYE Consultant and Mentor will also discuss the wellbeing of the NQSW's managing their caseload.</p> <p>Where there is a particular issue of concern to workload management the Consultant and Mentor will discuss with the Team Manager to find a solution. If a solution cannot be found the issue will be escalated by the Principal Social Worker to the Service Manager to resolve. If this is unsuccessful then the issue will be escalated to the Head of Service for the Centre of Excellence to resolve with the Head of Service for the social work team, although it is expected the issue would be resolved before it is escalated this far.</p>
Local authority	<p>NQSWs receive a 25% reduction in their caseload compared to a Social Worker in their team who is approximately two years qualified. The expectation is that across the year their caseload will gradually increase, as will the complexity of their work, in line with their knowledge and skills. Team Managers and Senior Leaders are aligned</p>

	<p>with the need for NQSWs to have a caseload which reflects their status as an NQSW, but also reflects any previous specific experience they may have had. A learning culture is embraced by Managers at all levels of the organisation, with NQSWs being supported in having protected learning and development time.</p> <p>Where an NQSW expresses concern about their workload, they are encouraged to speak to their Line Manager in the first instance. If this is not possible or they need additional support in doing so, they can seek support from any of the ASYE Coordinators. If it is deemed that their caseload is too high or too complex, then an ASYE Coordinator would discuss this with the Team Manager directly.</p> <p>Caseloads are discussed at each ASYE review and within supervision. Recently, a Children's Practitioner had transitioned to an NQSW and it was identified that their caseload was too high. One of the ASYE Coordinators discussed this with their Manager and a strategy was implemented to reduce this within two weeks. This was then reviewed and if this had not occurred, the Service Manager would have been alerted. To ensure we have a full picture with respect to caseloads rather than only dealing with this on an individual basis, it has been agreed that a quarterly report will be run by the Data Management Team identifying caseloads for all NQSWs, so that trends and themes can be identified.</p>
Local authority	<p>We have introduced a case load promise for the various stages of the NQSWs ASYE programme. This has brought in some level of consistency, although still raises challenges due to the volume of work that comes into the service. NQSWs can go over their caseload numbers and this is discussed with managers/ assessors in an attempt to reduce caseload as per the promise. Work continues in our efforts to reduce the volume of referrals across the service particularly in our EHASH (Early Help and Safeguarding Hub) with the aim of ensuring families receive the interventions needed at the right time. The Children and Family's Service has also seen the benefit of an Innovate Team to support with capacity. This involves social workers from this team working with families intensively where the potential for stepping down to Early Help services or concluding work to cease social care involvement, is identified.</p> <p>As part of our ASYE guidance, NQSWs workload promotes a progressive journey from child in need, to more complex child protection and public law work. This is to ensure that NQSWs have work according to their developmental needs. Plans are put in place that where there is increased complexity, such as the issuing of care proceedings, NQSWs are supported so they are learning but not feeling overwhelmed with this. This is not always an easy task, as the families we work with often have multiple needs which brings in much complexity, even with Child In Need. This has been heightened through COVID and is reflected in the assessor evaluation (workload section). Learning needs however are communicated by Assessors / NQSWs which are then cascaded to the training department around what our future learning programme should look like. Bespoke workshops are also put in place where required. The introduction of the practice</p>

	<p>learning leads is new. We are looking at how they will commence learning with the ASYEs so that we are developing social workers from the outset and promoting the opportunity to progress and develop.</p> <p>A key area of learning is through service user feedback and this is something we are developing in xxx. In addition to this, audits are completed live with Social Workers to support reflective learning.</p>
Local authority	<p>The PDC chairs the ASYE agreement meeting and all the review meetings to maintain an oversight on NQSWs experience and ensure equality and consistency across the different areas of service. This includes access to training, caseloads, supervision and support.</p> <p>During such meetings, a summary of each of the allocated cases is discussed in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - number of children and their ages - the legal framework in which the intervention is based - the presenting issues <p>The NQSWs are also asked a scaling question on how they feel they are managing their workload.</p> <p>NQSWs are aware that they can speak to the PDC independently of their ASYE Assessor if they need any additional support.</p> <p>The PDC has also offered coaching to NQSWs who have been found to be struggling with the transition from being a student. This can be in terms of the practicalities and/or and emotions of the work. Coaching using a DISC assessment has helped the NQSWs to increase their insight as to how they are as individuals and why they find some tasks/experiences more challenging than others. It also highlights their communication style and that of others and explain where this can be complimentary and conflictual. Again, this helps with to understand relationships with their team and the children and families they work with. This information can also be fed into the Professional Development Plans through highlighting development needs.</p> <p>As with many local authorities, NQSWs have access to the employee assistance programme. Wednesdays are dedicated to wellbeing with many resources available to encourage all employees to focus on self-care and resiliency. Wednesdays are also dedicated to Power Hour where all staff are expected to take a break for lunch away from their computers from 12.30 – 1.30 with the organisation keeping this under review and considering increasing Power Hour to other days of the week. Staff feedback is that this protected time provides breathing space for them and over 60% of staff wishes for the Power Hour to be extended to other days of the week.</p> <p>All NQSW's have access to TOIL to ensure that they are having regular breaks and time away from work, particularly taking time off in lieu when they have been required to work beyond their core working hours.</p> <p>We pride ourselves on comprehensive workforce development and support packages that help NQSWs feel motivated and enable them to</p>

	<p>confidently do their work. As such we will be recruiting a Workforce Development Lead, who will have a strategic overview of the ASYE programme and will be able to respond to any challenges and developments.</p>
Local authority	<p>We have an agreed and well understood case load 'capping' for ASYEs at 14 cases. This is monitored and reviewed regularly in supervision and discussion with the Advanced Practitioners and ASYEs. Supervision between TMs and ASYEs explores their readiness to take on more work or varied work to ensure that people develop skills at the right pace, without feeling overwhelmed. Advanced practitioner support focuses not only on reflective supervision but also learning how to do tasks and workload /time management. We also aim to support ASYEs to co-work cases with more experienced workers so they are able to learn from others, to help the development of their skills.</p> <p>We have a corporate agreement that we can recruit additional social work capacity on a short term basis (should it be required) to enable case loads to remain at this cap for ASYEs. We do however carefully manage the number of ASYEs across teams to ensure that maintaining a capped case load is sustainable. There have been times when service pressures have made this challenging, and where possible we have drafted in extra support for the ASYEs to free up the Advanced Practitioners to focus on case work as well as support.</p> <p>Daily performance data available to managers across the organisation enables the team managers, service managers, Heads of Service, Principal Social Worker and Director to review case loads. The Principal SW monitors this and will intervene with Managers / Service Managers as required to understand the numbers or raise concerns.</p>
Local authority	<p>In the past 12 months we have monitored caseloads and attendance at ASYE learning/reflective sessions, reporting weekly to the PSW who takes the information to the Senior Management Team. The purpose of this is to challenge high caseloads over the protected number and the correlation between this and non-attendance at the sessions. This has limited impact.</p> <p>In more recent months the PSW and Heads of Service have agreed an incremental approach to the caseload number alongside the degree of complexity. This is currently being applied by the Case Manager in the Academy so learning from this approach can inform future decisions. The application of the approach is more of a principal rather than a set figure for each review period and supports individual knowledge and skill needs.</p>
Local authority	<p>There is a 25% reduction of what an experienced social worker is carrying</p>
Local authority	<p>The caseload aspirations are set out in our Service Policy.</p> <p>All new managers have a session with a practice educator to support understanding of the programme and their role. This includes the</p>

	<p>expectation to ensure caseloads increase gradually, as skills and knowledge build, and that case complexity does not exceed the expectations and ability of the worker. This is reflected by having a role profile (job description) for newly qualified workers that highlights their difference from an experienced practitioner.</p> <p>When a worker starts as an NQSW, they, along with their manager, are sent the handbook, and guidance to indicate work load management and/case load.</p> <p>A practice educator also attends the ASYE initial Action plan meeting, and the Learning Agreement Meeting with the manager and NQSW. This is another platform where case load/work duties are discussed. The manager's responsibilities and expectations are clearly explored during this meeting. However, as recognised by Skills for Care. This does not always result in adherence, and this year during covid, additional pressures have been reported by some ASYE.</p> <p>The PSW regularly highlights caseload challenges and runs a dedicated over-limit report as to advise managers where their focus needs to be. Heads of Service request action plans from team managers where caseloads are felt to be unmanageable.</p> <p>NQSW's have check-ins during catch up/situational learning sessions. Challenges with case allocation can be raised here and the ASYE Coordinator will have discussions with team managers. If these are ineffective, the PSW may escalate to service managers.</p> <p>NQSW's do feel able to raise concerns with managers and professional development (this has occurred during covid regarding case supervision and also case load volume, and this has been escalated to heads of service for action).</p> <p>As a result of some of these issues this year, the following action has been taken.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continuation of catch up/situational learning sessions -PSW has recently held retention sessions with social work staff and NQSW's, follow up sessions have been booked in over Christmas and running into 2022 with a detailed report being provided to the Service Director.
Local authority	<p>The Principal Social Worker & the Deputy Director ensure that there is a robust mechanism and oversight of NQSW caseloads to be assured that they are in line with ASYE guidance of 10% reduction and there is a gradual increase in cases and complexity throughout the 12 months. However, we acknowledge this is an area of challenge for the organisation at present due to the volume of newly qualified social workers in one team, attributed to a lack of experienced social workers in the team who have left for promotion opportunities. The Head of Service is meeting with his Service Leaders to monitor caseloads, morale and what further support is required to support this particular</p>

	<p>team. Each Service Leader reviews caseloads twice a week and the level of complexity for each ASYE and this is discussed in fortnightly management meetings.</p>
Local authority	<p>To monitor case load and complexity of cases in supervisions and ideally keep the caseload at a manageable level of 15, although as a NQSW's capability and knowledge develop, this may increase to 20.</p> <p>NQSW's do not undertake any section 47 enquiries or hold child protection cases, although we do support them to work on section 7 welfare reports to understand the court processes. We do of course support shadowing opportunities in relation to complex case work as the NQSW progresses in their first year of practice.</p> <p>Due to the continuing high levels of referrals, we are in the process of adding another children's team within our locality teams and our assessment team has been split into 3 teams from 1, we have capped the number of NQSW's to a maximum of 3 that can go into each team, however due to the complex nature of cases coming into the assessment teams, we have capped that number to 1 in each of these.</p>
Local authority	<p>Workload management is something that can be a challenge. This is discussed within the assessment and support agreement meeting as well as during review meetings. If NQSW's workload becomes either too high or complex, as assessors we will discuss in more detail with the managers. Most managers are good at informing us if this is going to happen. We then look at the support available both from assessors, team managers and often advanced practitioners or others within the team.</p>
Local authority	<p>Across social work teams caseloads are lower than comparative years although we are aware cases feature more complexities which is becoming increasingly challenging for workers in addition to the administrative requirements of case-management. Our approach is to encourage workers to become more creative in their practice, we have supported action learning forums. We are currently undertaking a review of our service structure, our pilot teams have regular Practice Discussions which are reflective with peers, management and colleagues. Workers also have access to weekly Impact Review Panel which is a reflective forum attended by the worker, clinical lead and senior leaders for a shared responsibility to facilitate change within the child's timescale.</p>
Local authority	<p>The workload management of NQSW's is a key priority for the organisation. We have a clear strategic overview on workload management of our NQSW'S. Our ASYE handbook and ASYE Training adheres to the national guidance as set by Skills for Care. Caseloads are reduced and protected throughout the ASYE year. The ASYE induction and ASYE Reviews, sets the expectations for managers to protect caseloads and ensure that this closely monitored.</p> <p>The Practice Lead monitors the caseloads of all NQSW's and monitors the complexity of caseloads. All NQSW'S start with 6-8 cases within the first three months which is then gradually increased to 18 by the end of the ASYE. We strongly encourage NQSW's to joint work with an experienced social worker, to help develop their knowledge and skills.</p>

	<p>We also encourage a period of shadowing cases before cases are fully allocated.</p> <p>We have also introduced an escalation policy to challenge managers on cases that are not deemed suitable for NQSW's. The external practice educators also work closely with the Practice Lead to raise any concerns regarding caseloads.</p> <p>The impact of the pandemic has been a challenging time for most Local Authorities. In Slough, we have worked exceptionally hard to support and protect our NQSW'S, during this difficult time. All learning and support has moved to an online platform, with group supervision, action learning sets and mentoring taking place virtually. This has helped to support the NQSW's and ensure that their caseloads are protected. Historically, NQSW'S have had high caseloads due to the pressures within the organisation. Staff retention has been an ongoing challenge and has impacted NQSW'S experience in relation to team stability. The Council has recently issued a S114, which will have resource implications for all our services.</p> <p>xxx Children First is part of the xxx regional partnership, which has ensured that we benchmark caseloads, across the Regional Partnership.</p>
Local authority	<p>In the current climate referral rates and work load has increased dramatically. We are dealing with more complex cases and many teams are struggling with recruitment and retention and we know this is a pattern across the health and social care sector at this time.</p> <p>This places greater demand on managers and teams and temptation on managers to allocate more work to NQSWs especially if they appear quite competent.</p> <p>Trying to manage this on a long arm basis and often with managers who may not fully understand the ASYE programme can be a challenge, but we have managed this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clearly explaining at beginning of the ASYE re the 10% work load relief - Ensuring the ASYE Assessor is fully aware of this and monitors - That the NQSWs themselves are aware of this and are not tempted to pick up too much work due to high motivation or eagerness to support the team - Our Internal panel monitors this quite closely and any such issues picked up will be followed up - We advice right at the beginning that 1 day every two weeks is fixed to have as study day so that this is then integrated into the work load rota of the team. <p>We have also undertaking following to provide further support to the ASYE programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertaken Action Learning Sets - CPD SW peer supervising sessions - Social work specific training such as Reflective Practice with xxx and Assessor training - Rolled out opportunity for staff to undertake PEPS training - Regular ASYE/Assessor and PEPS Forums - Think Ahead programme and Student work placements to improve organisational understanding of Social Work. - ASYE SOP

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular emails to all Managers regarding ASYE and requirements - Regular emails to all NQSWs and Assessors regarding ASYE, reminders regarding reviews etc
Local authority	<p>The current recommendation within Children’s Social Care is that NQSW’s have a 10% reduction in their caseload. However, it is recognised that this does result in some inconsistencies for NQSW’s dependent upon caseloads across different teams and areas of the service. Team Managers and ASYE supervisors are currently responsible for monitoring NQSW caseloads, however, the ASYE co-ordinators currently undertake quarterly reviews of all NQSW’s caseloads, and this data is shared with senior management; if there are concerns surrounding individual caseloads during quarterly reviews, this is also discussed with the NQSW and their manager to identify appropriate steps to address this. The caseload reviews have also contributed to on-going discussions surrounding recommended caseloads for NQSW’s and consideration is currently being given to a caseload ‘cap’, however, it must be noted that feedback from NQSW’s has been that case complexity as opposed to caseload numbers should be the focus of this. In order to be able to effectively implement this, the Local Authority is currently addressing wider difficulties in relation to staff recruitment and retention.</p>
Independent family centre	<p>As much as the ASYE is surrounded by very experienced social workers and supervisors, in-service training requires a lot of teaching and learning facilitating practice knowledge. The challenges faced most relate to change in management and shortage of trained learning facilitators including independent facilitators. To mitigate this, we took a team approach to providing practical learning support for the ASYE so that should there be unforeseen changes in senior staff, there is always staff available to continue with the support. We also commissioned an independent supervisor to offer long arm support and a critical friend to the in-house supervisors. A team around the ASYE approach ensures workload is agreed and any changes to be approved by all supervisors to reflect safe practice progression for the ASYE.</p>
Independent care agency	<p>Protected caseloads and regular supervision are two important components of good leadership and supervisory practice standards, and if we get the standards right for social workers at the beginning of their career it will hold them in good stead throughout their career pathway, and ultimately result in good quality relationship-based work with children and their families. The caseloads that the NQSW’s have within our family assessment services family assessment are not excessive (4 families) and this can vary throughout the referral and assessment process, sometimes the NQSW may have 2 families. As we grow and develop our ASYE programme we will be able to monitor any challenges and identify solutions.</p>

	<p>We will always look to allocate caseloads suited to the NQSW's skills and experience. Once a referral has been taken, the manager will discuss the family with the social work team and then a decision is made and an appropriate social worker is allocated to the family. Weekly assessment plans and update reports are completed and discussed in the weekly operations meetings with the service.</p>
Commissioned Local authority service	<p>The NQSWs on this developing ASYE are both in Lead Practitioner roles, within a Targeted Early Help Service commissioned by the local authority. Their role includes safeguarding, practice development and quality assurance. Specific time each week has been agreed to allow for integration of direct work with children and families. All learning opportunities from this direct work are being used to inform practice across the Children's Centre areas.</p> <p>Any pressures with workload are discussed within supervision and agreement reached to ensure it is manageable</p>
Independent fostering agency	<p>We have an ideal maximum caseload for all our staff, but this individualised to the needs of the families and children they are linked to. This is monitored and discussed monthly.</p> <p>As managers we have a very open view on feedback from staff and development of the agency using this and would make it possible for anyone to feel able to come to us if they were not managing their workload.</p> <p>Circumstances were tough in the pandemic, and we recognise that not all NQSW's would have managed this situation. Our NQSW did not have as protected a caseload as we would have liked, but she has been supported with some tasks to assist with workload management. However, we have an electronic diary system so we can keep oversight of her workload in a practical way and use supervision, reflective groups to ensure we have oversight on the emotional impact of the work and reflect on learning.</p>
Independent fostering agency	<p>In the AYSE planning meeting the NQSW highlighted her learning needs and cases and workload were allocated based on this. Throughout supervision and AYSE review meetings the allocated work was reviewed, and further training needs were identified. Due to the nature of confidentiality some learning needs were unable to be fulfilled so creative thinking was used to established similar need.</p> <p>Supervision was divided into case load management and reflected learning at the early stages of the AYSE programme. As student confidence increases the amount of reflective supervision reduced but was always available.</p> <p>Regional and line manager shared the responsibility so that the impact was shared and also to provide the AYSE with different perspectives.</p>
Independent fostering agency	<p>Workload management rests with Area Managers in the same way as all other qualified staff: making a judgement of a case weighting (based on complexity, placement type, carer experience, travel distance, learning opportunities) and combining the right balance of cases to be</p>

	<p>fair. Carer assessment has to be introduced under close supervision also, to ensure robust assessment of a future resource. So far, the agency has been fortunate to be able to limit the number of foster carer families allocated to our NQSW's and to allocate carers in a balanced profile of experienced and new, in order to provide the right mix of stability and 'stretch' within a caseload to make it interesting.</p>
Independent fostering agency	<p>Workload Management is discussed during supervision between the team manager and NQSW. An examination of the key tasks being carried out by the member of staff is looked at. This forms part of the supervision policy. It is expected that all high-profile cases should be discussed at a minimum of once per month with the last visit recorded along with the action agreed. Cases should be discussed monthly with the Team Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there are safeguarding concerns. • Where there are ongoing concerns about the stability of placements. • Where there is a need for alternative care arrangements. • Where there are cases, where plans need to be driven in order to achieve permanency. • Where concerns it is considered that a review of the safer caring plan and risk assessment is required. <p>Where escalation is required pertaining to safeguarding matters or missing CLA documentation.</p> <p>Staff are advised that positive flexitime accrual can only occur where there is a workload which justifies the additional hours. Managers monitor workload to ensure that there is appropriate use of the flexi-time scheme.</p> <p>The NQSW are given caseloads of 10 active cases (the expectation for experienced social workers is 16) and they put aside 10% of their working week for CPD. The NQSW attend monthly ASYE sessions and also meet with their mentor) for individual and group sessions on Wednesdays. All NQSW (actually all SW) attend regular training some of this is provided by external organisations and some is internal. I have attached their CPD for your information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All social workers complete a self-appraisal as part of their appraisal and this asks them to comment on: their workload over the last 6 months (number of allocated families/ form Fs/ delivery of training/ participation in support groups/ other). • Have you met timescales for your foster carer reviews? • Have you consistently met requirements for frequency of visits and for foster carer supervision?
Independent fostering agency	<p>During their ASYE programme, NQSWs will be on a reduced caseload as part of our workload management. For the first 6 months on the programme the workload is reduced by one third. Over the remaining 6 months workload is gradually increased accordingly to support transition to a full caseload once the programme is completed. The agency operates a caseload weighting system. In practice, social</p>

workers in the agency have a caseload weighting of 12-13 and for the first 6 months the NQSW weighting would be 8.

Workload management is monitored through the supervision process and NQSWs also have additional reflective practice sessions where this is considered. As an agency all our social workers meet 3-4 times per year for social work practice meeting. Each session has an individual theme and our next session will focus on the emotions surrounding workload and professional boundaries as a social worker and the links to compassion fatigue.

While the NQSWs do have the reduced caseload and therefore the capacity to attend the comprehensive training programme available we do find that they will prioritise case work at times over training attendance. We see this as part of their development to learn ways in which to prioritise “rounded development” as a practitioner and offer help with implementing professional boundaries and time management. Examples would be supporting proactive arrangement of cover for cases, reflecting on carer expectations and the path of learned helplessness, offering a clear stance at all levels in the agency that learning is a priority.